LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD:
A Practical Theology Dialogue on the Margins of the Catholic Church

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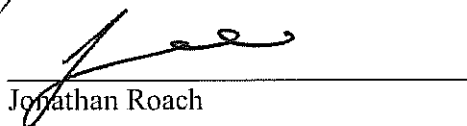
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Abstract

People are moving to the margins of the Catholic Church. As one dialogue partner states, "I left the Church to beat the rush." Yet, another remarks, 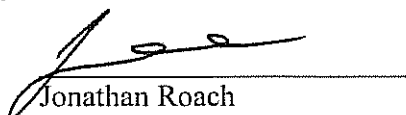"I just wonder. I have to ask, who's on the margins? I'm not sure." The main objective of this practical theology research is to understand the dynamics on the margins of the Roman Catholic Church in dialogue with fifty dialogue partners from the four geographic regions of the United States. Practical theology, the theology of marginality of Jung Young Lee, reciprocal ethnography, and the communication theory of Mikhail Bakhtin join in a transversal cross-disciplinary dialogue. The practical theology method invites non-consensus seeking dialogue, welcomes multiple voices and privileges the voice of the other. Aware of both centrifugal forces pushing towards unity and order and centripetal forces pushing towards multiplicity and diversity this practical theology research allows multiple perspectives to stand together to suggest new paths for transformative action.

In dialogue with the dialogue partners, I seek the reasons why Catholics over the age of twenty-one, who were once active and involved in the Catholic Church but presently no longer attend Mass, find themselves on the margins of the Church and how they understand their own marginality. This dialogue reveals implications for those on the margins of the Church, implications for all those talking about God and seeking to understand God's relationship in everyday experiences and for those who minister within the Catholic Church. Among these implications are adult religious education that teaches critical thinking in the areas of Catholic Church history, scripture, and theology. The

dialogue partners speak of new ways of being Church emerging on the margins. This emerging Church is marked by inclusive relationship that includes dialogue that does not seek agreement or consensus, a critical and thoughtful recalling of memories and narratives of the Catholic faith tradition, and appropriation of these in new and creative ways, and community envisioned as koinonia.

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I first want to thank my husband, Ed Reisinger, for his accompaniment and support on this academic journey. I am grateful to my sons, Edward and Dan Reisinger who provided motivation and encouragement, constant listening, and good questions along the way. My brother Dr. Thomas Hebert was a phone conversation away. He provided a map during this journey and the right word during challenging times. My sister Anne Wiles, brothers Joseph Hebert and Dan Hebert, and my father Mel Hebert read and commented on versions of this manuscript. I am grateful for their assistance. I also want to thank my friend Joan Nigen for her encouragement, listening ear, and good counsel throughout the last four years.

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Dedication

To my mother, Marie Pruss Hebert,

my grandmother Anna Tresnak Pruss,

and

my mother-in-law, Naomi Cheek Reisinger

in loving memory

of all you taught me

about love, laughter, and dialogue.

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The Faithful People of God on the Margins of the Catholic Church

Introduction

"Not going to Mass today, whereas I used to go. Can you tell me more about your project?" (Lance 2009)

What experiences move people to answer an e-mail invitation, a Craigslist advertisement, or an ad in the newspaper asking for dialogue partners?[1] Lance, a young man in his twenties, is one of my dialogue partners for this practical theology research study. Conversations with those on the margins of the Roman Catholic Church ground my effort to understand the margins of the Church.[2] Those on the margins of the Church are among the faithful people of God. Often well educated and aware of the meaning of their faith in their lives, they speak as part of the community of faith.[3] They are my dialogue partners in this work, and their words appear throughout as block quotes.[4]

This practical theology study has two parallel objectives. The first is to

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[1] The advertisement posted on Craigslist read, "Are you on the margins of the Catholic Church? Were you once active and involved and now find yourself attending Mass less frequently or not at all? Ph.D. candidate dialoguing with those on the margins." An alternative text read, "Are you on the margins of the Roman Catholic Church? Were you once active and involved and now find yourself attending Mass less frequently or not at all? Ph.D. candidate studying lived experiences of those on the margins and needs interviews."

[2] Often the capital 'C' in Church is used to refer to the hierarchal magisterium and the lower case 'c' for the broader Catholic community. The institution and the People of God as church are hard to disentangle. In this dissertation I am using the lower case 'c' in *church* to indicate the people of God, and the capital 'C' in *Church* to indicate the institution of the Roman Catholic Church. I will also be using the language that my dialogue partners used in talking about the Church. This means that official terms such as extraordinary minister of the Eucharist will be referred to as Eucharistic minister, in the more common vernacular.

[3] Since the earliest Church times, the Catholic Church acknowledged the Spirit's work in the People of God through its stress on the importance of the *sensus fidelium* [sense of the faithful] as one of the norms for knowledge and theological truth in the Church. The *sensus fidelium* "refers to the ongoing process by which the community of faith acknowledges that a teaching or a practice enjoined by church authority is a genuine expression of the church's faith and therefore true and binding, and makes that teaching or practice its own" (Phan 2006).

[4] Dialogue will be quoted as utterances. An utterance is more than a sentence. An utterance comprises a complete thought, saying something, responding to something, and anticipating a response. See Appendix A for more information about my dialogue partners, their pseudonym, and their ages.

understand the reasons why Catholics over the age of twenty-one, who were once active

and involved in the Catholic Church but presently no longer attend Mass, find themselves

on the margins of the Church and how they understand their own marginality. The

second, rooted in the experience of those on the margins, delves into the implications of

the experiences of my dialogue partners for others on the margins of the Church,

implications for all those talking about God and seeking to understand God's relationship

in everyday experiences, and for those who minister within the Catholic Church. By

bringing forth the voices of my dialogue partners, this study explores the dynamics of

marginality and integrates these dynamics into the lived experience of Church. It not only

observes the consequences of a process of dialogue that does not seek agreement and

uniformity, but builds on this non-consensus dialogue to privilege outside voices and a

cross-disciplinary approach as important contributors to practical theology in twenty-first

century practical theologians.

Nuancing the Margins of the Church

In this chapter, I begin by examining the available empirical research that

theoretically informs a perspective of the margins of the Church. I do this to understand

the state of what is currently known about the margins of the Church. Exploring this data

provides a basis for an appreciation of where the understanding of marginality has come

from and where it has grown. With the experience of postmodernity,[5] religion in the

United States changed. Such changes can be found in groups such as the Emergent

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[5] Modernity's effects included differentiations in the functions of society, a changing emphasis on policies rather than personal loyalty, individualism, and a leveling of social authority (Jodock 2000, 338). Postmodernity may be seen as a reaction to modernity. This generation is living in a pluralistic, diverse age. The advent of the computer and Internet brings with it the availability of global knowledge never before imagined. Rapidly changing technology, a global economy, and accessible movement across the globe have provided a context of increasing pluralism, difference, and diversity. The meaning of postmodernity varies in the literature, but there is agreement that it is a moment in time in which cultural, social, and theoretical shifts are located historically and systemically (Fergusen and Wicke 1994, 2).

Church movement[6] which seeks new ways of being Church in our emerging culture, and

within the Catholic Church as well. Past research on the margins of the Church varies.

Some research tracks overall actual trends, while other research is more in-depth.

Historically, there has not been as much research engaged directly with the voices of the

people. Proceeding from the more traditional quantitative research, this chapter reviews

this research as well as phenomenological research[7] that hears more of the voices of the

people within different religions in the United States, particularly that research with a

Catholic focus. Building on the tradition of research in the United States, I finish this

chapter with details of my own phenomenological practical theology research.

> I would be willing to be interviewed for your research. Not sure if I am the person you're looking for as I have been a Catholic all my life, attended Catholic schools from grades 1-12 and have worked as a Catholic school teacher for the last 19 years. I'll probably never leave the Catholic Church, but I am embarrassed at the image they have created for themselves: pedophilia, resistance/hostility to change, and a reputation for being hierarchical, rigid, and dogmatic. I'm leaving my teaching job in a Catholic school this year to work in a public school. I don't know if I'm on the margins or just not a good Catholic, but I would be willing to be a part of your research. (Rita 2009)

> One of the things about having the education like I did involves your conscience, and one of the things I always prayed for was the gift of discernment, because I think it's so important to understand what God asks us, or requires of us. Growing up in the Catholic Church is sort of a hard thing if you're gay, not from the standpoint of shame which is really what the Catholic Church in traditional terms is often about - shame. There's a difference between guilt and shame. Guilt is when you do something bad and you should feel bad 'cause you did something bad. Shame is feeling bad because of who you are or what you are and it's not healthy and it's not real. The Church shames gay people. I have people who say, "Oh this is a tolerant community." There is nothing to tolerate in my relationship with (Name). It's something to celebrate. I have someone who loves me and I love and we had a great underpinning of belief in each other and we're partners in life.

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[6] The emergent church movement is an ecumenical group of evangelical Protestants, Protestants, and Catholics. Brian McLaren and Richard Rohr are several of the writers and speakers in this movement. More information can be found at http://www.emergentvillage.com/.

[7] Phenomenological research seeks to allow the participants to describe the essence of human experiences studied through procedures that involve a smaller number of subjects. The development of patterns and relationships of meaning allows the researcher to better understand the lived experiences of those involved in the research (Creswell 2003, 15).

This is not something to be ashamed of, this is something my parents hope for their kids. So one of the things that's hard about growing up in the Church is that when you find out that something the Church is teaching is wrong suddenly. (Harry 2009)

What are the reasons that people are marginalized? What does it mean for people to be defining a place in a Church that does not define a space for them? Rita and Harry have dissimilar experiences of marginality. They describe their own marginality differently and even question their own and the institutional Church's understanding of marginality. Dialogue aims to understand the dialogue partners' process of ceasing attendance, and the dynamics of their marginality now. I also ask what names, rather than fallen-away, alienated, disaffected, and de-churched, they may choose to call themselves.

I always looked at this period in my life as a kind of, I still do to some extent, as a temporary lapse from the Church. I expect at some point, that I'll come back into the Church and be involved again. I don't know if that's an honest thing for me to think of myself, but for some reason that's in my head and so, and again, I don't know the term, lapsed maybe or something that doesn't necessarily mean that I'm permanently disengaged from the Catholic Church because I don't feel that way even though some of my thoughts and beliefs are fairly disconnected from the current teachings maybe. I still don't think of myself of someone who would consider being inactive in the Church. (Terry 2009)

Some of my dialogue partners, like Terry, indicate a willingness in the future to return to active participation in the Catholic Church. I wonder about their current attitudes of Church and what might lead them back to the Catholic Church in the future. I ask myself what this process of being on the margins and the issues they face there means to their faith journey, and question how they currently see their faith journey in light of their experiences on the margins. These are all topics for discussion in my dialogues.

An Hour of Coffee and Dialogue

"I don't really know why. But if you buy me coffee next week, I guess we can talk." (Ray 2009

I drive to the coffee shop, nervous but excited to be finally having conversations with people who identify themselves on the margin of the Catholic Church. In my own Church community I listen to these stories and watch as marginality increases. Progressive, feminist, and marginalized myself, I witness the pain of people I meet who express the feeling of being isolated or the pain of being without a Church community. I wonder at this phenomenon that seems to be growing in my local Catholic parish community. Now, I am sitting in a coffee shop, in a strange city, miles from my home, testing my tape recorder in the noisy environment, and scanning the room for a woman in a pink shirt.

Traveling to nine states in the United States, I dialogued with people in all four main census regions of the United States: Northeast, South, West, and Northwest.[8] I visited at least two cities in each region, conversing with at least nine dialogue partners in each region between June and November 2009. I dialogued with fifty-one Catholics between the ages of twenty-two and eighty-eight who stopped attending Mass since 2001. Most of our conversations lasted forty-five minutes to one hour. My conversations include people living at the margins of the Church who all identify themselves as Catholic. Some are Catholics in full communion with the Church but not attending Mass yet maintaining corporate spirituality. These Catholics connect with Catholic worship in a number of ways through small Christian communities, Intentional Eucharistic Communities, and other forms of regular group-based spiritual practices or worship. Some in this group feel marginalized, while others, though labeled and described by other

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[8] These are the four regions identified by Gallup (Gallup 2010).

people as on the margins, would not describe themselves as marginalized from the larger

Catholic Church. They would describe themselves as marginalized from the institutional,

hierarchical Catholic Church. Other Catholics identify themselves as Catholic, do not

attend Mass, but maintain spirituality and individual spiritual practices. Another group

interviewed connects with corporate worship and identify themselves as Catholic. A new

pastor asked this group of interviewees, regular Sunday Mass attendees, to leave their

Catholic Church after worshipping as a community in a parish in the same fashion led by

three different priests over the course of forty years. They now worship in an Intentional

Eucharistic Community.[9] There are several other groups of people on the margins who

are not part of this study: those who, though they are on the margins, worshipping at their

Catholic parish Church, those who no longer identify as Catholic and now belong to

another denomination and identify with that denomination, and those who no longer

identify themselves as a person of faith. For the purpose of this study's interest, these

people will not be involved in conversation.

God Called Me in Here, Why Didn't God Call Me Out?

    Jane and Bea, two dialogue partners, both struggle to understand their feelings of

marginality. They feel a part of the people of God, and both belong to small local

communities engaged in corporate prayer and worship.

> The odd thing is I felt so called into the Catholic Church. It was a strong call and
> it felt like coming home. I don't feel called out yet, and I don't understand that. I

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[9] Intentional Eucharistic Communities (IECs), small faith communities rooted in the Catholic tradition and mutuality and inclusiveness, join together to celebrate the sacred texts and rituals of their tradition, and to sustain each other as transformative public presence in culture and society (Veling 1996, 3). "Born in the enthusiasm flowing from Vatican II for a church of the people, some IECs were instituted in parishes, some were created as alternatives to the parish, some retain close ties with the institutional church, and some function independently, All are characterized by shared responsibility for the governance and life of the community" (Intentional Eucharistic Communities 2009). These groups share liturgical life and mutual support each other with the purpose of living Gospel-centered lives, growing spiritually, and working for peace and justice commitments.

wrestle with it. God called me in here, and I'm not active. Why didn't He call me out? But I feel like I have to stay where I am and I don't know what that means. (Jane 2009)

I'm eighty, born Catholic, high school, college, family, Peace Corps. Then when the kids were sort of peeling off, I went back to graduate school. I had volunteered in the libraries in (city) in the inner city and decided that's what I wanted to do, and so that's what I did. I found a job, older than everybody else but found a job too far away, but I took it because I needed a job. Then one came up that was closer, half the distance, so I took that. Then, my husband was diagnosed with cancer, multiple myeloma. So, I'd be upset about something personal at Church and he would say, that's not one of the essentials, forget it. After (husband) died the Church started pushing the rules and I started backing up. It was very troublesome. I actually agonized a long time about, what are the essentials? I hang on to the Gospel values and peace and justice. I was a Eucharistic minister. Wouldn't you know that last year the priest came out and decided we'll be the traffic managers at the back. So, we were standing there and he was saying, "Don't go out this door; go out that door. The Body of Christ, Body of Christ, don't go out this way, Body of Christ." He then, at one point, pulled my sweater to block the door better. At that point, when I had host in my hand, the woman in front of me and I stared at each other. That priest broke the straw. And then there was the lying, the cheating, and the scapegoating. The knowledge that the priests were abusing people and it had been covered up was horrific. That's part of it but part of it was the hypocrisy. Hypocrisy was huge. (Bea 2009)

Bea and Jane's marginality develops within their life experiences. Jane feels she needs to remain a part of the Catholic Church yet finds it difficult to attend Mass. Bea is active in progressive Catholic movements, but no longer wants to be a part of the institutional Catholic Church. Practical theology invites attention to the ways in which Bea's and Jane's lived decisions are incorporated into their future dialogue and action. It invites attention to the context and particular circumstances in which the tradition of the Church, as a communicative process and practice, may be being reconstructed, revised, and reinterpreted as circumstances change (Tilley 2000, 9, 29). My dialogue partners initiate a depiction of the context and circumstances of their life on the margins of the

Church. Their voices are important voices in enunciating an understanding of the Church in the twenty-first century.

Inviting the Voices of the People to Practical Theology

Practical theology emerges from the experiences of life.[10] It is contextual, oriented toward framing, situating, and identifying particular patterns of a contemporary situation and describing theologically the way the Christian faith occurs in this contemporary situation (Fulkerson 2007, 7-9).[11] The task of practical theology is to promote authentic discipleship in its concrete and contemporary situations (Cahalan and Neiman 2008, 67, 70). In this discipleship, practical theology goes beyond church-centered ministry to engage the postmodern, pluralistic world and culture, seeking a genuine and strategic commitment toward action for the common good (O'Brien 2009, 233; O'Brien 1999, 316).[12]

Practical theology utilizes an empirical theological approach methodology in a cross-disciplinary dialogue with other disciplines in the social and human sciences, and with theological disciplines, scripture, and tradition. This dialogue does not seek agreement, and rather pays attention to the differences and similarities in each person's narrative in a reciprocal give and take. It reciprocally invites my dialogue partners into the practical theology conversation by sharing and building practical theology knowledge

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[10] Practical theology is no longer situated only in the church, but rather engages the interactions of Christianity and religious and non-religious phenomena both in the church and outside the church (Van der Ven 1998, 38).

[11] Practical theologian Mary McClintock Fulkerson examines the concept of postmodern place through practical theology and ethnographic research exploring the practices of an interracial church that includes people with disabilities. She contextualizes and situates that conversation in a theory of practices and place that create a space for all to appear (Fulkerson 2007, 231). *See* Fulkerson's book *Places of Redemption* (2007) for an in-depth discussion.

[12] Practical theologian and religious educator Maureen O'Brien suggests that practical theology can be important in revealing patterns of practice, as well as implicit assumptions that contextualize and affect our interpretation of prominent events in our lives (O'Brien 2009, 237). This suggests the need for dialogue that will allow theological reflection about marginalization and those on the margins.

based on the dialogue and shared, examined, and reexamined knowledge.[13] This

understanding of practical theology as public theology suggests that practical theology

not only asks what the experience, beliefs, or practices mean to the local community but

also what they mean to all those affected by the decisions and commitments of these

communities (Davaney 2006, 167).

> The thing is the Church is causing pain. Now as a Catholic…I hope the Church would stop this pain and also understands the discontent of its people and the whole issue of Catholics being different in the United States because we are a democracy. To have to have a Church that is so hierarchical just goes against the grain. (Steve 2009)
>
> We were told we had three weeks to shape up. Umm, I don't remember having any great dilemma, and I wasn't facing any great dilemma I knew that my place was not going to be at St. ____ anymore. It was like someone took a knife, opened my chest, took my heart out and [tears]. How they can destroy something that was so real? I don't even see what it gains them; just power. (Harry 2009)[14]
>
> Steve and Harry poignantly express the hurt that so many of my dialogue partners

on the margins of the Church feel as they cope with loving a Church tradition and no

longer feeling that they can be a part of it. Practical theology attends to the structure of

this experience in all its details and depictions of life. It mandates a commitment to

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[13] My practical theology model can be broadly placed within a feminist model, informed by a doctrine of God as Trinity and grounded in a participative emancipatory paradigm (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003, Lincoln and Denzin 2008). This methodology seeks the empowerment of those on the margins and a change in the power imbalance for all the marginalized.

[14] The parishioners at this parish were asked to suspend their liturgical prayer style that had developed over four decades but, in 2008, did not conform to the 2002 General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM). In one member's words, "We the community of the church of ___, are standing at a painful crossroads. For forty years we have been a cohesive, intentional, conscience-driven community committed to justice. We cherish the Church of our baptism where we are fed by the Gospel, Vatican II, and the Church's social teaching. We struggle to live the challenge of Christ by being present to the people of our neighborhood, even though inadequately, to serve their needs through the various programs of the parish. Our work is fueled by a wonderful, inclusive communal prayer that evolved through prayerful discernment over four decades. For thirty-eight of these forty years, we have had priests walk with us on our journey of praying with integrity and listening to the choice of the Spirit alive among us. Now we have been told that there is no room for us to pray and worship as we have for so long… We are committed to the future of the Catholic Church that builds loving, inclusive, prayerful, justice-service communities of faith. We must move away from a culture of clerical power, control, privilege, and secrecy. We are not against authority. We are against patriarchy, which disrespects people. Unity is not uniformity. Unity can be attained by respecting diversity" (Dan 2009).

transformation for the common good (O'Brien 2009, 316). Transformation cannot be predetermined. Dialogue with multiple diverse partners including biblical and tradition elements and allied disciplines enables practical theology reflection to foster a creative space, a place of newness.[15] "The new understanding flows from and leads to new action, celebration, and further reflection in the continuing theological spiral" (Russell 1993, 30-31).

"What's in Your Bones?" - Towards Understanding

> *Would you still define yourself as Catholic?[16]*
> Yes, but it's like it's in my bones. It's like, I can't not be Catholic. I have no desire to go to an Episcopal Church, or a Lutheran Church, or another Church.
> *So, what would you describe that's in your bones?*
> Roman Catholicism. Oh, that's a good question. What is in my bones? (pause) that I'm attached to that Church somehow. But, I keep saying that Church is us, as people. (Judy 2009)

Dialogues are opportunities for the individual's story to be in conversation with the stories of others on the margins of the Church becoming a communal story. This yields new creative insights into the experience of marginality for practical theology, and for my dialogue partners as well.[17] I received e-mails after dialogues stating as Lily did, "I enjoyed meeting you and responding to your questions. My time with you has helped me clarify my feelings/frustration with the Church." These dialogues also raise questions that were difficult at times for some to answer. Judy, my second dialogue partner on the margins, describes herself as being Catholic because it is "in her bones." The question "What is in your bones?" became a question asked of all dialogue partners that is framed

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[15] When diversity is accepted and valued the margins provide an opportunity for insight. The margin is the crucial point, a new and creative core – where the two worlds of the center and the margin can coexist together (Lee 1995, 98).
[16] The italics in my dialogue partners' dialogue in block quotes indicate my words. It will indicate this throughout the dissertation.

in their own language to probe what they identify within them that *is* Catholic. This

question sparked thoughtful reflection, and some protests that the question is difficult.

Andrew commented by e-mail.

> Thanks for a great cup of coffee and for being a captive audience. While having lunch with friends today "religion" came up - one of the guests is in training as a Methodist minister and mentioned a communion monthly/quarterly - which helped me develop an answer to your 'Catholic' question - it is the centrality of the Eucharist and the meal to which all are invited that makes it Catholic for me - that the liturgy revolves around the meal rather than the homily is what makes it Catholic for me - or my tradition. So the focus on the table/meal sets the Catholic liturgy apart of all others for me. (Andrew 2009)

Dialogues help to develop a frame for my dialogue partners' lived experiences of the

margins of the Catholic Church and answer the question, "What is it to feel that one

belongs to the margins, to claim an identity as one on the margins, to experience

marginality?"

> Let's talk about who we are, what we do and where we're going in our Intentional Eucharistic Community. Yes, I wanted to be connected with the Church. In the canon law there is room for what we were doing. There is room for particular communities to be not regulated, to be not as strict in their liturgy, as well as in their mission. Well, we called ourselves Catholics and my question is: What does that mean? (Dan 2009)

> Well, a quote of the psychologist Jung…he said, and I can butcher it, but, "What's truth in the morning of our lives doesn't work at noon and is a lie by evening." So, is that just this? Does that happen with God? With spirituality and religion, as well as other things in our lives? I don't know. (Judy 2009)

> Dan understands Church as inclusive and wants to probe the bigger question of

what Catholic means. Judy questions the changes in her own interpretations of the

traditions of her life. Theologian Terrence Tilley suggests that traditions shape people

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[17] Dialogue educates each partner about itself and about the person with whom they are in dialogue, discovering potential and creating potential for new creative understandings about the self and the situation being discussed. This knowing of oneself and the world through dialogue with the other in all the other's diversity is a key action of human existence (Morson and Emerson 1990, 209-210). Relationship is primary as a person's self definition and self-perception, as well as knowledge and meaning are formed through dialogic relationships with others (Bakhtin 1990, 32).

and that people reshape those same traditions as they receive and enact them both individually and corporately (Tilley 2000, 122). Empirically, quantitatively oriented research is useful for understanding broad shifts in the importance of religion in a person's life. Exploring this data gives a picture of the margins of the Church and provides a basis for a beginning awareness of marginality within the Church.

Tracing the Margins of the Church: Empirical Research

Church Attendance Steady?

The Center for Research in the Apostolate suggests that the frequency of Mass attendance is a strong indicator of the general importance of Catholic faith in a person's life and of his or her level of commitment to living out the faith (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, CARA 2008, 2). Overall, church attendance among Christians in the United States has been fairly steady since the 1950s, averaging about 42 percent (Gallup 2009).[18] Catholics formerly attended Church in greater numbers, but attendance dropped in the 1970s and then leveled off to about the same attendance rate as Protestants (Gallup 2009). While Gallup claims it has remained at approximately 45 percent over the last four decades, the latest Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) study estimates Catholic Church attendance at 22 percent (CARA 2010). This number may be more reliable due to likely measurement error in Gallup data.[19]

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[18] Gallup has studied human nature and behavior since the 1930s with a focus on empirical evidence. See: http://www.gallup.com/Home.aspx

[19] CARA is a research center affiliated with Georgetown University that conducts social scientific studies about the Catholic Church. See http://cara.georgetown.edu/CARAServices/FRStats/massattendweek.pdf for a full discussion of this issue.

Table 1: Church Attendance in the United States – Multi-denominational data

	Attendance at Christian Worship weekly	Seldom/Never Attend Christian Worship	Attendance at Catholic Mass 2009	Seldom/Never Attend Catholic Mass 2009
Gallup Poll 2010	43.1%	45%	42%	
Baylor ISR Dazer 2006	32%-45% depending on denomination	9%-14% depending on denomination	33%	9%
Pew Forum for Religion in Public Life 2008	39%	23%	43% 30+ years of age 34% 18-29 years of age	
The Barna Group 2006			55%	

Catholics No Longer Attending Mass?

> My spirituality grew in college and they had a Newman Center on campus which is always really good. I've always had a struggle with the doctrines and structure within the Catholic Church just because as long as I've been going to Church, I love the community, but there's just certain rules and boundaries that I think were not…the Church is not necessarily growing and keeping up with what's going on around it and I understand the reason behind it. "Well we don't want to make abrupt changes because society changes so quickly." But these were the rules when my mom was a kid, and life and humans are progressing so quickly now that you can't wait and see anymore. You have to pick a side and stick to it. There's just things that we teach and because we've done it for so long nobody wants to question if this is this the right thing to do or what should we be doing. When I moved here I was going to mass at ____, I really couldn't find a home Church. The parishes never felt like home to me. Being the age that I am I need some place with young people. And it's hard to find. You know you have older Catholics that are married, you have young teenagers who are going with their parents; but you rarely find that twenty-five to thirty-five, unmarried, single person. I really long for like "Let's do Bible study. Let's do this; let's do that." So that's when I started pulling apart because I need more. (Caroline 2009)

Caroline, quoted above, would attend a Catholic Church if she found one with a

community of young people and relevant preaching. The fact that she finds few people

her age at Mass on Sunday affects her desire to participate in a community that does not

meet her needs. Her position coincides with the position of other young adults in

research by theologian Dean R. Hoge and his associates who found that young adults will

attend Mass when it contains relevant homilies, good music, and is connected with a

strong vibrant community (2001, 161).[20] Angelique Montgomery Goodnough,

researching Catholic identity at Catholic universities, found like Hoge et al., that young

people prize community and relationship as identifying markers of what it means to be

'Catholic' (Goodnough 2010, 4).[21] Kevin Meme and Jeffrey Guhn, young Catholics

themselves, find that no one story can summarize the increasing complex reality of young

adult Catholic spirituality. Rather young Catholics are struggling to articulate their vision

of the world, their place in it and the place of their Catholic faith in their life (Meme and

Guhn 2010, xiii-xiv).   Previous research by CARA has consistently shown strong

generational differences for Mass attendance. [22] CARA currently uses three generations

based on life experiences relevant to Catholics: Pre-Vatican II Generation (Born prior to

1943), the Vatican II Generation (Born between 1943-1960), and the Post-Vatican II

Generation (Born after 1960) (CARA 2010, 16). CARA divides the Post-Vatican II

Generation into two segments: one for those older than age thirty and one for those

between the ages of eighteen and thirty. The Pre-Vatican II generation attends Mass more

frequently and in general shows greater loyalty to Church practices. Many of the Post-

Vatican II Catholics of the Millennial Generation still live with family so that their

religious practices may be comparable to that of their families (CARA 2010, 20).

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[20] Dean Hogue (1937-2008) was a sociologist at Catholic University of America.
[21] Practical theologian Angelique Montgomery Goodnough lives and works in Austin, Texas. She is an adjunct professor in the School of Humanities teaching Religious Studies at St. Edward's University.
[22] See Appendix B: Are There Generational Differences?

"Few Catholics who attend Mass a few times a year or less think of themselves as practicing their Catholic faith" (Gray and Perl 2008, 98). Gray and Perl's survey asked respondents to determine from a given list what reasons explained their lack of Mass attendance. The list included: "a busy schedule or lack of time, family responsibilities, health problems or a disability, I don't believe that missing Mass is a sin, conflict with work, inconvenient Mass schedule, and I am not a very religious person" (Gray and Perl, 2008, 49). The most common reasons cited by those who attend Mass a few times a year were that they don't believe "missing Mass is a sin" (64 percent) and that they are "not a very religious person" (50 percent)" (Gray and Perl 2008, 49). Interestingly, these reasons were not given by my dialogue partners. Rather, they reported experiences of marginalization due to structural or systemic problems in the Church, personal issues in particular church communities or particular, personal experiences that made it difficult for them to feel nourished through church attendance and participation. My dialogue partners differed from Gray and Perl's population who were self-identified adult Catholics. They self-identified themselves as on the margins of the Catholic Church and responded to an invitation to dialogue.

Religion's Influence Diminishing?

Globalization is producing increased pluralism. With pluralism comes increased choice, and this is true for religious choice also. There are differing views of the effects of this choice and their importance. While the literature is unclear, research perspectives indicate the attitude of Americans towards religion fluctuates with major political events (Gallup 2008). In the December 2001 Gallup Poll, taken just three months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, 71 percent of the people polled, almost the percentage of the 1950s, said

religious influence was increasing, but by December 2005 the number was down to under

50 percent (Gallup 2008). By 2008, two-thirds of respondents reported feeling that

religion's influence is diminishing (Gallup 2008).

Studies now suggest that Protestants do not think of denomination when

indicating religious preference (Daser 2008). This is a trend that has been increasing

since 1988 (Daser 2008).[23] "Americans are losing a strong denominational identity. There

are rising numbers of non-denominational congregations as well as congregations that

minimize their denominational ties" (Daser 2006, 16). Large numbers of people indicate

that they are involved in multiple religious practices, mixing elements of diverse

traditions (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2009, 1). The Barna Group's surveys

indicate that studying only single church participation and those considered 'unchurched'

is no longer a viable method for studying religious health of the United States as many

people now attend multiple faith communities, conventional churches, house churches,

or a combination of both (The Barna Group 2008).

> I still go to Mass. I don't go every Sunday, but I do go once in awhile, like the
> holidays cause I think, once you're a Catholic, you're always a Catholic. (Chloe
> 2009)
>
> I stopped going to Mass gradually. Maybe my eyes were opened. Actually, we
> had a great pastor originally, who everybody complained about, but people
> complain all the time, right? But he actually was wonderful. Then we get this guy
> and we got the principal at about the same time. I thought the school principal was
> an idiot, but I thought the pastor was evil. Now I have no basis for that, just have
> a feeling. I would walk into Church and if he was saying that mass, we went to
> breakfast and came back and went to the next mass. If my son had not been
> young, we would have left and went to Presbyterian Church because we had a

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[23] The word 'denomination' is used by Protestants to name the various institutional affiliations to which one can belong. Roman Catholicism is included in the Baylor Survey's denomination lists. Ecclesiologically, the Catholic Church encompasses the People of God, all members of society. The Church seeks to meet the people's personal needs, emphasizes participation in rituals, and interprets religious leadership as the sacred priesthood (Van der Ven 1993, 23). Practical theologian Johannes van der Ven suggests a denomination is the opposite with multiple interpretations of religious understanding and moral values (Van der Ven 1993, 23).

Presbyterian Church on the street. I was friends with a lot of those people. Right about that time I went to Italy with my girls and I went to the Vatican. I hated the Vatican. I couldn't wait to get out of there. You know people are always teasing about male testosterone. I felt that it was at an all time high. It bothered me. It wasn't like a healthy thing, and it really bothered me. I just felt like wailing through the halls. We came back and it turns out the pastor was a child molester. I never dreamt that was his evilness, I just felt that he did more harm to the Church than anything, but it never occurred to me. So it was the priest and the Vatican that opened my eyes. (Susie 2009)

The Catholic Church: A Diminishing Influence?

The Catholic Church in the United States is both an immigrant Church, and one of the earliest established in the United States (Manuel et al. 2006, 71). In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, European Catholic immigrants moved into ethnic enclaves upon arriving in the United States, and for many the religious and ethnic identities were hard to distinguish.

The first time I met my grandmother, I remember because I was still in the crib. That's the image I am left with. I was still in the crib and I woke up in the night and my grandmother was visiting. It was pretty exciting, I was put to bed at the regular time, but I woke up during the night, and she was sitting beside my crib in a rocking chair. Of course, we all had rocking chairs and I could hear her beads. She prayed in German. She was German-Irish. (Sarah 2009)

As Catholics began to move from ethnic enclaves into the mainstream of society, and their Church followed them. Perhaps the central event in this process was the experience of World War II. The war, and Catholics' participation in the war efforts, confirmed that they were an integral part of society and that fundamental American ideals were consistent with Catholicism (Massa 1999, 8). But the 1950s gave way to the turbulent 1960s, and the ensuing decades brought changing times and with them new religious attitudes about the importance of religious faith in people's lives. By 2010, when CARA surveyed Catholics on the Catholic faith's importance to them, generational differences are evident. The Pre-Vatican II generation, age sixty-nine+, is twice as likely

to indicate that religion is very important to them as the Millennial generation, age

eighteen to twenty-nine (Bendyna and Perl 2000, 22). However, few indicate that their

faith is of no importance (Bendyna and Perl 2000, 22-23).

While religious faith may be of varying importance, other issues also are

important to those on the margins of the Church. Kate and Lily are adamant about

women's full participation in the Church. Jillian questions the Church's teachings on

sexual ethics. The reasons for increased marginality differ with each person.

> One thing we haven't talked about is women. That's one thing that caused me to leave because women are so….and I never wanted to be a priest or anything, but I just felt that women just weren't valued. (Kate 2009)

> And being an attorney, there are issues of justice, especially the women's stuff, the women's issues in the Church. To me that goes to just plain ole justice. (Lily 2009)

> I have concerns about birth control and actually, I think with my love of anthropology and studying developing cultures, that was when I really got upset with the Catholic Church. There were a lot of women who had a million kids because they weren't supposed to use birth control. They couldn't care for them, didn't take care of them, and they didn't want a million kids. They were exhausted. They didn't know how to take care of them all, but they had to because that was what the Church told them they had to do. I really think, do they really want us to have more kids to take care of? You know, women have to go through all of this, a lot of work and lots of stress on their bodies. And I heard these women say you can't use birth control 'cause you'll go to hell. They were scared of the Church. I really never thought about it much until I started travelling and saw the impact of the Church's teaching on poor women particularly. (Jillian 2009)

The Numbers Are Confusing, But Pain and Rejection Remain

In the words of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), "For a variety

of reasons, people leave the Church. They may seek out or be recruited into non-

denominational, evangelical, or fundamentalist churches, or into New Age or other

religious movements. Far too often they simply abandon the Christian faith altogether"

(USCCB 1999, 36). Yet, despite those leaving the Catholic Church, the number of

Catholics in the United States is not declining and even increasing.[24] The primary growth

in the Church is due to population increase in the largely Catholic Hispanic/Latino

community (USCCB 2006).

One thousand Catholics in the United States responded to a CARA Knowledge

Networks[25] telephone survey concerning their participation in the sacramental life of the

Church as well as their beliefs about the sacraments. The study found that there are

differences in attitudes in people who attend Mass frequently and those who do not

(CARA 2008, 97). The survey includes questions concerning a variety of issues of

importance to the Church, including forms of participation in Church life besides Mass

attendance, and agreement with other teachings of Catholicism.[26] Findings reveal "among

Catholics who attend Mass infrequently, fewer than four in ten (39 percent) agree

'strongly' that they are proud to be Catholic" (CARA 2008, 97).

> I feel pain now for a Church that's lagging behind. Theology always moves faster than the Church. Like the ship that you can't turn in the ocean right away. They are resisting and putting barriers up and telling people, forbidding them from discussing or doing their work and they're fighting it tooth and nail but it cannot be stopped. It can't be stopped. The people hopefully will begin to understand that there's more to the Church than what they are getting at Church on Sundays; that we have an obligation to ourselves to begin to become aware of those things. And it may take a hundred years but eventually, eventually I think there has to be, there has to be a change. (Maria 2009)

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[24] Recent estimates of the population of Catholics in the United States are 65.6 million or 21 percent of the population (CARA 2010). In 1965 Catholics numbered forty-five million or 24 percent of the population (CARA 2010). Mass attendance in 1965 was at approximately 72 percent. Today, just 22 percent of Catholics report that they attend Mass once a week or more (CARA 2010). These numbers suggest a move to non-Mass attendance from previous years. The question is why?

[25] Knowledge Networks specializes in on-line research methodologies. This survey drew from a large national panel of households and was collected through probability sampling,

[26] In 1965 Catholics numbered forty-five million or 24 percent of the population (CARA 2010). Mass attendance in 1965 was at approximately 72 percent, today, just 22 percent of Catholics report that they attend Mass once a week or more (CARA 2010). These numbers do not give the reasons for this decline. They beg for more in-depth dialogue to understand the dynamics that are a part of this decline.

Maria and James cease involvement in their Church communities despite years of faithful and deeply committed ministry in their Church communities yet they still long for a Church community. Maria continues to search. James below is devastated by a breach of trust in the sexual abuse scandal and cover-up and states that he gets up on Sunday morning and feels he should go to Church, but he does not go. Jillian is raising a family and longs for a Church in which she can raise her child, but does presently part of such a Church.

> This is part of my problem now, the (priest's name) a pedophile. Oh, I tell you if anybody would tell me that early on, I would tell them, "no way." This would be absolutely unbelievable. The man was so sensitive, cry all the time, that type of thing. When I heard that, I was beside myself. My kids, they were not abused…but, I think things were close, let's put it that way. It could have happened. You know, I trusted my children to this man. This is still in our midst today. I went to see a priest, Fr. (name). I told him that I haven't been to Church in quite awhile now and I told him, 'This is why'. He knew Fr. (name), and he tried to tell me that it's happening all over. I didn't want to hear that. You people, I'm sorry, are put upon a pedestal. You're entrusted, you know. More than the school teacher, I would trust a priest. This type of thing, and he kind of blew me off. I didn't want to hear that. I didn't know what I wanted to hear at that time, but I didn't want to hear that. No, it wasn't ok because my way of thinking, (name) should be in jail, 'cause a few of them should be in jail. But instead they transfer them to Rome. You know, if that were me, I would be away for good. (James 2009)

> My Catholic Church was very liberal too. I learned a lot about social justice and environmental issues that really led into my main views in college, very little on the law and the aspect of Catholicism I don't like. But the more I thought about when I am in a Church and I'm going to give my money to a Church I'm going to support, I really don't want to support a Church where woman aren't allowed to be leaders at the highest level. So, to me, I don't want to bring my daughter up in a Church where she's not viewed as equal. (Jillian 2009)

Catholics around the United States generously volunteered for conversation about the Catholic Church and their own marginality. My dialogue expressed pleasure in

joining with others and contributing to a work of practical theology on the margins of the Catholic Church. Where were these generous conversation partners located?

Dialoguing Where Catholics Are

Catholics are more evenly distributed around the United States than other denominations. "The rectangle that connects Milwaukee and St. Louis in the Midwest to Boston and Baltimore in the East defines the Catholic heartland initially settled by European immigrants" (Froehle and Gautier 2000, 6). Religion by Region, a project of the Leonard E. Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life at Trinity College at Hartford, identifies eight regions in the United States and attempts to show how religion shapes and is being shaped by the culture (Walsh and Silk 2004, 7). In these regions, Religion by Region explores the way politics, public policies, and civil society relate to religion (Walsh and Silk 2004, 8) While Catholics are well distributed throughout the regions of the United States, the New England states, particularly Rhode Island and Massachusetts, are the states in the United States with the highest percentage of Catholics (Walsh and Silk 2004, 27). "New England Catholicism is in a state of flux…in part due to the crisis set in motion by the Church's sex abuse scandal. But it is also related to the fact that the New England region is experiencing various changes in social structure and ethnic composition" (Walsh and Silk 2004, 78). Religion is not as much of an animating factor in the Mountain West states as it is elsewhere in the United States. This is particularly true in Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. Within these states, southern Colorado has a strong Catholic concentration (Shipps and Silk 2004, 24).

In the South, most Catholics live at the geographical edge of the Southern states - along the coasts and the northern-most boundaries of Virginia, West Virginia, and

Kentucky (Wilson and Silk 2005, 35). There is little presence at all in Mississippi and Alabama. Nevertheless, Catholics there have established multiple schools and universities in an effort to nurture and sustain a faith commitment (Wilson and Silk 2005). In Florida, Catholics make up 10 percent of church goers (Wilson and Silk 2005, 57, 126).

The Southern Crossroads area, including Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma has been marked by heated battles over religious culture. These struggles continue in the culture wars of American political life (Lindsey and Silk 2005, 10-33). Catholics in this region (18 percent of the population) are transitioning from their status as the only recognized religion in the area in Spanish times. They are negotiating southern social and political norms which, in many cases, look relatively similar to their Evangelical Protestant brothers and sisters (Lindsey and Silk 2005, 112).

In the Pacific Northwest few religious groups control a larger share of the spatial marketplace (Killen and Silk 2004, 33). Catholics are the largest religious body in the Pacific Northwest states. Catholics today continue the widespread social service that marked their early presence in this area (Killen and Silk 2004, 68).

In the Midwest, because of a relative lack of institutional presence in the nineteenth century, Catholicism developed a spirit or style less tied to a hierarchical structure and legalistic mentality than in the Northeast (Barlow and Silk 2004, 110). Illinois has the most Catholics of these states. Many progressive Catholic organizations such as Call to Action were founded in this area.

Some states have denser Catholic culture than others (Silk 2008). A dense Catholic culture is typified by a denser network of Catholic Churches, schools and

universities, and organizations as well as the impact on public culture. States in the Northeast generally have the densest Catholic culture due to nineteenth and twentieth century successive waves of immigration (Walsh and Silk 2004, 42; Froehle and Gautier 2000, 207).

My dialogue partners reside in six of eight of the *Religion and Public Life* regions of the United States. For the purpose of discussing my dialogue partners' locations, I divide the United States into four regions of the U.S. Census: the Northeast, West, South, and Midwest regions. My dialogue partners reside in all four of these regions.

Table 2. Catholics and Dialogue Partners by Four Geographic Regions[27]

Regions	States [28]	Percentage of Catholics[29]	Attendance at Mass[30]	Percentage of Dialogue Partners	Number of Dialogue Partners
Northeast	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.	29%	19%	24%	12
Midwest	Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin	22%	23%	30%	16
South	Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky,	25%	32%	24%	12

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[27] U.S. Census Bureau 2008
[28] CARA 2010, 16
[29] CARA 2010, 16
[30] CARA 2010, 17

	Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.				
West	Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming	24%	20%	22%	11

My dialogue partners come from all four regions of the United States in generally similar percentages to the percentage of Catholics in the region. Most of my dialogue partners in the Midwest (87 percent) came from an Intentional Eucharistic Community that formerly worshipped together for forty years with a Catholic parish in the region. This is interesting because this region, according to Barlow and Silk, is more open to adaptation and experimentation within the Catholic Church, notably in the area of liturgy (2004, 110).

Summary of Research in Actual Trends

Numerous studies indicate declining numbers in Catholic Church attendance, as well as an overall lack of identification with denominational religion. Less committed Catholics indicate they are not proud to be Catholic. There is some fluidity in attitudes and beliefs among Catholicism. All religions inherently are responsive to cultural and social environmental changes. Because of this, changes in attitudes and beliefs can be expected. While Catholicism may be responsive to changes, the numbers cannot reveal

further information about these changes (Walsh and Silk 2004, 79). What is needed is dialogue that asks questions about these changes in beliefs and attitudes.

Limitations of Quantitative Research

In or Out of the Church...Where Are the Voices?

One of the main limitations of the less phenomenological methods used in the above studies is that they do not provide any in-depth detail as to the lived experiences of the people. While studies such as these are useful, they do not allow us to hear the voices of the people, or understand what the experiences look like from their point of view. It is difficult to determine why people stop attending Mass because survey questions do not allow room for complex answers. Gray and Perl's survey asked questions to identify why people attend Mass less frequently, but they were close-ended responses forcing respondents to choose those most appropriate for them. Research that actively interacts with the participants, builds rapport, and involves the participants directly in the process yields a greater level of detail, a thicker description and a more holistic, interactive encompassing narrative (Creswell 2003, 179-183).

Clifford Geertz famously used the term 'thick description' in ethnography to describe the type of description necessary to yield the meaning of a cultural sign (Geertz 1973, 13). In order to identify the changes and relational understandings happening of the margins of the Church a thick description is critical. This thick description assists in determining the social significance of marginality, and the value of issues of marginality in the Catholic Church through a multilayered, rich description that finds personal experiences and converses with people about those experiences (Geertz 1973, 13).

Allowing the Margins to Define the Margins?

In addition to the limitations of this less phenomenological research, present

research proceeds from a traditional understanding of marginality perceived from the

perspective of centrality. It defines the margin from the center and views the margin with

either/or thinking. One is *either* in the center *or* on the margin. This allows the

perspectives of the center to draw the peripheries, conceiving and defining the margins

from the center. The participants' rating of behaviors and feelings in predetermined ways,

the lack of emphasis on dialogue, labels such as lapsed, disconnected, and de-churched

emphasize this centralist view of the margins by allowing the center to define the

margins. The resulting meaning yields a view of the margins that is limited and

incomplete. In order to allow the margins to define the margins, the voices of those on the

margins are necessary. A shift to dialogue and narrative to engage the voices of people on

the margins promises to shift the focus from centrality to marginality. Research from the

perspective of the margins rather than in the center, allows for the discernment of the

dynamics at work in marginality in the Catholic Church.

Yet few phenomenological studies focus on the dynamics that underlie

engagement and affiliation patterns, facilitating an understanding of the lives of those on

the margins.

> You know Karl Rahner once was asked the question if he had it to do all
> over again and if he didn't know Jesus, and if he hadn't learned about the
> Catholic Church, how he would feel about religion. And he scratched his
> head and he said, "I can't possibly answer that question because who I am
> has been informed by my entire life, and all my life I have known nothing but
> that." I feel the same way. I have known nothing but the Catholic Church as my
> family. I've also branched out. I've explored different spiritual traditions. I
> meditate, and Yogananda is one of my very wonderful authors that I look to. I see
> connections with spirituality with Buddhism, the spirituality of the East. The
> Dalai Lama is a living saint as far as I'm concerned. You don't have to be

Catholic to go to God. I just happened to be born Catholic and feel most comfortable in that tradition. I also feel comfortable in a synagogue, and I also feel comfortable in a temple. That's where I am. I'm a spiritual being and I'm aware, so there's something inside of me that always says, "Don't judge. Let people evolve the way they evolve and look to the scriptures, where God said, 'There are many rooms in my mansion.'" (Miriam 2009)

Miriam's reveals the dynamics present in her understanding of the margins, an ecumenism that undergirds her statement, "Don't judge!" Further phenomenological studies reveal other dynamics.

Phenomenological Research: A Thicker Description of the Margins of the Church

Some People Are Seeking a Relevant and Authentic Way of Being Church

There is much discussion about the emerging church movement, sometimes also called the Emergent church movement.[31] For the last twenty to twenty-five years this movement understands themselves as a part of the larger church, providing middle, relevant, and authentic ways of being church that bridge both conservative and liberal churches. Emergent church spokespersons, among them Richard Rohr, Phyllis Tickle, and Brian McLaren, encourage Roman Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Evangelical, and other Christians to explore together the emergence and convergence of new ways of being church. Important topics in the emerging church literature include discussion of a fresh understanding of Jesus, a spirituality that links contemplation and action, social justice and holistic mission, and an authentic community. Research into the Emerging Church movement continues with researchers exploring methods of Church leadership, Church ritual, images of God and Jesus, salvation and justification and its importance to a lived spirituality (McLaren 2007; Simcox 2005; Morgan 2009).

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[31] See also http://www.emergentvillage.com for more information.

Dynamics in the Margins

Losing a Faith Once Valued

The works of Hammond (2001), Dillon (1999), and Hoge et al. (2001) explore the dynamics on the margins of the Church. Hammond discusses what it means to experience a loss of religious community and reasons why this may happen (2001, 36-46). Dillon examines a group of Catholics who find themselves in a dynamic process of marginality, but working with their identity as Catholics (1999, 13). Hoge and his colleagues contribute a perspective on young adults in the Catholic Church who exhibit generational differences from their parents and grandparents (2001, 36-69).

Hammond describes the 'de-churched' as those "who have lost a faith that they once valued or have left a body of believers with whom they were once deeply engaged" (Hammond 2001, 1). Hammond explores the reasons for dechurching through interviews with people who are or have been 'dechurched.' She finds "small issues sometimes trigger or mask much larger issues that are harder to name and address" (Hammond 2001, 37). Hammond suggests five reasons people may leave the Church and become 'dechurched.'

1. An inability to be honest in church about personal life issues.

2. Structural abuse, prejudices, and personal abuse "All abuse – whether sexual, physical, emotional, or intellectual (such as mind control) – has consequences of a profound spiritual nature…When the abuser claims to follow Christ, the abused receives destructive messages about God, the church, and the life of faith" (2001, 36).

3. The experience of the four rules of a dysfunctional family, "Don't think, don't feel, don't talk, and don't trust" (2001, 46).

4. Disenfranchisement in the failure to acknowledge experiences of trauma or disabilities by our church leaders and communities.

5. A personal perception of the irrelevancy of the church's mission and/or disillusionment with church policies.[32]

Hammond's work explores the dynamics present in religious marginality. The reasons she details for this marginality are similar to many expressed by my dialogue partners, though her population was not specifically Catholic. Disenfranchisement, the clergy sex abuse scandal and more importantly the cover-up, disillusionment with Church policies, and issues of trust are all issues for my own dialogue partners. But these issues do not define my dialogue partners. They continue to wish for and act towards inclusive ways of expressing their faith and spirituality.

> People want to get back to Church but they don't. They, we, want a reason to go back, that's what we're looking for. We want a reason, give us something, and give us something not new and exciting, but interactive, get us back there. Show us that you want us still, that we can trust you. We have lost the trust completely, between all the history and the denials and the scandals, how are we supposed to trust you? We have faith in God, we don't have faith in the Catholic Church anymore and that's the difference. Yeah, I'm still Catholic. It's a big part of my life. It always will be. (Kim 2009)

Mass is Not a Priority, but Alienation and Boredom Matter Too

Several qualitative research studies find that other Sunday obligations take priority over Mass for many Catholics in the United States. Camille and Schorn examined reasons that Catholics in the United States separate from the Church, finding that often specific Catholic teachings, the feeling of being ignored, and a sense of

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[32] Researchers in the U.K. exploring the margins of the church include British sociologist Grace Davie who states that the percentage of Christians attending church in Britain is about 10 percent (1994; 2005, 1). She believes that people treat the Church as a public utility in Europe and the U.K. to which one turns passively when needed – 'believing while not belonging.' Questions that plumb this notion of 'believing while not belonging' yield more authentic data (Davie 2005, 3). Voas and Crockett contest these findings, arguing that the belief systems of people who leave the church change over time to include vague beliefs that have little social or personal significance (2005, 11-18).

boredom during Mass affected their decision (Camille and Schorn 2004, 25). Hoge and

his colleagues found that young adult Catholics between the ages of twenty to forty

became inactive for a variety of reasons after Confirmation. These reasons included

alienation, lack of agreement with or disbelief in Church teachings, boredom, and the

irrelevance of Church teachings (Hoge et al 2001, 39-69). Hoge and his colleagues

suggest that the next generation of Catholics will not remain Catholic in the old way, or

simply return to the Church keeping with life cycle patterns, in part because we live in a

culture of choice where compliance behavior cannot be forced (Hoge et al. 2001, 238).

He and his colleagues call for Catholicism to "present itself as distinct, vital, relevant and

worthwhile as a living tradition of discipleship, community, and sacramental

consciousness" (Hoge et al. 2001, 238). Janet's story shares her perspective of her

marginality, beginning in her teen years. Her feelings of marginality continue today, even

though she works for a Catholic school.

> Religion was a requirement in our house, a very strong Catholic culture. In high
> school everything changed because my Dad was an alcoholic and he lost his job
> and we had no money to give to the Church. So my brother was up for
> confirmation and they told my family they would confirm my brother but that
> was it – we could no longer come to the Church because we did not have the
> money. They just made us go. My family just all walked away en masse. I used to
> go to the Cathedral downtown as a teenager to High Mass and sit and cry
> through it all. (Janet 2009)

Disagreeing and Engaging With the Church Clarifies Catholic Identity

Dillon examines why people choose to remain Catholic despite being

institutionally marginalized, focusing on how these Catholics negotiate their identity. She

engaged pro-change Roman Catholic activists and professional Catholic theologians as

response partners to show how people remain Catholics and maintain their commitment

to building an inclusive Church (Dillon 1999, 113). Her study shows that the institutional

context informs and empowers pro-change Catholics' identity (Dillon 1999, 13). This

happens because these Catholics must engage with official Roman Catholic Church

pronouncements and institutional practices with which they disagree. This engagement

enables them to further clarify their own identity. Her findings "illustrate the complex

and multifaceted nature of individual experiences, the importance of shared group

membership in both anchoring and mobilizing individuals, and the differentiated nature

of the Catholic Church as both a doctrinal tradition and an institutional environment"

(Dillon 1999, 242).

My dialogue partners, while still considering themselves Catholic, also wrestle

with Church pronouncements with which they disagree. Among other things, this informs

their identity.[33] Practical theology examines the reality in which people live. Matt's

reality, given his life experiences, leads him to disagree with his understanding of the

Church teaching.

> You know, I'll tell you what, the first thing that really, when I began to
> question something was when my older sister got married to this nice
> guy. I was about four or five years old when she got married, so he was
> always around. He was like a big brother. He wasn't Catholic. I'm not sure
> what religion he was, but we learned as kids, like Oh, my God, if you're not
> a Catholic then something is wrong. So, that's not fair. This guy is nice. He's
> a nice guy, he doesn't go to Church like we do, but he's around and he's a nice
> guy. And then I started wondering, that was the first big question I had so, like
> why should he be punished? (Matt 2009)

Miriam is a Catholic woman who describes herself as traditional and who sought

ordination in the Catholic Womanpriest movement. Her experiences too have shaped her

faith response and lead her to continue to worship in a Catholic community as well as to

lead her own community.

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[33] Chapter 3 suggests that human identity and anthropology begins with the person as a relational being.

It's my Church, you're not going to take me out. I was born and raised in
this family and who are you to tell me that I can't be Catholic. Who are you
to tell me that my grandmother and my grandfather, all these people who brought
me up, surrounded me with love? No, the Church is saying to me, and I want
you to put this in your thesis. The Church is exactly saying to me, "I do not
exist. They have no record of me." There is a women who is working on a
large article on me and she called the archdiocese which is really around the
corner in that building, yes in that building right there. She called the arch-
diocese and said she would like to have an opposite viewpoint. "She does
not exist," is what they said. She said, "Oh really, I just had an interview
with her." They said, "Well that might be you, but as far as we are concerned,
she does not exist." I don't think you can get any more marginalized that that.
Well, I guess I'm a figment of my own imagination and if I am, I can do anything
I want, right? And what I want is to be God's witness. And so that's what I'm
doing and I'm a priest. (Miriam 2009)

These phenomenological studies begin to give detail of the reasons for

marginality. Yet, the dynamics of life on the margins are still difficult to discern. How do

people sustain their faith? Are people continuing corporate worship? How do they define

and live their own marginality? How do they understand their lives on the margins of the

Catholic Church?

Catholics Once Active, But Now Gone

One study, the earliest model of directing its attention to people who were once

active in the Catholic Church and who left, is an in-depth phenomenological study

utilizing interviews by Robert Dixon. His work, commissioned by the Australian Catholic

Bishops, seeks to address the gap in current research to learn the reasons why Catholics'

attendance at Mass is decreasing, whether Catholics still describe themselves as

belonging to the Catholic Church, and to discover if there are any factors that could

attract these Catholics to begin attending Mass again (Dixon 2007). His research team

interviewed forty-one Catholics, age twenty five and above, once active and engaged in

their Church. The interviewed people, identified by their parish council, were because of

no longer attending weekly Catholic Mass. Participants' participation was obtained with the help of the parish councils in their former parishes. His research includes the participants' voices, his own voice, and that of fellow researchers in comments in the summary narrative. Dixon's data, which reflects the social context of Australia, reveals a variety of factors that lead to a gradual decline in Church attendance. Participants often voice disagreement with the Church's teaching or policies, the irrelevance of the Church to a person's life, or disappointment with various aspects of the Church's performance including issues of misuse of power. While these are major reasons for a cessation of attendance at Mass, often smaller issues also lead to the final decision to stop Church attendance (Dixon 2007).

Grounding Understanding in the Lived Experiences of the Margins

There is relatively little phenomenological research in the margins of the Catholic Church to help us understand the life-worlds on the margins of the Church. The research to date indicates shifts in church attendance and participation, marked by decreasing Catholic involvement. Such studies however give little information about the context of the margins, the meaning and relevance of marginality. This gap in research, reflecting a lack of dialogue with those on the margin, beckons practical theology.[34] Practical theology research attends to the shifts in the contemporary situation in a fluid, situational, continuous process, allowing the past and present to meet in new ways (Fulkerson 2007, 234). It guides its action toward individual and social transformation (Browning 1996, 36). One of the transformations of a theology of marginality is that marginal persons

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[34] Fulkerson notes that feminist theology has an orientation toward transformation (1994). She cites Fiorenza in her insistence that a sense of knowing is a positioned and value judgment, but also an issue of praxis that insists on an action orientation. She also notes Russell's treatment of feminist theology as praxis, "action that is concurrent with reflection or analysis and leads to new questions, actions and reflections, it is a change in society" (Fulkerson 1994, 39).

move to an understanding of themselves as *in-beyond* people who can hold both being in the margins and the center together without merging these identities into one. Living *in-beyond* does not mean a person on the margins is free of the different worlds in which people exist, but rather lives in both of them without being bound by either of them (Lee 1995, 63). A hermeneutics of transformation "articulates a new vision for a new humanity, a new global ecology, and a new religious community, in which relations of domination inscribed in texts, traditions, and everyday life are transformed by God's power at work in a community of believers into relationships of equality, dignity, and mutuality" (Reid 2007, 6).[35]

A Perspective of Understanding and Living Faith

Dialogue with those on the margins of the Catholic Church grounds practical theology research in the lived experiences of those on the margins. It provides a perspective of the contribution of those on the margins to the ways we understand and live religion in the Catholic Church in the United States, as our traditions are being shaped in the context and circumstances of the world today. "The task is to fund, to provide the pieces, the materials and resources out of which a new world can be imagined. Our responsibility then, is not a grand scheme or coherent system, but the voicing of a lot of little pieces out of which people can put life together in fresh configurations" (Brueggemann 1993, 20). Ted's comments point the way for the dialogue that is necessary.

> I think it's important that there be room for listening and that there is some action done. If there is a call, there needs to be a response, a couple of things here. I would like to see what they did in South America, South Africa about truth and

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[35] Biblical theologian Barbara Reid utilizes seven steps in Biblical interpretation for exploration of all hermeneutic steps, including the hermeneutics of transformation from feminist, liberation perspectives. See *Taking Up the Cross: New Testament Interpretations through Latina and Feminist Eyes* (2007).

reconciliation. That needs to happen, even in the St. ____ community, they say, "You guys that are upset about this, you need to get over it." Well, we didn't get over it when we had a racist priest and the whole parish marched down to the Archdiocese in the late sixties, and we're still talking about that. This disconnection or feeling of being alienated is just as powerful and it's very painful. So I think that's one thing that could happen, just to name that there is this disconnection. We need to seek to understand and we need to understand it together. Well that's just one thing, if the Church would do that, that would at least start the process of reconnecting and even if for the reason for clearing in the communities the negativity and the pain, even if just for that, even if people don't come back it's creating a space to clear this negative stuff that just hangs on us so that we all can move on. (Ted 2009)

My practical theology research tries to do just this – to seek to understand the margins of the Church together with those on the margins of the Church.

Dialoguing on the Margins: Practical Theology Reciprocal Ethnography

Trinitarian Reciprocal Practical Theology Method

The practical theology method used in this research is cross-disciplinary in its methodological foundation and dialogic and reciprocal in its method. The doctrine of God as Trinity provides a theological foundation for the relational nature. I understand my practical theology method as praxis-centered, active dialogue that does not seek consensus, privileging multiple voices. Each stage progresses in dialogue with my dialogue partners, and in dialogue with four sources for practical theology: experience, tradition, reason, and the social sciences (Osmer 2005, 307). As a practical theologian I began each dialogue with my dialogue partners and with the multiple disciplines with which I am working with prayer, a dialogue with God. I sought to be open to the engagement of the Holy Spirit in the great mystery that the experiences of our daily lives reveal and prayed with hope that transformation, however that might look, will be possible out of this experience.

My practical theology research seeks the empowerment of those on the margins of the Church. It pays attention to the differences of each person's narrative as a means for identifying where the narrative threads reveal a new creative core developing. Its design is a feminist, reciprocal ethnography (Lawless 1993).[36] The knowledge shared and built in this method is based on dialogue in a collaborative, multi-voiced model. Ethnography asks questions about the lived experiences, daily lives and social context of groups of people, attempting to understand the 'life-world' of the margins of the Church, using the self to do so. In reciprocal ethnography the participants, as dialogue partners, ask and answer these questions as well. Reciprocal ethnography deepens the hermeneutical epistemology and furthers knowledge construction rather than affirming what I think I know. Both interviews and focus group experiences provide phenomenological research data

My dialogue with dialogue partners consisted of semi-structured dialogues, audio-recorded, lasting approximately one hour. I exercised my own judgment and sought the participant's judgment about what is significant in both the interviews and the transcripts (Seidman 1998, 100). Many dialogue partners came to the conversation having reflected on the question themes that I had previously sent them, with points they wanted to emphasize to me. I received e-mail after the interviews with additional thoughts about the questions from several dialogue partners. Our conversations included discussion of the dialogue partners' involvement in their Church, and the process of ceasing attendance and their current attitudes about Church. Dialogue included my dialogue partners' discussion

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[36] Elaine Lawless first used the term reciprocal ethnography to indicate research that involved the participants she was observing (Lawlwss1993).

of their faith journey, any names they might call themselves indicating their space on the

margins of the Church, and factors which might lead them to a Church in the future.[37]

*Are You On the Margins of the **Institutional** Catholic Church? I Want Your Voice to Be*

Heard!

Dialogue partners answered advertisements in Craigslist and local newspapers, or

e-mails sent by progressive Catholic organizations such as Call To Action.[38] None of the

Craigslist or local newspaper advertisements generated dialogue partners who expressed

their marginality as stemming from a wish for a more conservative Church. In the

Northeast the advertisements placed in Craigslist and local newspapers initially produced

only a couple of people volunteering to be dialogue partners. I changed the

advertisement.[39] Two changes motivated people to call according to their report. I added

the statement "Let your voice be heard." I specified understanding the space on the

margins as on the margins from the mainstream, *institutionalized* Catholic Church. A

snowball strategy with dialogue partners recruiting other dialogue partners then generated

sixteen e-mails within thirty-six hours and eleven dialogue partners.

Making Knowledge Together

I facilitated two in-depth communal dialogues in focus groups once the themes of

the dialogue were identified. "The hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of group

interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the

interaction found in the group" (Hesse-Biber, Nagy, and Leavy 2007, 277). Focus groups

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[37] See Appendix C for the semi-structured interview guide I use. These questions were similar to those used by Robert Dixon in his study in Australia. Although my research questions are similar to Dixon's and there are similarities in our methods, my study also differs methodologically from Dixon's, giving more attention to phenomenological and theological considerations.

[38] See Appendix E for advertising copy.

[39] See Appendix E for advertising copy.

are beneficial in drawing out opinions on marginality as well as useful in addressing limitations of analysis (Hesse-Biber 2007). The two focus groups consisted of dialogue partners who are on the margins of the Church who, once interviewed, expressed an interest in conversation in these groups. After interview dialogue was coded for main themes and sub-themes, focus groups allowed for the theological reflection and social analysis of data generated from the dialogic interviews. Focus groups gathered twice, once in the South and once in the Midwest. All dialogue partners in driving distance to the focus group were invited to participate. Participants dialogued together, looking at themes and sub-themes from the dialogues and linking them relationally in a way that expresses their understanding of the experience of marginality in the Catholic Church. This process allows for theological reflection and social analysis of data generated from the dialogic interviews. It ensures that my dialogue partners are involved in making practical theology knowledge.

Awareness of the Effects of Context and Environment

I recorded reflections after each dialogue, and kept a journal in an attempt to identify biases and assumptions, in an attempt to practice 'holistic reflexivity' (Hesse-Biber 2007, 496). I also explored how my own theoretical position and biography has affected my choice of dialogue partners and topics. I am attentive to my own structural, political, and cultural context and that of my participants throughout the dialogue process with my dialogue partners. My environment and context affects the research process and product. For that reason, I have worked to be fully transparent regarding my environment and context and to treat that as part of the data (Hesse-Biber 2007, 496).

Who's Who in Dialogue

Then I Started Doing Some Reading, Which is a Dangerous Thing

As young parents do, we had our children baptized. My faith life started to grow again as I started to be involved in their education. I started out teaching CCD at First Communion prep. I did Youth Group, as my kids grew. I was involved in liturgy, I was a, you know, a communion and a cup server, and I was on the liturgy committee. I was on the faith development committee. I was on all of the commissions except for Parish Council because I didn't want to be involved in the politics. And at some point my pastor said, "You know, you can do this for a living. Why don't you go back to school and get your M.Div. and do this? You obviously have a bent for it." And so I did. (Jane 2009)

I went back for theology and philosophy credits and then decided to put it into a Ph.D. and ended up doing up the Masters in Counseling. Before I applied for the Ph.D., I went for a second Masters in Divinity. But the Pope came over here and shook his finger at Sister Theresa Kane, that famous time, because she said in Abigail Adams' words, "Remember the women."[40] It was mild, totally mild, and he shook his finger at her. We were all watching this and I thought, "Oh, my God, I can't use this Masters of Divinity in the Church. I went on a retreat and I said, what the heck am I going to do? And so I thought, "Hey, I get the courses free so go for the Ph.D. in Counseling." I was finishing up my Masters in Divinity when I was also accepted in the PhD. program, so I was doing a year's worth of work on both at the same time and finished up the Ph.D seven years later. (Jean 2009)

Table 3: Dialogue Partners' Education

Generation (Age Range)	Percentage of Dialogue Partners	Total by Generation	Percentage with College Degrees	Total with College Degrees	Degrees in Theology/ M.Div	Total Degrees in Theology/ M.Div.
Pre-Vatican II (70+)	30%	15	80%	12	40%	6
Vatican II (50-69)	32%	16	87.5%	14	25%	4

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[40] In 1979, Sister Theresa Kane addressed the Pope in his visit to the United States. "As women we have heard the powerful message of our church addressing the dignity and reverence of all persons. As women we have pondered these words. Our contemplation leads us to state that the church in its struggle to be faithful to its call for reverence and dignity for all persons must respond by providing the possibility of women as persons being included in all ministries of the church." The Pope was visibly annoyed (Jones 2000).

Post-Vatican II (30-49)	22%	11	54.5%	6	0	0
Post-Vatican II - Millennial Generation (18-29)	16%	8	87.5%	7	14%	1
Total	50	50	78%	39	22%	11

Like Jane and Jackie, my dialogue partners as a group are very well educated. Along with the eleven who have degrees in theology or divinity, many were active in Church ministries and participated in the conventions and training that often comes with such involvement. Many dialogue partners, like Bill, mentioned education, its importance, and its effect on opening them to new ideas.

> Listening to other people's stories and some people welcoming us to share our story, where we were and where we thought we were going; and asking for their guidance, their wisdom. It was an incredibly enriching experience, and I think that was one of the turning points to experience that. I think it began to raise questions in my mind and then I started doing some reading which is a dangerous thing, you know, you start looking at stuff. Suddenly, the scripture classes that I'd been taking, New Testament and primarily the Gospels, the whole contemporary scripture scholarship – You can't really say, "Well, it's in the Bible, this is what really happened." I went to hear a couple of lectures by Ray Brown a couple of years ago, and then I had a Gospel of Luke class and things just started clicking. So, between that and then my own life experience, reading a little bit of the history of the church. When you start reading, and whether it's the whole notion of celibacy, the history of ministry in the church, you start studying about the early church, the life of the early church and what those early church communities looked like and sounded like, who was doing what, you start questioning and you start saying, why? Somehow, I guess my understanding is that the hierarchy would like us to remain in the first century Palestinian mindset and culture and I don't think that's what Jesus really intended. I think Jesus intended that we live in today, and we're now in the 21st century. (Bill 2009)

Education does not cause marginality. Rather, "Christian thinking arises in an organic way out of Christian life in order to address problems" (Fulkerson 2007, 233). Education affects our practices and evokes responses. My dialogue partners address the

experiences of their lives with creative thinking that is formed by a combination of their theological, cultural, political and autobiographical convictions. The high education level of my dialogue partners is reflected in their knowledge of Church structure and theological issues.

Living Faithfully

Most of my dialogue partners were active and involved Catholics in their parishes rather than "Sunday only" Catholics. My dialogue partners are lay, ordained, and religious. Their ministries ranged from spiritual direction, religious education, and prayer ministries to serving as liturgical and Eucharistic ministers, retreat work, and leading a number of Church programs. A number served on their parish councils. Peace and justice work, particularly work with the homeless and hungry, is extremely important to the majority of my dialogue partners. Their social justice ministries continue as my dialogue partners live on the margins of the Church. One participant is a retired priest in good standing, two are religious sisters, and three were priests who had sought and were granted laicization in order to marry.

A Window into the Reality of the Margins of the Catholic Church

This brief sketch of the available literature about people on the margins of the Church life, my own practical theology research, and my dialogue partners provides a small window into the reality of marginality today. In connection with my dialogue partners, a picture emerges of people who are well educated, active at one time in their Church, still active in peace and justice work, and claiming their catholicity by entering into a conversation with a practical theologian whom they had never met.

The next chapter builds from this chapter's empirical grounding to a more theoretical look at marginality. Developing a theology of marginality, Chapter 2 makes marginality central to imagining the creative potential available from the diversity and difference that moves people to the margins. Drawing from this theology of marginality and on-going engagement with my dialogue partners, I continue by linking Trinitarian theology, neuroscience, and communication theory to propose an anthropology that is relational and dialogic (Chapter 3). A Trinitarian ecclesiology informed by pneumatology suggests in turn, a transformative vision of catholicity, communion, and dialogic communication. I add to this a conversation on models of Church (Chapter 4). Building on these dialogues on marginality, anthropology, and ecclesiology, I offer a discussion of practical theology and a cross-disciplinary methodology that emphasizes praxis and multiple voices follows (Chapter 5). Next I explore the implications of a hermeneutical understanding of dialogue that does not seek agreement to practical theology (Chapter 6). Appreciating the fact that my dialogue partners on the margins of the Catholic Church are defining a space for themselves in a Church whose leaders do not define a space for them, a final discussion with my dialogue partners' concerns the implications of this dialogue to our understanding of the margins of the Catholic Church (Chapter 7). I conclude with suggestions for the future (Chapter 8).

> I don't know where the margin starts. You know, we're a minority, but minorities are not always marginalized. Sometimes they are the essence. The margins are where the change, the potential lies. It's all evolving. I might be marginalized and someone else might be way ahead of me. You have to catch up. Hey, wait for me, I'm your leader! So margins change. (Colleen 2009)[41]

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[41] It is remarkable that Colleen's comment emphasizing that margins are the places of change and potential coincides with Pope Benedict's own suggestions of the importance creative minorities in this pluralistic postmodern moment. English historian Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975) suggested that creative minorities are able to generate the ideas and methods for meeting the challenges of today's world. These ideas and methods are then adopted by the majorities. See http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/toynbee.html

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Exploring the *Both-And* of the Margins

I think my spirituality and my practice is (pause). I think where I am is more the center of the true Church than where the current institutional Church is. (Kellie 2009)

I guess I should say I was aware that we were outside the box but not how far. I was not aware of how much an exception we were, but I was aware that we were exceptional. Maybe more than I thought about previously. Yeah, I'm not outside the box and I am outside the box. It is the same. But now doing what feels right, and what feels like a life in the Gospel, and feels like what I was raised to think was important doesn't happen to match up with the box. (Anne 2009)

When you said margin, I saw myself there but you're out there, you're on the edge, you are barely a part of this big thing, so that's how I would translate it. (Sarah 2009)

Kellie, Anne, and Sarah describe the margins of the Church differently. Kellie and Sarah understand the margins in relation to the center. Anne sees the margins as a *both-and* place that is both in the center and in the margin.[42] These different perspectives affect the meaning of margins for those in them. The particular perspective of the margins taken by those on the margins and by the readers, whether oriented from the center or the margin, determines the meaning drawn from their narratives.

While Chapter 1 and the dialogue of my conversation partners presents information about the lived experiences on the margins, this chapter's primary focus is a deeper understanding of the margins through the work of theologians and other theorists. They add to the dialogue by helping to critically advance our thinking about the context of the margins. Following a consideration of the concept of 'margin' as contextually formed, embodied practices, I consider the theology of marginality of Jung Young Lee,

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[42] I am choosing to write *both-and* with a hyphen rather than both/and, acknowledging the liminal space that is present on the margins with the understanding of being in both the margins and the center simultaneously.

an Asian-American theologian. Lee's theology is rooted in the contextual, the

autobiographical, and narrative. Exploration of a theology of marginality provides an

understanding of the margins as *both-and* places that have the potential to move to the in-

beyond creative space by bringing about inclusive relationship and an honoring of

difference. Grounding the perspectives of the margins with this theology develops the

narrative and allows further meaning and relationships to be discerned. Finally, the

concept of the chronotope provides a creative space where dialogue on the margins

acquires meaning in relation to the interaction of each person and each community's

experiences in space and time (Bakhtin 1981, 84-85).[43]

Naming the Context

> Something you said struck me, 'Let your voice be heard.' (James 2009)

> I would be interested in meeting with you. I'm a very appreciative graduate of
> Catholic schools where I learned values that have sustained me all these years.
> Also, I'm grateful for my wonderful childhood in a Catholic home. Like many of
> my friends, I feel betrayed by the institutional Church. "Power corrupts" is an apt
> adage for the leaders of both my Church and my country. It's crucial, I feel, to
> distinguish between Church leaders and the Catholic community....(Potential
> dialogue partner 2009)[44]

> I sit at the computer in a strange city clicking on an empty e-mail box, again. In

three weeks I will arrive in another state for more dialogues with those on the margins.

With airline tickets and car reserved, I have exactly two interviews scheduled. Are there

people on the margins of the Church in this area willing to dialogue? Today, a dialogue

partner described the context of her city, "People here are very, very closed in terms of

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[43] Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) is a Russian communication theorist, philosopher and literary critic. He
lived through extraordinary times in Russia. Born in 1895, he survived the 1917 Russian Revolution, the
Civil War afterwards, the Stalinist repression, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the Cold War, the
years of Khrushchev and Brezhnev (Dentith 1995, 1-21; Emerson 1997, 3-23; Green 2000, 11-23). He led a
scholarly life despite his exile to Kazakhstan, and his poor health due to a debilitating bone disease,
ostomyelitis (Clark and Holquist 1984, 254; Emerson 1997, 3, 70, 123).

[44] This dialogue partner continues to attend Mass and so is not among the fifty dialogue partners with
whom I conversed.

who they are. Don't get me wrong, they are very warm and welcoming to people who are

visiting, but when it comes to baring their laundry and talking about things, you almost

have to be inside the circle, in order for you to be acceptable for them to give you an

opinion." I wonder, 'Is this happening in ___?' I consider my own context as a woman,

my journey learning to speak up when necessary and gaining my voice. I rewrite my

Craigslist invitation to dialogue. I add, "Let your voice to be heard." Another dialogue

partner explains his context to me. He is on the margins of the institutional Church, but

not on the margins of the Church understood as People of God. Do I need to specify the

context more explicitly in my invitation for this area of the country? I tweak my

Craigslist invitation specifying understanding the space on the margins as on the margins

from the mainstream *institutionalized* Catholic Church. Context matters. I receive sixteen

e-mails in thirty-six hours. Eleven become dialogue partners.

Context: Space and Time

> I lived in a Catholic community and the Church played an important social role in
> the community as well as a religious role in society. The social activity in the
> town revolved around the Church and some of the organizations of the Church
> like the Knights of Columbus and the Altar Society. My dad was very active. The
> whole psyche and psychology of everyone in this country was different. You
> helped your fellow man. My folks would get together with others and fill a box
> with food and canned goods and leave it out on the porch, knock and run off so
> they would not be beholden. We were raised with the Church and the belief of
> "Love your neighbor as yourself," and "Be your brother's keeper." Church was
> the center of your life. (Max 2009)

> Interestingly this is a rising issue in the twenty-first century. There are so many
> different perspectives out there, and so many different religions for that matter. It
> is tough to believe that, "Oh, I was just fortunate to be born and brought up in the
> right one." Ok, I don't think the Catholic Church really teaches this, but in some
> of the religions if you're not following our exact teachings, then you're not going
> to go to heaven. I never got the impression that was the teaching of the Church –
> maybe if you're not Christian you're not going to heaven. I really have a hard
> time with the line between these people who are going to be saved and these
> people who aren't. It doesn't necessarily determine whether you are a good

person or not. To me, that's the ultimate question. Salvation or after life, if that exists, would be based on the quality of your life and how good a person you are and how you have treated others, not necessarily if you were taught XYz and if you followed them. (Terry 2009)

Born in the 1920s, Max grew up in a small town where the Church was the center of society. Terry was raised in the 1980's-1990's when life and the world were in many ways more complex. In both cases one can understand the margins in terms of specific questions of culture, social relationships, and politics. Context matters when examining the perspectives of those on the margins.

Postmodernity: Influencing Our Language and Historicizing Our Imagination

For people on the margins and for practical theologians as well, conversations about the margins reflect a sense of belonging to the traditions in the past and the present, a critique of these traditions, and the ability to hold both in tension. Larger socio-cultural movements influence language and historicize our imagination.[45] Rapidly changing technology, a global economy, and accessible movement across the globe provide a context of increasing pluralism, difference, and diversity. These suggest a postmodern milieu.

Postmodernity can be defined in part as a reaction to the modern age of Western culture. The endorsement of universal reason, its assertion of an unchanging and absolute truth, and its ignorance of power relations inherent in relationships typify the modern age (Davaney 2006, 141). The theological understanding that humans "live within multiple historical trajectories, organizing and interpreting [our] lives out of plural sets of

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[45] Theologian Sheila Greeve Davaney proposes a pragmatic historicism that understands experiences in their broader social, political, and intellectual contexts. This movement rejects permanence and absoluteness, and insists on self-criticism and continuing revision of its claims and conclusions. It is situated in the wider understanding of the contexts of embodiment and language. Language and ideas reflects the embodied selves in the physical universe. Power affects both (Davaney 2000; McFague 1993; West 1989; Dean 1991).

influences, not singular points to which all other values, commitments, and convictions
are subordinated" confronts modernity's understandings (Davaney 2006, 141).[46] The
meaning of postmodernity varies, but the literature agrees that it is a moment in time in
which historical and systematic shifts in social arena, culture, and theory react to the
modern age of Western civilization (Fergusen and Wicke 1994, 2). Today's postmodern
society challenges a monochromatic view of the world. The margins in this postmodern
view are not a single place or even a single lived experience; rather, margins consist of
multiple experiences and multiple dialogues which exist side by side rather than merging
into each other (Bakhtin 1984, 289). The margins reflect a place of shared dialogue, a
postmodern place.

> I'm not under the umbrella of the teeny-tiny Catholic Church, but I consider
> myself under the umbrella of the broader universal Church; certainly not under
> the smaller umbrella of the hierarchical Church. On the other hand, I think Christ
> called us to live a certain kind of life. I think that lots of different people, lots of
> different groups who are doing that. (Cindy 2009)

Framing the Margins: A Gathering of Embodied Practices

Can the margin of the Church exist as postmodern place? Rather than being a
geographical location, postmodern place denotes a territory of meaning – an embodied
gathering that frames a contemporary situation (Fulkerson 2007, 28).[47] The margin of the
Church as postmodern place consists of people who are making meaning out of their

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[46] Modernity counters any monopolizing view of the self with logical, explicable principles. Modernity is
basically about order: about rationality and rationalization, bringing order from chaos. "The assumption is
that creating more rationality is conducive to creating more order, and that the more ordered a society is,
the better it will function (the more rationally it will function)" (Klages 2007). "In postmodernity, we are
left with the task to utilize the relative and "multi-relational" nature of knowledge to unite the disjointed
fragments of legacies from relevant academic canons so that we can confront the issue of self-
understanding squarely" (Lui 2009, 13). *See* David 1989 also.

[47] Practical theologian Mary McClintock Fulkerson's work on postmodern place frames this conversation
about the margins, allowing these margins to be seen as contextualized, fluid, grace-filled places where the
Spirit of God is at work in the reality of people's experiences. Her book, *Places of Redemption: Theology
for a Worldly Church* (2007) provides a full discussion of postmodern place theory and its benefits for
practical theology in conjunction with her exploration of practices in an interracial church.

lived experiences. It cannot be defined narrowly as an *either* "in the church" *or* "out of the church" place. This defines the margins in traditional ways, from the institutional center. "The complexity of place has forced the analysis away from common markers such as institutions, fixed beliefs, or unchanging practices as the indicator for normative ecclesial 'boundaries'" (Fulkerson 2007, 254).

The margins of the Church are produced by their practices.[48] Feelings and narratives provide a unity of place that holds diversity and division, as well as complementarities with both those on the margins of the Church and those in the institutionalized or hierarchical Church. Both centrifugal and centripetal forces emerge in this embodied place by bringing fluidity and characterizing it by constant process (Fulkerson 2007, 35-36). A theological reflection on the postmodern place of the margins insists on close attention to the bodily continuum of the experience and emphasizes the essential need for attending to the marginalizing differences (Fulkerson 2007, 232-252). Practices in the church through the culturally marked bodies of participants bring people face to face in communication with each other.

"Hermeneutics shows that the model of conversation remains the central hope for recognizing the possibilities which any serious conversation with the claim to attention of the other and the different yields" (Tracy 1989, 562). [49] An awareness of marginalizing differences takes into account diverse interpretations in theological thought, the diverse voices, the assortment of feelings, and the multiplicity of narratives of those who are on

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[48] Sociologist, anthropologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) brings an understanding of practices as habitus which is embodied, socially, culturally, and politically shaped (Fulkerson 2007, 36-38).
[49] David Tracy, in his seminal theological work, *Plurality and Ambiguity* (1987) discusses conversation in ways that are pertinent to a deeper understanding of the margins. "Conversation is a game with some hard rules: say only what you mean; say it as accurately as you can; listen to and respect what the other says, however different or other; be willing to correct or defend your opinions if challenged by the conversation partner; be willing to argue if necessary, to confront if demanded, to endure necessary conflict, to change your mind if the evidence suggests it" (Tracy 1987, 19).

the margins of the Church. This awareness brings a recognition that "theological discourse, like any other, is marked, not neutral, and as such inevitably reproduces the shape of the world *as it is experienced by dominant populations*" (Fulkerson 2007, 254; Fulkerson's italics).

The use of language reflects hermeneutic understanding of social locations and traditions. Historical context influences these hermeneutic interpretations making them both changeable and fragile. "We are products of historical processes that we both inherit and transform and therefore, we are thoroughly situated beings located within particular strands of history" (Davaney 2000, 2).[50] Conceptions of the past interconnect with interpretations that include our present understandings, our values and commitments.[51] The time in which we are living cannot be understood as totally different and disconnected from the past. It can be understood instead as constituted by that past and open to transformation in the present.[52] Dan gives an example.

> You and I sitting here, is essentially according to what I, anyway, think is essentially unconscious. But we acted. It forms our vision. And so then, we try to understand the context of our vision. And when we do that we get a sense of our contemporary culture and the sense of the society we live in. With that in mind, I am suggesting that, the way that I experience the hierarchy today, I am expected to deny that vision and deny the culture that I live in and the kind of society I live in, to deny the myths or the symbols of my vision. And I am supposed to leave it

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[50] This is reflective of the theological reflection of pragmatic historicism. It "grounds itself in the assumption that human beings, as biological and cultural creatures, reside within the complex fabric of interwoven realities, realities that depend upon both each other and the fabric as a whole to exist, survive and flourish" (Hopkins and Davaney 1996, 35). This approach to theology determines responses and actions in the larger religious, cultural, and intellectual world of today.

[51] "Languages are philosophies not abstract but concrete, social philosophies, penetrated by a system of values inseparable from living practice and class struggle" (Bakhtin 1984 b, 471). Philosopher John Macmurray (1891-1976), understanding the self as always in relationship, points to the power of communication as the capability to understand. Our power to communicate is "the capacity to enter into reciprocal communication with others" (MacMurray 1961, 60).

[52] This context begins with the assumption that we are historical people that exist in natural and cultural contexts. These historical contexts become the "product of intricate conscious and unconscious processes whereby the element of a given past and the contending dimensions of the current setting together result in distinctive configurations of historical existence" (Davaney 2000, 148). Thus, my dialogue partners reflect both modern and postmodern movements in their conversations.

outside the Church as I walk in the Church door, so that I can adapt a pre-seventeenth century language. It is clearly Galileo revisited, and to me these are intelligent people. (Dan 2009)

Language of the Margins: Formed by the Past and Open to Transformation in the Present

Belonging and Non-Belonging: Toward a Creative In-Between?

In defining the margins, practical theologian Terry Veling proposes a hermeneutics that allows people to understand their experience of belonging and non-belonging to a tradition through a critique of their beliefs about the tradition that he terms dialogic hermeneutics (Veling 1996, 18). This critique allows their experience of non-belonging to give rise to a hermeneutics of suspicion – exilic hermeneutics – and allows them to ponder both the belonging and non-belonging, permitting a creative in-between – marginal hermeneutics (Veling 1996, 18-20). Definitions and names of the margins form dynamically in social, political, and cultural contexts, often proposed by those in the center. [53] Yet, critique of these definitions and names allows those in the margins to participate in defining and naming the place of the margins. This place takes on creative potential becoming fluid places where the margins can change to the center and back to the margins again. Place is an always moving phenomenon where God's redemptive transformation allows the reality of God to be seen (Fulkerson 2007, 254). In this creativity, marginal place is the opening in which hermeneutics begins and ends – forms and reforms. One of the goals of this practical theology work is to bring forth the voices of those living on the margins of the Catholic Church to begin to define their own

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[53] Language is a fragile body, capable of forming a world. Maurice Merleau Ponty (1908-1961) adds to this concept with his phenomenological philosophy that argues for significance of the lived, existential body in the relationship between subject and object, self and world. He emphasizes the integral nature of the embodied self in the world."In any case, once a *body*-world relationship is recognized, there is a ramification of my body and a ramification of my world and a correspondence between its inside and my outside, between my inside and its outside" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 15).

understandings of this creative potential in their marginality. Jane's narrative is an example of one voice discussing both belonging and non-belonging.

> Anger is healthy and I think I feel let down by the Church as much as I know how systems are not, the Church was never nimble. But there's, there's something about the tradition that still speaks to me and when I get back to that and all the other stuff; it, there's great joy in that mystery, that unknowing, and being in touch with that. (Jane 2009)

In sum, a marginal hermeneutics invites belonging and non-belonging to exist side by side, holding the paradox. The embodied hermeneutic of postmodern place invites the voices of difference to participate in naming and defining the margins of the Church. I turn now to definitions of the margin, looking for the variety of definitions of margins, understanding they may be defined from the center. This undergirds the contemporary experience of margins providing clues to the past and opening the margins for transformation in the present.

What's in the Word 'Margin?'

Different words for the margins, including margin, marginal, and marginality emerged at different times in history. The meaning of the word 'margin' changed since its first use during the Middle Ages. *Margin* was first used in the fourteenth century to mean a border space. The word 'marginal' was later applied to an individual or social group isolated from, or nonconforming to, the dominant society or culture, and was used as an economic term in 1926, indicating of little effect or importance. Gradually, modern culture began to accept that people on the margin are marginalized in the economic, cultural, and political aspects of their lives, unable to contribute in important areas of society. Today, marginality, a dynamic word, has been defined spatially as "straddling

two different concrete areas, sharing something of both but belonging entirely to neither"
(Meier 1991, 7).

Marginality

Janice Perlman worked in the late 1960's in Brazil to understand the 'myth of
marginality,' the myth that those on the margins are unable to contribute in important
areas of society. She discredited this idea by finding that those on the economic margins
due to poverty in fact contributed to society. However, they did not benefit from the
goods and services of the society and instead were manipulated, suppressed, and
exploited (Perlman 1976).[54] The myth of marginality benefited the status quo by creating
the perception that the poor are incapable of such contribution.

Perlman's study suggests questions about contributions of others on the margins
as well, including those on the margins of the Catholic Church. It suggests a need to ask
questions concerning attitudes that correlate the place on the margins of the Church with
lack of contribution by people on the margins. This leads to an exploration of the
dynamics of marginality and relationship on the margins of the Church. In what ways do
people on the margins and the dynamics of marginality related to the dynamics of the
larger Church contribute to the larger institutional Church?

Marginalizing Giving Way to Exclusion?

Perlman includes exclusion in the experience of being marginalized. Exclusion
puts people outside the margins and making them non-existent (Mette 2009, 93-94)[55]

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[54] Perlman, founder and president of the Megacities project, and professor of urban and regional planning, received numerous awards for her work and book *The Myth of Marginality*, is considered one of the most important books on urban studies in the last 40 years. Her work reiterates the necessity of understanding that too often the margin is defined by those in political, cultural, or social power (Perlman 1976).
[55] Practical theologian Norbert Mette is at Dortmund University's Institute of Catholic Theology in Germany.

Perlman argues that the "factors of power relations, agency, culture and social identities come into play [in exclusion], an environment in which individuals do not have access to public resources, as a result they are able to contribute but not able to receive" (Perlman 2005, 12). Perlman states that since the 1990's, the myth of marginality is the reality of marginality for the poor, particularly the poor in Brazil whom she studied. Similarly, practical theologian, Norbert Mette suggests that exclusion replaces marginality with nonexistence. Because exclusion declares human beings superfluous, their ability to participate and contribute in the social life of the community is taken away (Mette 2009, 96). Mette proposes that exclusion "does matter to Christians especially…This exclusion does not only refer to Christians but also to members of other religions and philosophies of life. Therefore a dialogue with these members is necessary and cooperation in solidarity. Common matter must be to put up resistance against the fact that human beings are declared excluded and unnecessary and to insist on the fundamental dignity of every human being" (Mette 2009, 96).

Changing Things with Your Feet or Your Money

Michel de Certeau adds to the concept of marginality by rooting it in modernity's emphasis on consumerism.[56] Marginality today is "no longer limited to minority groups, but is rather massive and pervasive, this cultural activity of the non-producers of culture...Marginality is becoming universal. A marginal group has now become a silent majority" (Certeau 1980, xvii). This definition exposes the hidden power relations of production and its effect - marginalization. For Certeau, consumption is really production

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[56] Michel de Certeau (1925-1986), French Jesuit philosopher, proposes that a representation of everyday practice is necessary to understand the way people who are marginalized superimpose their own practices on cultural systems that would "use' groups or individuals (Certeau 1980, 64). While Certeau wrote in modern times, his analysis is still an important one today in consumerist, individualistic culture.

because its expression is through the many ways that the dominant economic order

imposes use of products. People on the margins, from their place on the margins,

reinterpret and appropriate the uses of the production in ways different than the culture

would demand in their everyday life. My dialogue partners approached this idea of

marginality in two ways. First, they superimposed their practice of withholding

contributions to the church as a means of expressing discontent by challenging the

cultural expectation for support of Church. Cindy and Julian provide examples.

> I really think the only true way to change things is either with your feet or with
> your money, and if people really left in droves and quit contributing, I think the
> powers that be would listen a little more. (Cindy 2009)

> But the more I thought about when I am in a church and I'm going to give my
> money to a church I'm going to support I really don't want to support a church
> where woman aren't allowed to be leaders at the highest level (Julian 2009).

Secondly, dialogue partners use their economic resources in ways that are countercultural

and important to their faith beliefs. Harry is an example of this.

> You know, it all goes back to when I was thirteen or fourteen years old when I
> had my first income. I took $149 and went to the bank, got a cashier's check and
> gave it to one of the nuns at school. I said, "Use this to teach the kids in Bogotá."
> They had a mission down in Bogotá. It didn't hurt very much, and so ever since
> then I've been doing non-profit stuff and contributing. Now I'm on four non-
> profit boards. (Harry 2009)

Sites of Resistance

Writing a decade later in 1990, feminist English professor and social activist, bell

hooks describes margins differently as sites that are socially constructed for people

considered to be of no account by dominant groups. This concept of marginality is

located in the experiences of marginalized groups. These often emotional experiences

may be places for connection to other marginalized people or sites for struggle in support

of important beliefs. "I make a distinction between that marginality that is imposed by

oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as a site of resistance" (hooks

1990, 153). Both Deb and Sarah, in some ways, choose their place on the margins. Deb

wonders about life experiences that cause her to share differences of opinion with the

Church, increasing her marginality. Sarah understands her place on the margins as a

prophetic place that is a site for struggle.

> I don't know if it's that I've not found the right place, or even if as I've gotten
> older that my personal, political, whatever you want to call it, beliefs may not
> necessarily mesh in with those of the Church. The conservative values are not
> necessarily the ones that I want to believe in, just a personal preference in all the
> big issues of the Church. (Deb 2009)

> So, we had liturgy, of course, and I don't go to liturgies in my congregation
> because we neglect the inclusive language and we neglect inclusive imagery; we
> still are afraid, so I don't go anymore. This is what I do. My community knows
> that I stand in protest when we have these liturgies without inclusivity. You know,
> I do believe that a prophet is one who stands up and speaks when everybody else
> is seated and silent. And who in their right mind wants to be called a prophet?
> (Sarah 2009)

A Theology of Marginality

Moving From Either/Or to Both-And to In-beyond

Jung Young Lee[57] proposes a theology of marginality to provide another way to

understand the margins and marginality. The theology of J. Y. Lee creates a space for

dialogue in both the center and the margins. It holds promise for allowing those on the

margin of the Church to transform their negative experiences and pain into something

positive. I find Asian and Asian-American theologies rich and relevant as I continue to

learn from the blessings of diversity. Western culture is more comfortable with a dualistic

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[57]Korean American theologian, Jung Young Lee (1930-1996) developed a theology of marginality that
theologically brings together the *in-between* of both cultures, understanding himself *in-both* worlds.

mind.[58] Asian Theology, with an Eastern mindset, contributes to the ability to hold

ambiguity and paradox. This enables the ability to hold both the Christian tradition of the

past and the present together by respecting both for the contributions they make.[59] J. Y.

Lee offers his work for others to use. "While I write this to assist my own understanding

of marginality and to help determine a way to cope with my own marginal status in North

America, I hope this work may become a catalyst for others to reflect on their

experience…My study may appeal to all marginalized people" (J.Y. Lee 1995, 2).

As an adult immigrant to the United States from Korea, J. Y. Lee was often on the

margin of American society as both an Asian and an American in the United States.

These experiences caused him to insist that the self-understanding of those on the margin

is important for a full understanding of margin (Phan 1996, 414). While Lee understands

the margins from an Asian-American focus, I am trying to understand the margins of the

Catholic Church by focusing on dialogues with people on the margins of the Catholic

Church.

J. Y. Lee moves through his own autobiographical journey to share how this

understanding impacts the Christian story (J.Y. Lee 1995, 33).[60] People on the margins

live at multiple margins or centers, depending on the perspectives of those involved, as

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[58] A binary way of thinking, dividing things into opposites and choosing between them is characteristic of the Western mode of thought; the Eastern mode sees life and the opposites present not so much as in opposition or conflict, but as a part of a whole (Fox 2003, 96)

[59] It is with respect and humility that I draw on Asian Theologians who have been influential in providing wisdom and relevant perspectives for my understanding of the margins, particularly, Dr. Jung Young Lee. Choan-Seng Song's work provides the value of story (Song 1984). Chun Hyun Kyung engages with the poignant and powerful story of struggling in suffering to claim identity as one created by God (Kyung 1999). Kwok Pui-lan's work imparts a feminist post-colonial theology (Pui-lan 2005). Peter Phan provides insights into an Asian American theology (Phan 1999, Phan 2003). Finally, Chansoon Lim offers an understanding of the work of Jung Young Lee in the context of postmodernity (Lim 2003).

[60] Johann Baptist Metz (born 1928) understands theology as biography rising from an understanding of Christianity as a community that remembers and tells stories with a practical intent. It is "in [such stories that] the mystical biography of religious experience, one's life history before the hidden face of God, is inscribed into the doxography of faith" (Metz 2007, 199). This impacts my own theological understanding of the margins, bringing out the importance of the voices of the people and their narratives.

they both define their status as *either* in the center *or* in the margin, or as *both* in the margin *and* in the center at the same time. The margins, defined in the lived experiences of those on the margins, are dependent on the contexts in which this marginal status is defined (J.Y. Lee 1995, 32).[61] Christians move to a creative understanding of the margins as places where they are both in the center and on the margin. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection facilitate a move to *in-beyond* where new centers and new margins are continuously formed and reformed. J. Y. Lee's theology of marginality infuses my own work with those on the margins of the Church.

J. Y. Lee's theology of marginality is helpful for those on the margins of the Church. Its application makes new understandings of margins and the life present there possible. J. Y. Lee speaks of the margins as connecting two worlds together. "In this margin of marginality, the conflict between the margin and the center disappears and reconciliation between marginality and centrality takes place" (J. Y. Lee 1995, 63). This facilitates a move to an in-beyond space where one is both on the margin and in the center simultaneously. *In-beyond* brings together both our "roots and [our] branches," the traditions of our past with the traditions of the present, respecting both, and sitting in the paradox of their relationship (J.Y. Lee 1995, 49).

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[61] Many of my dialogue partners are on the margin of the Catholic Church, but leaders and solidly in the center in Small Christian communities, Intentional Eucharistic Communities, social justice organizations, and in their professional lives. They may be on the margins of the Roman Catholic Church but many are in the center economically, racially, ethnically, etc. Many were also once in the center of the Roman Catholic Church and have now moved to the margins. This holds some important psychological differences among other things. It is a very different marginality from being poor which "means not only economic, material deprivation but also being subjected to cultural rules that convey a complete lack of recognition of poor people as bearers of rights" (Perlman 2005, 12).

The Classic View of Margins as Either/or

J.Y. Lee understands marginality differently from the traditional perception of people on the margins as *either* in *or* out. The classic definition of 'margins' defines the margin solely from the center by focusing on an *either/or* situation or experience, *either* in the center *or* out (J. Y. Lee 1995, 62; 69). When the margin is defined from the perspective of the center, the margin becomes secondary. This is the traditional definition of the margins. Jean draws the lines for the margins of the Church from the center as related to the institutional church. For her, the margins are *either/or*, either in the institutional Church or out, and she considers herself out. Julia also considers the margins in an *either/or* way.

> I'm a cultural Catholic, I was born Catholic, my language is Catholic, my perspective is Catholic; it sort of get's into your DNA, I'm not an institutional Catholic. (Jean 2009)

> From that point on I would tell people I left the Catholic Church to beat the rush. So, for awhile after that I just didn't go to church. (Julia 2009)

In this part of Julia's narrative, she is states that she is definitely not in the Church because she has chosen to leave. For Julie, at this point in her narrative, she is either in or out. Yet, margins are interdependent on each other for definition. Without the center there is no margin, but there is also no center without the margins (J.Y. Lee 1995, 30). Julia, later in her narrative, expresses a different understanding of marginality.

> Somebody can be on the margins, but also in the center of things. I'll tell you that the one thing that drives me absolutely crazy is when people who are traditional, conservative Catholics and they say, "If you're a progressive Catholic, you're not part of the Church. They're not real Catholics." There are two different places on a continuum. What makes you get to say that you are the right one, the official one? Just because you have the backing of the bishops, that isn't a particularly convincing argument to me. So, it really bugs me when the progressive wing, and we are a wing, is somehow illegitimate and the conservative wing is legitimate. (Julia 2009)

This narrative suggests a perception of the margins different than the classic perspective. Julia's concepts of margin moves from an understanding in which she is *either* in *or* out of the Church during our dialogue to an understanding of the margins that is defined on a continuum. In reality, marginality and centrality can also be seen as mutually inclusive and neither deserves stress over the other (J.Y. Lee 1995, 31). Yet the margins need to be emphasized because they have suffered from neglect (J. Y. Lee 1995, 31). Understanding the margins as *both-and* places restores the balance that was lost from defining the margins from a position of centrality. This definition of the margins uses both the positive and negative elements of the margin and views marginality as dynamic and unfixed.

Jesus-Christ: the Creative Core of the Margins

Our Story Engages with Jesus' Story

A theology of marginality begins first with a person's own story, and provides the context for the theology. Then, taking the centralist understanding of the margins as *in-between*, or *either/or,* it moves this understanding to *both-and*, in *both* the center *and* the margins. It engages the *both-and,* uniting our story with the Jesus story: Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. In his full humanity and full divinity, he is *both-and* Jesus-Christ.[62] Feminist theologian Kwok Pui-lan notes Jesus-Christ and Jesus/Christ as a hybridized concept where the space "between Jesus and Christ is unsettling and fluid, resisting easy categorization and closure" (Kwok 2005, 171). The hyphen in Jesus-Christ is the liminal place - the place where a new understanding of Jesus-Christ reaches beyond the interpretations that have been made by those in center (J.Y. Lee 1995). Jesus Christ in his

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[62] J.Y. Lee writes Jesus-Christ with a hyphen to indicate his marginality because Jesus is the Christ and Christ is Jesus (Lee 1995, 78).

life and ministry used reception rather than dominance to change the world (J. Y. Lee 1995, 71-72). Reception rather than dominance informs J.Y. Lee's theology.

The Incarnation of Jesus-Christ: Living Fully, Loving

J. Y. Lee reinterprets Jesus as divine marginality that indicates the incarnation of Jesus changes everything.[63] "Both incarnation and creation are divine marginalizations: incarnation is the subjective or inner marginalization of the divine while creation is the objective or outer marginalization of the divine" (J.Y. Lee 1995, 173). Yet God cares for God's 'marginal' creation. God's covenant (*berith* in Hebrew), so powerfully seen in God's care of the Jewish people, is now a covenant for people through the ages through God's kenosis, God becoming fully human in Jesus. It is a movement of God into humanity, into suffering, and into the margin. God is revealed in Jesus and in this revealing what it means to be human is broken open and expanded. "God comes to us disguised as our life" (Rohr 2010).

God, revealed in the person of Jesus as a marginal person, is very different from past expectations.[64] Jesus, marginalized by historians and politicians of his time as insignificant, by his birth to an unwed woman in a stable, and by his death on a cross as a criminal, is puzzling. Yet, his marginalization by his association with the sick and the poor, the weak and the rejected, by his teachings and healings, and the fact that he

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[63] Teilhard de Chardin's vision provides understanding of this. His vision was helping people see Christ in all things and all things in Christ so that people could see and feel the presence of God everywhere (King 1997).

[64] A midrash approach, retrieving our roots in Judaism is congruent with an understanding of Jesus in the theology of marginality. "The midrashic approach finds the division between, 'the Jesus of history' and 'the Christ of faith' to be a false dichotomy, based on a misguided assumption of two stages of reality: (a) the 'real' Jesus and (2) myths created about him. The dichotomy dissolves if one approaches Mark's text [and I would add other Jesus texts] as a midrashic composition in which, from the beginning, history and faith intersect. Reading Mark as midrash raises the expectation of multiple and varying scriptural perspectives intersecting with history and arranged into a poetic whole that provides neither a biography nor a 'definition' of Jesus but rather engages its audience in reflecting on the mystery of his identity" (Sabin 2002, 116-117).

marginalized himself, becoming an itinerant preacher for those who were culturally, ethnically, socially, physically, sexually, and politically marginal is also puzzling. Jesus' marginality roots theology in the margins. "The usefulness of the historical Jesus to theology is that he ultimately eludes all our neat theological programs; he brings all of them into question by refusing to fit into the boxes we create for him" (Meier 1991, 199).[65]

"Sometimes we need to get out of our comfort zone in order to encounter God anew and to listen to the gentle voice of God arising from the whirlwind" (Kwok 2005, 170). The whirlwind, according to Pui-lan, represents the many voices of those throughout the centuries who have been marginalized by centralist understandings of Jesus. Theological discourse, like any other, is not neutral but reproduces the shape of the world as it is experienced by dominant populations (Fulkerson 2007, 254). Because of this, all understandings of Jesus reflect the ideologies and social situations of the person or community interpreting them (B. Lee 1993).[66] Too often "his followers wanted to be part of the central authority to rule and dominate the world. Christians became increasingly interested in his power and forgot that it is his weakness that made him powerful and his humility that raised him to be the Lord of Lords" (J.Y. Lee 1995, 78).

> My relationship with Jesus changes if I get over that big story there that this is why Jesus lived. If I can do away with that, then I can look at Jesus more personally and deeper and he came to teach and to bring love and his life was so full of love and it just changes the whole person of Jesus, the whole concept of Jesus. It's this far off person who suffered for me, that's what I grew up with. It brings God to you differently. (Lily 2009)

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[65] Biblical Scholar Msgr. John Meier has written multiple books on Jesus, 'the marginal Jew,' linking the Jesus of faith with the Jesus of history (1991; 1994).
[66] "Every interpreter comes with a history, a social situation, a social class and a vested interest (B. Lee 1993, 25).

Lee's theological understanding of marginality beckons Christians to follow Jesus as new marginal People of God (J.Y. Lee 1995, 101). His foundations for this theological understanding are the doctrine of God as Trinity and Asian yin-yang thinking. Both emphasize the harmonizing of opposites, inclusivity, and relationality. Understanding an embodied humanity Lee's theology stresses movement rather than stasis and interconnectedness (J.Y. Lee 1996, 50-70). These lead to a focus on *both-and* thinking where unity and coexistence in relationship change both the margin and the center as relationship changes (J.Y. Lee 1996, 50-60).

Margins As Both-And Places – Opening to a New Definition of Margin

Both-and thinking is a holistic and open-ended thought process that forms the margins and the center into a harmonious whole (J.Y. Lee 1995, 69). Margins hold both *either/or* perspectives, *either* in the center *or* on the margins, as well as *both/and* perspectives, *both* in the center *and* on the margins. A person who uses *both-and* thinking thinks in both either/or and in-both terms. *Both-and* thinking affirms both worlds, even if one world denies the other's existence.

A practical theological understanding of the margins as *both/and* draws on the ancient Hebrew people's way of understanding a word. This perspective uses the epistemological function of narrative structure, providing information about who God is, as "a kind of deep story that a people live out of in all its particular stories" (B. Lee 1993, 29).[67] The deep story is not created by the person, but rather a person awakens to it and

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[67] Practical theologian Bernard Lee understands the Hebraic tradition as always open to redevelopment, through the process of responding and interacting with new social situations and new religious experiences (Lee 1988, 113). The implications for our construct of knowledge are enormous. The Jewish tradition is formed with more of an empirical imagination. "Knowing is for the sake of practice. It is in the service of

makes it real by living the story out in a historical moment.[68] "The Hebrew word is not a 'movement away' from itself towards vision and abstraction; the word leads inward into itself, not outwards towards the 'thing' " (Veling 1995, 156).[69] This type of thinking leaves the word margin open to multiple meanings, and interpretations which are dynamic, yet rooted in the word and the past interpretations which have taken place. It allows one on the margins to feel the tension of both belonging to and voicing one's critical analysis of the tradition, attempting to allow each its justifiable claim and living with the ambiguity of is-like and is-not-like in order to understand a fuller meaning (Veling 1995, 135). When the paradox of belonging and non-belonging exists at the same time, it signals a move to *in-beyond*.

In-Beyond Harmonizing the Differences

A person *in-beyond* lives in both worlds by harmonizing the differences not transcending them (J.Y. Lee 1995, 63). "The essence of being *in-beyond* is not a by-product of being in-between or being in-both; rather it embodies a state of being in both

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qualitative living. (B. Lee 1988, 23) "One critical dimension of fidelity to Jesus is a commitment to continuing reinterpretation of the meaning of God in new historical, social and cultural institutions. Interpretation "not only projects the meaning behind the texts, but more primordially projects new possibilities out in front of our lives." (B. Lee 1988, 117)

[68] Our traditional Christian understanding is formed in patterns of Greek logic. An understanding of religious behavior formed in this logic sees religious behavior as a judgment of everlasting order and the religious task as the logical deduction of God's presence from this timeless ordering in any given historical experience. This means that religious norms and behaviors are to be understood as transhistorical. To humanly interpret the experience of God from a Jewish perspective includes interpreting God from God's self in Jesus. This requires a change in Christian self-understanding that moves from a Greco-Roman understanding of perfection and God as changeless to a Jewish perspective of mutuality with God - God in relation and changing according to human need. Understanding God from this perspective opens the margins to new interpretation of religious norms based on God's particular work in history.

[69] This understanding brings together dualistic and non-dualistic thinking. Western thought patterns reflect the Greek philosophy path where there is a dualistic split between spirit and matter, divinity and humanity with spirit more highly valued. This has led to a devaluing of the body and a hyper-valuing of rationality. The Hebrew historical pattern uses a more non-dualistic view of creation. It sees God as loving, active and involved in history. Spirit and matter are both perceived as both important. (Johnson 2008, 108-109). The Asian thought path reflects the Hebraic pattern.

of them without either being blended" (J.Y. Lee 1995, 62). This means living in both

worlds without being bound to either of them (J. Y. Lee 1995, 62-64).

> I think that's where Jesus was, he was always on the margins, there's no doubt
> about that, but there are a lot of people whose life experiences have kinda put
> them where they are and yeah, we would explore that with them. That's where
> they are and I think that's where I need to meet them and welcome them. (Bill
> 2009)

> When the margins become *in-beyond* places a holistic picture of the margins

forms. The *in-between* and the *both/and* come together in the *in-beyond*, each having its

place. As in-beyond is affirmed, the value of the center changes and a space becomes the

margin of marginality. The margin is the crucial point, a new and creative core – where

the two worlds of the center and the margin co-exist (J. Y. Lee 1995, 98). A theology of

marginality is open to the viewpoints from the center as well as those from the margin.

In- beyond affirms both in-between and in-both, and balances the two poles of centrality

and marginality. Thus, it brings harmony.

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) suggests that in Asian

theology and culture "harmony embodies 'the realities of order, well-being, justice and

love as seen in human interaction'...Harmony is not simply the absence of strife…The test

of true harmony lies in acceptance of diversity and richness" (FABC 1992-1996, 278).

When diversity is accepted and valued, the margins can provide an opportunity for

insight. Joe holds both his feelings of marginalization and the knowledge that he is in the

center as a priest together in tension.

> I can't work with them [the current hierarchy] easily so that has kind of brought
> me on the margins, that phrase, you know, comfortable but fortunately in my
> retirement…And so I have been retired for 15 years and during these years I find
> that a good part of my ministry is to people who are alienated or disenchanted or
> are on the margins and looking for something that will bring them spiritual
> nourishment...What's going to happen eventually, I feel in my heart, progress
> will eventually be made. We have to have that faith because I believe that good

never dies. Good does not die. The good that the Council proposed will prevail. We're going through a backlash, I don't really want to call it a historical thing. We're right in the midst of it. But, uh we have to be faithful in our own way and help one another where we're at. It's God's work. (Joe 2009)

A theology of marginality encourages the *in-beyond* through dialogue and an opportunity to voice the experiences and needs that contribute to alienation and marginalization. This action moves those on the margins to opportunities for creative understanding of the margins. Transformation results and often produces a space *in-beyond* where "centrality becomes marginality, marginality changes to new marginality and all people become marginal" (J.Y. Lee 1995, 169-170).

Transforming the Margins in Liminal Space

A theology of marginality shifts attention from living always seeking centrality to living with ambiguity and paradox, affirming marginality rather than denying it. The margin can never become a new center because a theology of marginality seeks inclusivity, cooperation, service to others, and non-domination of others. "Marginality is not a stage toward centrality but a radical process of shifting one's value system, itself, which is an egalitarian principle to radically reconstruct the existence of the center" (Lim 2003, 192). When the margins coexist they encourage inclusivity and also the most relational forms of thinking (J. Y. Lee 1995, 70). Margin then becomes a relational term.

It's Difficult but Worth Encountering God in the Margins

While the J. Y. Lee's theology of marginality is a theology formed in the margins of ethnic marginality, I appropriate it here for those on the ecclesial margins of the Catholic Church. It begins in the validation of the experience of those on the margins and

their perspectives (J.Y. Lee 1995, 172).[70] It suggests pursuing genuine participation and dialogue, valuing those on the margins as partners in theological reflection. This requires an awareness of the multi-dimensions of marginality and involves questions of agency. The theology of marginality seeks practical theological awareness of a theologian's own marginality or lack of it. With awareness, theologies may emerge from the margins that address the concrete social, political, cultural, and religious concerns of the people and relate the Christian tradition directly to the experiences of the people.

A theology of marginality seeks a holistic understanding of the margins (J.Y. Lee 19995, 67). Yet, it realizes that any theology of marginality will always be unfinished work (J.Y. Lee 1995, 172). Marginality is a process of movement, creativity, and change for those who risk encountering God in the margin.

In sum, given an understanding of the margins as *both-and* places, the margins can be defined on a continuum including both margin and center. In reality, marginality and centrality are mutually inclusive and neither deserves stress over the other (J.Y. Lee 1995, 31). Yet the margins need to be emphasized because they have suffered from neglect (J. Y. Lee 1995, 31). Fully reaching the potential of the margins described by my dialogue partners requires a way to hear the movement in the dialogue through the life experiences told in the narrative of dialogue. This requires a listening that uncovers the place where the narrative of the margins is tied and untied. In the communication theory of Mikhail Bakhtin this is called a chronotope.

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[70] Jung Young Lee's theology of marginality deepens understanding of practical theology in line with other practical theologians including Schleiermacher, Van der Ven and Immink. Schleiermacher's (1768-1834) theology understood experience as the starting point for all theology. "That he viewed praxis as the basis and organizing principle for theology as a whole…is clear from his understanding of theology as a positive science"(Heitink 1999, 25). Schleiermacher rooted the action of theology in Christianity in the context of changing society, in the praxis of the faith, and in the Church (Heitink 1999, 25).

Chronotope

A Time and Space Where the Narrative is Tied and Untied

Bakhtin did not definitively define but rather described the concept of chronotope.

Chronotope's conceptual source is Einstein's mathematical concepts. These concepts

suggest that time and space cannot be separated without distorting the nature of the thing

under discussion (Bakhtin 1981, 84; Morson and Emerson 1990, 367). Thus, for Bakhtin,

there is an organic unity between time and space. Fundamentally, time and space operate

within experiences and actions. Chronotopes provide an analytic tool that assists

understanding experience and actions performed in specific contexts (Bakhtin 1981, 84).

For the purpose of this study, chronotopes foreground space and time as a means of

uncovering that place where spirituality and everyday life meet where present and past

connects for the future. In other words, a chronotope is a 'pivot' or a 'liminal moment' and

a critical turning point in the narrative. Cindy's utterance contains chronotopes.

> Our Church was small and our community was small and we were every
> connected. You know, if somebody was sick, everybody was there for them. Mass
> was very casual with Fr. ___, and then with Fr. ___; the kids were called up. They
> were told just be around the altar, just sit and listen, you were included. Well,
> when Fr. ___ died, that pretty much all stopped, and Fr. ___ was actually very
> good, but he also was a theologian. He pushed against the rigid structure as best
> he could. I had this 'Ah ha' moment one day. I was listening, and I loved
> listening to Fr. ___, and I loved going to Mass. Going to communion was very
> important and all of a sudden, I listened and I thought, "Oh, my God, this is
> just men's opinion, all of this is just some men who got together and this is their
> opinion about how we should believe. This is how we should live; this is what we
> should say." It was startling to me. I mean, it was just startling to me, and I didn't
> know what to do. I didn't know what to do with this feeling. It wasn't that I
> was mistrusting, it was just that, 'Oh well, that's your opinion.' (Cindy 2009)

A chronotope can be seen in Cindy's utterance, "I had this 'Ah ha' moment one

day..." The "Ah ha moment" is essential – bringing in the *chrono* of chronotope – the

time. But the time cannot be separated from the space. Cindy is dialoguing with herself

about the Church, the Mass, and her love for the Mass and Eucharist. Her realization

began a process that moved her to question, and moved her to the margins of the Church.

> Well, it was all a part of it, when we went to the L.A. Congress [a large Religious
> Education conference], we would go to the speakers that were on the fringes; a lot
> of them didn't have their talked taped. It was like, I wasn't the only one struggling
> with this narrow masculine view…and it was even when I was starting to read...I
> love scripture, but I would read scripture and I'd think this is just some man's
> opinion, just some man's opinion.
> *And is the term 'man' important to you there?*
> Yeah.
> *So would you call yourself a feminist in your spirituality?*
> No, not exactly. Because I don't feel as strongly that I only want feminine words
> and I only want feminine women. No it's not like that at all. What I really want is
> inclusivity; I want to hear all the voices. If I've said anything about myself, I
> would say I'm a listener, and I want to listen to all the voices and it just more and
> more obvious that I don't hear all the voices. (Cindy 2009)

The chronotope brings attention to Cindy's movement toward relationship through an

understanding of the need for adult religious education, even though marginalized, and an

understanding of the need for inclusive dialogue.

Time Thickens and Space Becomes Charged and Responsive to Movement

Cindy's space on the margins is a space shared with others, and her 'ah ha

moment' is a time for reflection about the reality of her experiences. Bakhtin agrees with

Kant that time and space are the indispensable forms of cognition, but goes beyond Kant

to propose that time and space are not transcendental but rather are "forms of the most

immediate reality" (Bakhtin 1981, 85). Time and place as immediate reality are

important to the narrative and to the dialogue formed between the reader and the

narrative. "Time as it were thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise,

space becomes charged and responsive to the movement of time, plot and history"

(Bakhtin 1981, 84). Space is social and relational, time is historical and biographical

(Morson and Emerson 1990, 367-368; Pereen 2008, 40). [71]

Chronotopes are contextual clues, historical and changing over time in response to

the needs of our everyday lives. As such they ground the practices shaping our narratives.

"Chronotopes differ by the way they understand context and the relations of actions and

events in it" (Morson and Emerson 1990, 367).

Chronotope: Providing a Lens for Understanding the Margins

The chronotope provides an essential lens, a loving gaze that is helpful for

assisting theology in listening and understanding the conversation and dialogue at the

margin.[72] The chronotope allows one to engage practical theology in the fullness of both

place and time in the margin, moving to the creative core of in-beyond.[73] Throughout this

work various points of Bakhtin's communication theory enhance my practical theology

on the margins. Bakhtin's concept of chronotope is a window into people's relationships

and the 'living impulses' available in time and space (Morson and Emerson 1990, 366).

> I remember having the thought come to me about twenty years ago that I do not
> want to be a child of God anymore, but to be an adult of God. To be here because
> I decide to be, and having been on automatic Catholic for five decades, I think it's
> time to be an intentional Catholic. (Dee 2009)

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[71] Postmodernity has placed an emphasis on place while modernity placed an emphasis on time
(Sarup1996, 99). A *both-and* approach is found in the chronotope.

[72] This use of chronotope in practical theology contributes to ethnography and ethnographic method.

[73] An in-beyond place is a place in time and space. Place and time is a space which has historical
meanings, where things happen which are now remembered. These provide continuity and identity across
generations. Place is space in which important words are spoken which establish identity, define vocation
and envision destiny (Brueggemann 1977, 5). "Place is space in which vows have been exchanged,
promises have been made, and demands have been issued. Place is indeed a protest against the unpromising
pursuit of space. It is a declaration that our humanness cannot be found in escape, detachment, absence of
commitment, and undefined freedom" (Brueggemann 1977, 5). Time can best be expressed by Bakhtin's
concept of heteroglossia – the fundamental other languagedness or 'double-voicedness of human experience
(Bell and Gardiner 1998, 197). "The idea of heteroglossia holds that every culture exhibits the material and
temporal traces of another's speech in another's language" (Bakhtin 1981, 324 in Bell and Gardiner 1998,
197).

Chronotope: As a Pivotal Point

Dee's chronotopic movement, "a thought came to me twenty years ago," joins the time twenty years ago with the space of embodied self. Rather than an automatic Catholic, she imagines herself in a new story as an intentional Catholic. In the chronotope the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships are expressed (1996b, 84). The interconnection of space and time that is the chronotope as the essential organizing impulse (principle) in life, prompting the reconfiguration of experience situated in space and time (Pereen 2008, 33). The words, *I remember having a thought twenty years ago*, are chronotopic as are the words, *child/adult. Remember having a thought* speaks of the historical, autobiographical nature of this time and place. *Child/adult* speaks of the social – the relationship with God and with self. Dee's wish to become an "adult of God" is the moment in which Dee's experience of being a Catholic changed. The experience of wishing to be an adult rather than a child leads to the transformation from a *child* to an *adult* of God. The memory of the experience leads to a dialogue twenty years later examining her journey in becoming an intentional Catholic.[74] The chronotopic terms *remember* and *adult/child* helps us understand the context that defines intentional.[75] They are the places "where the knots of the narrative are tied and untied" (Bakhtin 1981, 250). These chronotopic terms allow experience to be

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[74] Theologian Maria Harris (1932-2005) speaks of re-membering leading to movement and an integrating of the revealed parts of the self into the present everyday life. This step in spirituality is dis-covering. It begins a "crumbling of a false or narrow notion of ourselves and the emergence of the truth of our being" (Harris, 30).

[75] Metz describes the importance of dangerous memories such as these, and especially the dangerous memory of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The dangerous memories of the suffering of the poor, narrative, the stories are told in a community that remembers and tells its own stories of death and resurrection, and solidarity. Dialogue in the margins provides hope in communities of solidarity and begins to form a community where these stories can be told and heard. In such community people live oriented toward a future in which all persons live together as a Church of the people in God's presence (Metz 2007, 245-346).

contextualized and their use in Dee's narrative suggests a framework for understanding. It provides a piece of the context of marginality.[76] A chronotope is "not a congealed event, but a whole complex of concepts, an integral way of understanding experiences, and a ground for visualizing and representing human life" (Morson and Emerson 1990, 375).

Seeking the Chronotope: Revealing Meaning

Each narrative is shaped by the different possibilities of action within time and space. Narrative is dialogue with the reader and the reader brings the reader's own interpretation. "The ability to see time, to read time, in the spatial whole of the world and, on the other hand, to perceive the filling of space not as an immobile background, a given that is completed once and for all, but as an emerging whole, an event – this is the ability to read in everything signs that show time in its course, beginning with nature and ending with human customs and ideas (all the way to abstract concepts) the work of the seeing eye joins here with the most complex thought processes" (Morson and Emerson 1990, 415).

> So, 2002, I was sitting in Church, I always go to the 11:00 Mass and kind of I've been hearing things but not a lot and I, uhm, remember him saying, he said, 'Now, you know, the bishops are meeting in Texas. The scandal is broken. It's small,' and he pointed out the__, which was our most liberal paper. And he said, "Don't read everything, you know, I suggest you subscribe to the ____ and wait till you see what the bishops say. Don't read, you know, and then listen to them. Don't believe everything you read in the newspaper." And it just hit me in such a hot way and I remember getting kinda nauseous and I kinda got warm and sweating, gosh, I'm coming down with something, you know. I think it was still in the spring or summer, but the bishops were meeting in Texas, and so, it must have been still during their session, but I felt increasingly nauseated and I had to excuse myself and I went into the bathroom and I threw up. Now, it's not a normal reaction for me. And I somehow made it through Communion and then I left right afterwards and I got home. (Jane 2009)

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[76] Pereen uses the Chronotope to explore identity construction as differentiated, situated, and circumscribed by chronotopic contexts as intersubjectivities (Pereen 2008). Because our attempts to make sense of ourselves and of the world are multiple and uneven, yet also specific and local, Bakhtin understands the construction of an identity as intersubjective occurring through others.

The chronotope 2002 is recognized as a date, but one that has significance as the year the clergy sex abuse scandal first became widely known. The date, heard frequently in dialogue with my dialogue partners on the margin, is one imbued with multiple meanings and a feeling of growing disillusionment for my dialogue partners. The year 2002 and Jane's nausea relates to place where meaning is being formed and experienced bodily in space.

> And I had the most unsettled feeling and I was sort of, you know, it was in my body. And every time I was going to Church, I would get sick. So, I'm not, and so I went to my spiritual director, and kind of said, maybe I need to talk to someone about all of this cause I would talk to my friends. She said, "Idiot, are you listening to your body? You are just denying what your body knows? Something, this is hitting at a very visceral way and you need to be listening, paying attention to this." (Jane 2009)

Bodies help form the context of access to the world. Culture, reality, and meaning are produced and constructed through our language, relationships, and the esteem of some bodies and the absence of others in the dialogue and practice.[77] Space can be understood as a frame for a contemporary situation, a means to understand the living milieu from which and to which we respond. [78] "Postmodern place frames contemporary situations in a way that brings a number of the complexities of bodied, visceral, local and environment in view" (Fulkerson 2007, 51).

> And the more I read about the clergy sex abuse scandals, and even in my own workplace, I said, "Oh, we do a quarterly newsletter, widely read, widely, I mean we've tackled every issue under the sun." And I remember sitting on the

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[77] This suggests a need to be aware of issues of power and how power is active in religious worldviews and theological symbol systems. Because a theology of marginality is always about the negative and positive aspects of the margins, it brings together the *both-and. See* Paulo Freire for an excellent treatise on power (Freire 2006).

[78] Fulkerson examines postmodern place and place theory asserting that "place theory makes practices central to the imagining of the faith community as contemporary situation" (2007, 23). Space is a configuration of experiences that are lived, communal, and embodied, rather than a vacuum that needs to be filled. *See* Fulkerson 2007, 25-52 for an interactive treatment of postmodern place.

front porch in 2003 with the sisters. And I remember them saying "Oh, it's been there, done that, everybody's done this." Have we? We haven't! I'm the only one who asks questions. Shouldn't some of this be addressed, you know, to the congregations? Shouldn't this be addressed, you know, 'cause we're also talking just about abuse of power, that a minister has a role and especially if you're in spiritual direction. You are holding these people who are very vulnerable and these are power issues. And it's the one time I felt dismissed a little. Then I got a call from a fellow student whose son was a victim from [city]. And he wanted us to do something about it. He said, 'I don't read anything from you folks.' I went back and asked again, and they said, "No." and I went back to him and we talked a little bit and as a parent his son has been through hell and that they as parents had too and of course they entrusted him to the priests and he went through the same [education] program as me, he was involved in the Church, he was a spiritual director. So, anyway, it was very, very sad and I finally just couldn't go back to Church, I was so sick. (Jane 2009)

Jane's on-going experience of bodily illness gives meaning to her experiences. Her bodily illness is also given meaning by her experiences and moves her toward relationship and different practice. Place is embodied and constructed culturally and socially. Fulkerson maintains that on-going practices define place and must be given priority in an understanding of faith. "They help make sense of a lived world that produces both forms of obliviousness and possibilities for appearing" (Fulkerson 2007, 51). For Bakhtin, "every subject, at each moment in time, occupies a unique place in the world that cannot at the same time be occupied by someone else. There is no reference to the body which is not at the same time a formation of the body" (Pereen 2008, 75).

> I don't go to Church, so I started a group of woman and we did our own Eucharist once a month. We called it "Silent Eucharist." We did the gestures; we did a shared homily, so we shared the leadership. So we all took turns doing it. And I tried going to other Churches. Well, now that I'm home full time with my husband, I still keep an association with the sisters, and I kinda read the website and I go on to different websites in terms of Church. I still support Call To Action and I read everything I can get, but in terms of the actual faith community, I don't have one because I haven't found one. I tried to go to different Catholic parishes. I thought maybe part of it is just mine, and nope, same thing. And more of this came out that this was a bigger thing than what people first thought. Even though some of this is so called ancient history, abuse is never ancient history. People don't get that.

What is still Catholic 'in your bones'?
I think for me, it is my tradition, first of all, and I was raised in it. I love ritual, I love a lot of how the tradition addresses mystery and how the tradition, I mean the long tradition, even in our mystics, there was very much a sense of universality and transcendence along with immanence. It's not so much the rubrics and the high Church and the funny hats, and all of that, but just the tradition itself. I mean basically this is a love affair with a God who loves us, you know, so immanently. So this was a tradition that spoke to me and professed this and also a tradition that speaks to justice. The Jesus story is a compelling story and it's my story. (Jane 2009)

Chronotope makes use of both time and space to provide understanding of daily life experiences. Jane's assertion that the 'scandal' needed to be addressed and her statement, "Abuse is never ancient history," is the meaning that is accomplished through the gates of the chronotopes 2002 and nausea. These chronotopes, the places where time and space contextualize the experience and create the space in the narrative, alert people to look for meaning. In this case, the meaning is about relationship. This relational meaning is two-fold. Time, 2002, and the space that is the body racked by nausea signal the deeper meanings in this narrative: Abuse is never ancient history. Jane also sits with the paradox of dislike for a situation and love for a tradition. She sits with the pain and the ambiguity of being both *in-between* and *both-and* at once. This enables her to continue to love a tradition, but to also call it to honesty and authenticity. J.Y. Lee asserts that marginal people are expected to be silent and to think nothing. A theology of marginality enables the *both-and* by giving the inner strength of self assertion and the ability to not wait until the world offers acceptance (J. Y. Lee 1995, 68). With *both-and* thinking the meaning gained is chronotopic. Space and time acquire meaning in relation to Jane and her community, in relation to her life and interaction (Pereen 2008, 39). The chronotope scaffolds understanding of margin to the *in-beyond* place that is the creative

core. Jane moves to her love of the tradition and most particularly to the Jesus story saying, "The Jesus story is a compelling story and it's my story."

The next chapter turns to anthropology asking, who are we as humans – we who consider the Jesus story our story? Fully answering these questions requires exploring the doctrine of God as Trinity which leads to an anthropology that is relational. I put this relational anthropology into dialogue with neuroscience, particularly mirror neurons, and the communication theory of Mikhail Bakhtin on dialogue, outsideness, and authoring. My purpose is to further uncover relationality, contributing to an understanding of the margins from the standpoint of relationship and dialogue.

3

Contemplating Self-Identity: Trinitarian Relationships, Neuroscience, and Dialogue.

Who Are We as Humans, We Who Consider the Jesus Story Our Story?

> I went through some of the catacombs, you know, we stopped and the tour guide was jabbering away, and there was a niche right beside me, and I just ran my hand over the dirt, and I was just thinking, this is part of our family; this dirt is part of one of our family. (Bill 2009)

Today in the liminality of the margins, intersubjective space is shared in ways unknown before, due in part to the current advances of technology. Yet, people continue to contemplate self-identity, much as those in the early Christian communities did, trying to understand themselves as Jewish followers of Jesus after the destruction of the temples in 70 C.E. (Senior 2009). A relational anthropology provides a frame for dialogue with people on the margins of the Catholic Church and shapes the conversation in this chapter as well as later chapters.

The primary focus of this chapter is to establish an understanding of the human person as relational, in light of three areas: the doctrine of God as Trinity informed by pneumatology, neuroscience, and communication theory. First, the doctrine of God as Trinity provides the foundation for understanding human relationality (LaCugna 1991, 289). The discipline of neuroscience, particularly a look at mirror neurons, offers a scientific representation of our relational being. The work of Mikhail Bakhtin suggests that relational anthropology may enable the action of dialogue to form and re-form us humans.[79] Through the use of the Bakhtian concepts of dialogism (dialogue) as well as

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[79] Communication theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) suggests that dialogue turns away from thinking about identities as fixed, as did many others in his time, toward the idea of persons who construct their identities through dialogue with others. This "moves toward a vision that presents identities that humans hold as multiple and variable, yet at the same time situated and specific constructions, grounded in the spatio-temporal and discursive contexts of their intersubjective articulations" (Pereen 2008, 11).

related theories of authoring and outsideness, I endeavor to surmount any binary and/or dualistic thinking and develop intersubjective thinking to help situate practical theology dialogue of those on the margins of the Church.

Forming Relationship

It is late afternoon in a strange city, and I head for a small apartment where I will meet my next dialogue partner. We conversed via postal service mail, as she does not "do computers." She serves as one of my contacts for the Intentional Eucharistic Community with whom I am in dialogue. She is a delightful 'wisdom woman' of a certain age, extroverted to the extreme, full of vim and vigor, and passionate about social justice. We begin talking about relationships in the Church and this leads us to images of God.

> I think that thinking brings you to new experiences and moves the concept of God you know, it isn't just vertical. God with the beard is gone forever more. The more you get involved with people's lives, the more horizontal the God concept is and your spirituality is involved with other people. You know women happen to be made in the image and likeness of God as well as men. It just helps to know that God is mother, father, whatever. I don't see God as neutral either because all we've got in life is male and female, whether its bugs or humans. The male/female process is where life comes from, so I see God as male/female. It is a he/she, my he/she God. I don't even like to see it in terms as man/woman, that's another concept. There's got to be a word that includes both, but I see it as a male and female concept, God is bigger than man/woman. The male qualities and the female qualities are what give life to something so that's how my concept of God is. (Colleen 2009)

The time passes swiftly. Colleen's understanding of God as relational undergirds her understanding of herself called to relationship. She is outspoken in just war issues and the need for relationship with the poor and needy, the hungry, and the homeless. She describes herself as a discovering Catholic. "I just keep discovering new ways of discovering community and God. It's always new and that's how I like to see myself."

God's Invitation to Relationship

As human beings, both female and male, this likeness to God shows itself relationally in relationship to God and relationship with all of creation (Bowe 2003). Ecological theologian Sallie McFague asks, "What if we begin to realize that the community model - the model in which human individuals must fit into a just, sustainable planet - is a necessity?" (McFague 2008, 44). Her work offers a holistic anthropology that understands human persons as related to the whole cosmos as well as each other. Dan's relational understanding of our connectedness to those in our past and our future informs his actions on the margins of the Church. Catholic anthropology holds that, as human people, people are social beings in need of others in order to realize our true humanity (Groome 1998, 181).

> In Chartes, one of the doors, there's a carving; the doorframe is actually a series of people who are ascending into heaven. The image is that each person is holding on to the heel of the person above them - probably a thirty foot door frame, carved in stone. And it's just a reminder that we're not in this alone, we're holding onto our ancestors, and it's part of who I am. It's not Roman in exclusion of the Jerusalem church, or the Antioch church, or anything like that, but it's very much that we're in this together. (Dan 2009)

Created For Relationship: A Trinitarian Anthropology

Made in the Imago-Dei

A theological understanding of God as Trinity begins in an understanding of the person as embodied. Genesis' statement that humans are made in God's image (*Imago Dei)*[80] suggests that human beings are imprinted with the divine. This not so simple statement grounds a Trinitarian understanding of the human as sacred, body and soul. Human beings are an embodied people. The configuration of the person as both body and

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[80] *Imago Dei* is Latin for image of God and this reference to the human being made in the image of God is found in Genesis 1:26-27.

spirit reinstates not only human agency, but also human worth. Made in the image of the divine, the body is sacred and the spirit is corporeal (Bong 2010, 190). This understanding addresses a politics of identity and difference that renders some people more privileged that others because of the ways in which their bodies are gendered or made. It questions any dualistic understanding of the human that sees humanity separated into a mind-male/body-female duality. Malaysian feminist theologian Sharon Bong suggests "A theology that matters is one that is embodied" (Bong 2010, 186).

Made in the Image of Trinity

An embodied theology, with its foundation of the Trinity, offers a way to begin to understand the living God as Trinity present in experience. God is imaged as one God. Yet three separate persons validate diversity and difference in this experience. The presence of Creator God, Jesus, and the Spirit deepens the statement that humans are made in the *Imago Dei*, suggesting more definitively, that humans are made in the *Imago Trinitatis*, the image of God as Trinity and are thus deeply relationally centered (LaCugna 1991, 289). Thus, it teaches about God's life with people and people's life with each other (LaCugna 1991, 1). [81]

Classic Understandings of the Doctrine of the Trinity

The early Christians themselves monotheists understood God's saving action in their lives through God's presence in the Exodus experience, through the prophets, but above all through the life and ministry of Jesus. They greeted each other, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you

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[81] Catherine LaCugna was a theologian at the University of Notre Dame who is best known for her groundbreaking work on the Trinity.

all" (2 Corinthians 13:13; Johnson 2008, 203-205). This phrasing reflected their talk about the Trinitarian God.

Many in the early Church put forth considerable effort to think through their relationships with God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit (Groody 2007, 61). In the fourth century, the Council of Nicaea composed the Nicene Creed, affirming God as one in being with the Father, in large part as a response to a question of the divinity of Jesus in Christian circles at that time. Fifty years later, at the Council of Constantinople, the church expanded the statement of faith to include a reference to the Holy Spirit as the power by which Jesus came into the world (Karkkainen 2002, 45).

Perichoresis: God Active and Relational

The early church used the term perichoresis to explain the concept of Trinity by emphasizing the dynamic and vital character of the Triune God (Groody 2007, 62; LaCugna 1991, 171). The notion of perichoresis stems from its root words *peri* meaning 'around' and *choresis* meaning 'dance.' This introduces the metaphor or analogy for Trinity as a divine dance by imaging a cyclical movement in which each of the persons of the Trinity is present to and permeated by the others (Groody 2007, 62). While perichoresis advances a relational understanding of Godself, it also allows an understanding of God as active in human history bringing people together in the divine circling spiral of love (Johnson 2008, 210-212). Harry reflects this understanding in talking about how people and communities act on this understanding of God in relationship and the way God works through each person.

> In the gay community the norm is why do you go to a place of oppression? I say, "The church is an instrument of oppression, but my community isn't. We're trying to show a way to be Catholic that is not oppressive." At [our Catholic parish before we were asked to leave because of liturgical irregularities] we were

the place that if you were divorced and feeling unwelcome, or you were gay, or you were radical or something, you would come to St.____ because it was the place where you were accepted, you were nurtured, you were welcomed and cherished. I never felt that people tolerated me at St. ____'s, I felt that people just loved the fact that I was there. You know, you can't continue to oppress groups of people and expect people who demand justice to acquiesce. That's a perfect word for it. The people at [Intentional Eucharistic Community] demand justice because they believe God does. There's a wonderful song and it goes: "What does our God require of you? What does our God require of you? Justice, kindness, walk completely with God." (Harry 2009)

Perichoresis reveals God's invitation to humanity to realize the interconnectedness and the relational core of the human being. This invitation calls for joining the Trinity with actions of love in the world as God works God's love in the cosmos (Groody 2007, 63).

A Western Trinitarian Orientation: One True God, Three Persons

During the fourth century, Augustine (354-430) laid the foundation for a Western Trinitarian orientation. He insisted on one, true God existing simultaneously as three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, with the Spirit proceeding through the Father and the Son. He also contributed to the understanding of the Spirit in pneumatology by grounding the Holy Spirit in the three most traditional names for the Spirit's nature: Holy Spirit, Love, and Gift (Karkkainen 2006, 46). Augustine suggests that rather than uniting all people in knowledge that the Spirit unites all people *in communio* with the Father and Son in love (Karkkainen 2006, 46).[82]

A Medieval Emphasis on Pneumatology

Medieval mystics advanced a rich spirituality of the doctrine of God in the Trinity that is informed by pneumatology. Their themes of love, community, and unity in the Trinity are today being developed in contemporary understandings of the Trinity. For

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[82] The ontological assertion that' God is love' is an intrinsic concept of relationality in Christian faith (1 John 4:16; Tracy 1991, 146).

example, medieval monastic Bernard of Clairvaux speaks of the mutual love of the Father and the Son with the Spirit as he links human sinfulness and God's grace with liveliness and growth in the Spirit (Karkkainen 2006, 52). According to Bernard, the Spirit makes knowing revelation possible. Even more, the Spirit represents the intimacy of love within the Trinity and between God and the believer (Karkkainen 2006, 52). Writing in the early Franciscan tradition, Bonaventure understands the Spirit as holding the community together. He sees this action of the Holy Spirit as central to the narrative of Pentecost and successive forms of Christian life. Doctor of the Church, Catherine of Siena moves toward a more unifying understanding of the Trinity, combining the understanding of God, the Creator, present in creation and humanity, and God in the human experience of God's saving work. "In Catherine of Siena's holistic theology, the entire Trinity works together in both creation and redemption" (Karkkainen 2006, 54).

An Eastern Perspective: Trinity - Harmony in Diversity

J. Y. Lee brings a balance to the understanding of Trinity. Coming from an Eastern perspective of the Trinity, he emphasizes unity rather than individuality in terms of the Trinity. Such an understanding appreciates the Trinity as an inclusive whole and essential continuum, moving from unity to the diversity present in the inner process of change in all things (J. Y. Lee 1979, 115-117). Such an understanding relocates the Trinity to a *both-and* understanding of the oneness of three persons in God and the threeness in one God (J. Y. Lee 1997, 115). This allows for appreciating both the unity and the diversity of God. An Eastern perspective of Trinity also acknowledges the reciprocal nature of the Trinitarian persons focusing on God's creation of humans in God's image (Karkkainen 2006, 45).

J. Y. Lee's doctrine of God as the Trinity roots the liberation experience of God in the understanding of humans as children of God and, as such, joined with God in the family of the divine Trinity. This understanding unifies all creation by God the Father with the redemptive work of Jesus, understanding Jesus as the agent of creation (J. Y.Lee 1996, 102). J. Y. Lee suggests that the fact that humans are created to be different by a Trinitarian God indicates that humans have inherited God's plurality (1996, 105). This plurality exists harmoniously. "Thus unity in difference is possible through harmony, and harmony is possible because of individual plurality" (J. Y. Lee 1996, 105). This understanding rejects centralist notions of sameness and singularity that criticize and marginalize the different. It holds instead a belief that human identity is relational and coexists in universal kinship with all people.

Engaging the Margins

The doctrine of God as Trinity theologizes the margins concretizing Christ's preferential option for the poor, where compassion and interconnectedness with those on the margins stretches to imagine and act together toward a better tomorrow (Kwok 2010, 188). It does this by in solidarity and relationship and allowing the plural voices of the marginalized to speak with dignity. The experience of Jesus from a theology that begins in the margins in the everyday suffering and healing of human life realizes equitable and just relationship. The experience of God's Spirit working in this experience heralds the experience of action, the Spirit of freedom, speech, and community (Karkkainen 2006, 155-156). Thus, the margins become sites of creativity where God the Creator, in Jesus, and through the Spirit is present making all things new.

The Trinity – Two Perspectives

Feminist theologians Elizabeth Johnson and Catherine LaCugna bring two different perspectives of the Trinity to the understanding of the nature and significance of personhood through the Trinity. Yet each theologian points to the relational nature of Trinity and the impact of this on an understanding of the human as relational.

Johnson rejects an undue emphasis on personhood in the Trinity in favor of the mystery of the transcendent God. God is not a person as humans understand person but rather is interpersonal and transpersonal, always richly beyond what can be known (Johnson 1992, 203). Likewise Johnson suggests that the intent of speaking of the Trinity with the numbers one and three is subtle. Talking of one God in three "is intended to negate division, thus affirming the unity of the divine being. To say that the persons are three is intended to relate singleness, thus affirming a communion in God" (Johnson 1992, 204). Johnson suggests that God as Trinity affirms the one God "who is not a solitary God, but a communion in love marked by overflowing life" (Johnson 1992, 222).

The image of God as Trinity, an inclusive whole yet plural, enables an understanding of God as *communio* "making it possible to speak of how the mystery of God is capable of relating to what is creaturely and laced with history" (Johnson 1997, 228). Johnson emphasizes that the Spirit of God that unites the world in its unity and diversity is also the Spirit of God that is utterly transcendent with a difference that is necessary to our humanity and to the understanding of God (Johnson 1992, 147). This suggests a freedom of Spirit that understands relationality intrinsic to God's being in the world (Johnson 1992, 247). "The relation is mutual while differences remain and are respected...the universe, both matter and spirit, is encompassed by the matrix of the living

God in an encircling which generates uniqueness, futurity, and self-transcendence in the context of the interconnected whole" (Johnson 1997, 231-232). This Trinitarian theological perspective of diversity within wholeness puts forward patterns of differentiation that are non-hierarchical and forms of relationship that do not include dominance (Johnson 1992, 219). This suggests patterns of relationship that include the margins as part of the whole, in all their uniqueness, a relationship that values them equally and respects their diversity.

LaCugna places a greater emphasis on God as social and the communal aspects of the Trinity than Johnson providing another lens in which to understand the Trinity and human relationality. She emphasizes the human capacity to know God as well as God's intimate relation to the world through the divine persons. In offering a clear definition of the key elements of personhood, she emphasizes a relational anthropology. To be human is always to be in relationship with God and with each other. "The doctrine of the Trinity, ultimately, must measure its reflections on personhood by the revelation of divine personhood in the face of Christ and the activity of the Holy Spirit" (LaCugna 1991 292-293). This indicates that the mystery of God coming to us through Christ and the mystery of Spirit "has far-reaching social implications…for it promotes mutuality and undermines all hierarchical structures among humans" (Metzler 2003, 281).

Both Johnson and LaCugna point to the doctrine of God as Trinity revealing the essence of the person as relational (Johnson 1997, 219; LaCugna 1991, 192-193). The symbol of the Trinity suggests a "mutual relationship of different equals as the mutual paradigm of personal and social life" (Johnson 1997, 222). LaCugna further informs an

understanding of interconnectedness, insisting that a person's own particularity, incomprehensible fully to another, is shaped in relations with others (1991, 289).

In sum, the doctrine of God as Trinity lays the foundation for new understandings of the human as a relational being, made for relationship in the *Imago Trinitatis* [image of the Trinity]. God's unity and diversity ground our embodied being in particularity and universality suggesting that the human develops in relationship with God and others. Interestingly, contemporary scientific studies in neuroscience that make this relationality visually apparent through the neuroscience of mirror neurons. Today, scientific studies in neuroscience offer a means for exploring the significance and the processes of our human interconnectedness in ways that provide an embodied corroboration for an understanding of a relational anthropology. [83]

The Wonder of Creation: Neuroscience and Mirror Neurons

Our Human Connectedness Seen Through Science

The discovery of mirror neurons gives rise to speculation about the ways in which they ground our social cognition in our body in the world, the ways in which we engage in cooperative, communal actions and how we understand them. Mirror neurons expand our insight into knowledge, language, and understanding of the self as embodied, and increase our appreciation for the way in which we are so wonderfully made that our interconnection with others is a part of who we are.

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[83] Advances in brain science in the past decade are reshaping our understanding of human behavior. "The recent emergence of interpersonal (or social) neuroscience now draws particularly on cognitive and social psychology, along with cognitive and development neurobiology, to deepen our empirical comprehension of human relational processes, thus providing critical new data for theological anthropology, and therefore practical theology" (Hoge et al. 2009, 80). Research into biological reactions to prayer, meditation, and social neuroscience exploring mirror neurons and emotional responses in religious and social experiences are but a few of the interests of this discipline.

An Interpersonal Link With Other Acting Individuals

Mirror neurons were first discovered by Rizzolatti as he was experimenting with macaque monkeys (Rizzolatti 2004). He noticed that the neurons activated when the monkey performed a purposeful object-oriented action were also activated when the monkey was an observer of that same action performed by another (Tummolini 2006). Such neurons are not just triggered by visual input. Audio-visual mirror neurons are triggered by and discriminate between the sound of different actions. They do this whether the action is just heard as well as when the action is being performed. All mirror neurons contribute to an internal storage of motor knowledge that activates when a goal-driven action is seen or heard, giving a mental representation of that action. The monkey watching the action actually experiences the firing of the motor neurons in a space of the brain just as the monkey doing the action. This space where the motor neurons are fired is dynamic and may vary according to the change of the object's spatial location in time (Fogassi 2007). "This suggests that a set of mirror neurons encodes the observed motor acts not only for action understanding, but also to analyze such acts in terms of features that are relevant to generating appropriate behaviors" (Caggiono et al. 2009, 403).

Brain imaging studies in humans show that mirror neurons are also present in the parietal and premotor areas and activated when we observe and perform actions (Fogassi and Ferrari 2007, 137). [84] Speech actions activate premotor regions of Broca's area, a portion of the brain known for its connection to communication and language. Mirror

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[84] It is important to note that there are both minimalist and maximalist understandings of mirror neurons. The maximalist understanding, to which this author adheres, understands that mirror systems may involve more than just mirror neurons. This is significant because it suggests that there is more to know regarding motor neuron firing, and more to brain functioning in regards to more complex operations. Many parts of the brain may be involved in more complex operations. Yet, these studies indicate the presence of actions, of motor neuron firing, that cannot take place without another. We are truly made for relationship. Gallese is a proponent of maximalist interpretations of mirror neurons (Tummolini et al. 2006, 103). Gallese's work can be explored at www.interdisciplines.com.

neurons receive input from other parts of the brain, enabling their functioning to integrate this process of mirror neuron activation and encode it into the brains and body's motor system (Gallese 2009a, 519-536). Observation of an action performed by another person causes an automatic simulated re-enactment of the same action within an observer and forms the basis for the observer's understanding of the action. The encoding, by mirror neurons, of agent-object interactions within a motor space is dynamic and affected by time. This gives information about ourselves. It facilitates social connectedness by reducing the gap between self and other by allowing a person to see the other with the other's sameness and difference. [85] Mirror neurons reveal in very real ways deep intuition and theology has been telling humanity throughout history. Humans are relational beings needing others even in the way human bodies function.

Establishing a Sense of Identity

Gallese proposes that the motor neuron circuits involved in action control and in the experience of emotions and sensations are also active when a person witnesses actions and emotions (Gallese 2009a, 519-536). These neural circuits, as well as other mirroring neuron clusters outside of the motor domain, provide the neural foundation for a common underlying functional mechanism – embodied simulation. This can be understood as "an automatic unconscious and prereflective functional mechanism, whose functioning is the modeling of objects, agents, and events" (Gallese 2005b, 4).

Knowing the World Relationally

This functional mechanism in the brain plays a major role in people's epistemic approach to the world. It enables the capacity to establish a sense of identity as the

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[85] Bakhtin proposed this as an important component of dialogue in the twentieth century, unaware that future findings of neuroscience would corroborate his intuition.

person observes actions, intentions, feelings, and emotions of others by automatically establishing an interpersonal link when other individuals are observed. Mirror neurons preside over our pragmatic relation with the world of others, establishing a sense of social identity (Gallese 2009a, 522). This social identity is based on shared meaning in intersubjective space through the embodied link our mirror neurons establish. This leads to social identification, empathy, and "we-ness" which are the basic foundation of our development and being (Gallese 2009b, 580-584). Bodies comprehend the acting 'bodies' of the others sharing their world through the embodied simulation of mirror neurons. This shareability of the matter and actions of people's brains and bodies in their intentional relations with others produces an intentional attunement.

"The advantage of such an epistemological approach is that it generates predictions about the intrinsic functional nature of our social cognitive operations…" (Gallese 2005a, 31). The exploration of mirror neurons leads to an understanding of abstract thought and imagination that suggests an intersubjective bodily way of knowing through the joint significance of intentionally meaningful sensory-motor actions. Knowing – knowledge arises from the sharing of situated experiences of action and emotion generated by the mirror neurons. Relations with others in the brain-body system, though prelinguistic and pretheoretical, are nevertheless contributing to the conceptual content of knowledge. Embodied personal knowledge is contingent on the multi-leveled connectedness that is shared with others. Thus, "we-ness and intersubjectivity ontologically ground the human condition, in which reciprocity foundationally defines human existence" (Gallese 2009a, 530).

To summarize, a doctrine of God as Trinity suggests that humans are created in the *Imago Trinitatis* as relational beings. The neurosciences as interdisciplinary dialogue partners provide a scientific window in which we see one of the ways that diverse relational beings function in and through relationship. Mirror neurons provide an epistemological basis for the embodied we-ness that ontologically grounds the person. How do we begin to take seriously this identity of the human as relational, the particularity and universality in relationship? Dialogue that begins in the multiplicity of the voices on the margins holds epistemological promise for practical theology. It enables the person to form and be formed through dialogic relationship.

Dialogue and Relationship: Dialogism, Authoring, and Outsideness

A relational concept of dialogue is infused with the awareness of the dialogic that realizes the edges, surfaces, and depths of the reality of one's self are constantly entering into relationship with the reality of another (Green 2000, 34-37). The work of Bakhtin grounds itself in this awareness. The multi-leveled connectedness shared with others, and the reciprocity that foundationally defines human existence establishes anthropology as relational beings that form and are formed through the embodied action of dialogue (Bakhtin 1993, 287). Bakhtin bases his communication theory of dialogue called dialogism in a paradigm that includes multiple voices, emphasizing the ordinary rather than the ideal situation. It suggests practices for practical theology that spark attention to the multiple voices of the other and allow the honoring of difference, enabling the margins to contribute to theological discussion.

Dialogue and Relationship: Dialogism, Authoring and Outsideness

Dialogism

Relationships Adjusting To the Other

Dialogism is a set of diverse concepts unified by the insight that encountering the

other is crucial for our consciousness and being, and for others as well (Green 2003, 25).

Dialogism is the inherent orientation and adjustment of all discourse to the utterances of

others (Gardiner 1992, 37; Pechey 2007, 17-18).[86] It engages the entire realm of dialogic

interaction itself rather than language in isolation (Gardiner 1992, 37). This concept

extends the concept of dialogue to include not only direct face to face vocalized verbal

behavior such as verbal communication but also books – verbal performance in print, as

well as anything intended for active perception involving inner responsiveness, attentive

reading, and reaction (Dentith 1995, 139-140). Dialogism is constituted through social

interaction in dialogic relationships between individuals and groups. It performs social

functions and has practical effects on the everyday life and the persons involved. It insists

on a non-consensus seeking dialogue that privileges the multiple voices of the other.

Dialogism encompasses four processes relevant to a discussion of a relational

anthropology: heteroglossia, dialogue, outsideness, and authoring. Each interconnect with

the other synergistically to provide the whole of dialogism.

Heteroglossia

Multiple Voices Interconnected In the Past, Present, and Future

Heteroglossia informs any discussion of dialogue that finds the welcoming of

multiple voices necessary. Heteroglossia encompasses the multiple conflicting voices

from multiple social locations, cultures, and geographies. Bakhtin's turn toward the

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[86] Eschewing linguistics as telling only about the formal structure of language, but revealing little about
language as a living concrete reality, Bakhtin instead used a theoretical approach he dubbed translinguistics
which later became known as dialogism (Danow 1991; Gardiner 1992 23-31). The theory of dialogism
began with Bakhtin's dialogic reading of Dostoevsky, but his insight into dialogism grew beyond the
textual or even intertextual to embrace the whole social world (Gardiner1992, 25-31).

narrative through dialogue acknowledges the inherent relationship of ideology and utterances. Therefore, dialogue lives in its historical and social context. Language reflects the multi-temporality of human life by emphasizing the interconnections in the past, present, and future forms of life associated with different speech genres and cultures (Bell and Gardiner 1998, 208). "Though a huge concept, it [heteroglossia] can be presented succinctly as the joyful recognition that in life or in a literary work there are a number of 'social language systems' in play at the same time, rubbing shoulders with each other, often in the mouth of the same speaker" (Green 2000, 54). Speakers and listeners hear the various languages in contention with each other, understanding that there are many meanings that can be construed from the same words. Cindy, one dialogue partner, shows an innate understanding of this listening in her comments about the listening she believes is required on the margins of the Church.

> At Pentecost it says they all spoke in different languages so that everybody understood. We need Pentecost listening for all these Pentecost voices. (Cindy 2009)

Dialogue

Dialogue, like dialogism, is not just verbal communication. It is the umbrella under which all language stands, acknowledging the multiplicity and interconnectedness of voices, the many levels of language, and the multiple ways of hearing such languages (Green 2000, 46). Dialogue looks at language outside the traditional sense.[87] Language

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[87] The traditional understanding is that language represents concepts through an arbitrary symbol system that is socially shared and organized and governed by rules (Owens 2005, 7). Language and speech are part of a bigger process - that of communication, which involves the sending and receiving of messages about information, ideas, feelings, etc. (Hulit and Howard 2006, 3-11). Language has three major components: content, form, and use, which include semantics (how we code ideas and their meanings), syntax (the rules governing word order), phonology (the sound units), morphology (the appropriate words and ending and beginning sounds), and pragmatics (the rules governing language use in the communicative context) (Owens 2005, 6-29). Bakhtin challenges the study of language in linguistics and its study of the sentence and enlarges the concept of utterances beyond the idea that utterances are mechanistic units of language

consists of utterances (rather than individual words or sentences) that involve interaction and take into account the words of another (Bell and Gardiner 1998, 54). An utterance comprises what is actually articulated and what is also assumed (Green 2000, 53). These utterances are the basic unit of speech communication.[88] An utterance has two aspects. First, it is characterized by a referential semantic content that refers to specific meanings and specific contexts, and it has a particular aim. Second, the speaker of the utterance actively evaluates the referential semantic content of his/her utterance. "Someone must say it to someone, must respond to something and anticipate a response, must be accomplishing something by the saying of it" (Morson and Emerson 1990, 126). Each word, each utterance is distinct and has subtle differences in the often contradictory "talking components" (Emerson 1997, 36). Bakhtin writes, "For a word is not a material thing but rather the eternally mobile, eternally fickle medium of dialogic interactions. It never gravitates to a single consciousness or a single voice. The life of the word is contained in its transfer from one mouth to an other, from one context to another, from one social collective to another, from one generation to another. In this process the word does not forget its own path and cannot completely free itself from the power of these concrete contexts into which it has entered" (1984, 202).

Thus, words include different contexts, times, and places which affect the meaning of every utterance. The speaker, listener, the writer and/or reader differ, and meanings differ making each utterance unique. "An utterance is never just a reflection or an expression of something already existing and outside it that is given and final. It

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(words, sentences). He emphasizes that the utterance is characterized by an exchange with someone that anticipates a response, and responds (Morson and Emerson 1990, 125-127).

[88] An utterance may be as short as a non-verbal shrug, a one word exclamation or as long as multiple sentences (Morson and Emerson 1990, 125-127).

always creates something that never existed before; something absolutely new and unrepeatable" (Bakhtin 1986, 119-120).

<center>Creative Understanding – Difference Is Foundational</center>

In dialogue, both centrifugal forces pushing towards unity and order and centripetal forces pushing towards multiplicity and diversity exist together. As a person speaks, anticipation of the responses obtained from the listeners helps form the utterances. The meaning of words is determined equally by whose word it is and for whom it is meant. Words are shaped in the dialogue. The task for the listener participating in dialogue is to understand and respond to the words spoken with agreement or disagreement, with compassion, in expansion, etc. (Bell and Gardiner 1998, 24).

Dialogic relationships preserve alterity and are able to hold difference and distance as well as similarity neither seeking negation of the difference or assimilation (Pereen 2008, 100). Perhaps, Bakhtin's most important contribution is this awareness that dialogue is enhanced by the difference of the 'other.' In fact, difference is foundational.[89] Because of this, dialogue does not demand agreement, nor reduce the dialogue to a single denominator. Dialogue, enhanced by the difference of the other, educates each partner about itself and about the other. It discovers potential and creates potential as the self takes on the creative understandings generated in the dialogue about self and other and fashions these into provisional self-narratives. Maria's narrative of a turning point is an example.

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[89] The fact that difference is foundational contributes to my methodology, informing the methods used, my research hypotheses, and the outcome of my research. This contributes to my understanding of the margins as relational, dialogic space.

> I'll never forget. St. ___'s church had a nun. Vatican II had already
> been established for a while. She was the head of religious education
> and she wanted family Mass instead of Mass just for the adults; family
> catechism instead of just the children. And so she instituted Sunday
> Mass with family religious education and conversation with each other
> and that was the beginning for me, for seeing a woman who was active
> in the church, who was proactive, out there. She talked about women
> becoming priests. That to me was such a revolutionary idea, I never had
> thought of anything like that. But here she was, on the cutting edge of
> doing things that nobody else was doing. We would stand around the altar
> all the families, holding hands, watching the priest, going through the Mass
> and the children there participating. It was to me the beginning of where
> we are today in our belief that we are the church. I never knew that before.
> The church was the priest, the Pope, the hierarchy, what we were told, that's
> what we did. That to me was a turning point in my life; to have this insight
> and to be a part of the Mass and to be there, not excluded, not sitting over
> here watching a man who was doing something. We were a part of it.
> (Maria 2009)

The importance of an awareness of power dynamics cannot be stressed enough with this concept. Dialogic relationships do not demand adherence to one point of view, or relegate another to the margins. It is the responsibility of each partner in dialogue to take seriously the politics of recognition and inclusion. Dialogue educates the self and the other through recognizing and including a multiplicity of voices. Because of the inclusive nature of dialogue, each dialogue partner experiences the particularity and the universality of self, the particularity and the universality of the other. True dialogue understands that a person can never be where I am, or see themselves as I see them (Pechey 2007, 157). Nor does one need to do so. "To live answerably is to sign one's name to one's life" (Green 2000, 44). It is to take responsibility for where I stand, how I choose to live, for the quality of my life, how I live my life, and the self I become. "The thing that distinguishes the dialogic relation...is that every word calls for a reply, so that the more I answer, the more I am responsible"(Green 2000, 45).

Outsideness

Because of creative understanding produced through dialogue, dialogue allows the self to know itself through the responses of real, imagined, historical, and generalized others. It creates dynamic intersubjective relationships among individuals, social groups and cultures. The creative processes of dialogue are present because of what Bakhtin terms 'outsideness.'

Relating With the Other in Dialogue - Understanding the Self

Outsideness is a major characteristic of dialogic relationship. When one meets another in dialogue one meets in a spatial-temporal context (Bakhtin 1981, 84-85). Dialogue for Bakhtin "takes place not in the neutral space of 'communication' but in a charged and irreducibly sociopolitical space of its own making and remaking" (Percy 2007, 13-14). This spatial-temporal context is permeated with meaning and significance and is indicative of relationships (Bakhtin 1981, 84-85). [90] A person is always outside the other in relationship during dialogue never duplicating their space or time. Each person in dialogue sees facets unseeable to the other. Through outsideness a person learns to understand the self, the other, and culture in a way that helps each to reveal and actualize potential (Morson and Emerson 1990, 54-55).

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[90] This is the chronotopic event discussed in Chapter 2. As discussed earlier, the chronotope is a way of making meaning, a way of understanding experience and actions that are performed in specific contexts, as well as the time and space that operate within them (Bakhtin 1981, 84-85). Chronotopes, historical and changing over time in response to the needs of our everyday lives, are the ground for activities shaping our narratives and their meanings. The chronotope provides an opportunity for a focused loving gaze through which theology may listen and understand the conversation and dialogue at the margin.

Authoring

Self in Relationship

"What underlies the unity of an answerable consciousness is not a principle as a starting point, but the fact of an actual acknowledgement of one's own participation in unitary Being-as-event, and this cannot be adequately expressed in theoretical terms, but can only be described and participatively experienced" (Bakhtin 1993b, 40). This participative experience is authoring. Authoring is the way the dialogical self knows itself through responses of others (Bakhtin 1973, 59). It is "the primary activity of all selves in the world dominated by the self/other distinction" (Clark and Holquist 1984, 94). Authoring has three aspects: authoring of self, other, and art. It may be seen as God interacting with humans and creation, the self authoring of a deed, the creation of a work of art, the writing of a dissertation, or a conversation between people as in Maria's story earlier. Authoring takes place in dialogue. It is important to remember that dialogue includes the entire realm of dialogic communication not only direct face to face vocalized verbal behavior. Authoring can be imagined as a dance (Bakhtin 1990, 137) or as a set of concentric circles (Green 2003, 165). What is constant and vital is difference. "Outsideness is a prerequisite for authoring" (Green 2003, 169). The difference of the other is foundational for authoring.

The dialogical self knows itself through the responses of real, imagined, historical, and generalized others (Bakhtin, 1973, 59). Authoring the other is always connected to authoring the self. As we author the other, the other we shape is an exploration of the self. The authoring of self has three aspects: *I-for-the-other, I-for-myself,* and *the other for me* (Green 2000, 34). The authoring of self is a process of self-

formation in response to images given by others through dialogue. It allows the self to

mutually create a response and actively shape itself from that response. As I see myself

and the other in dialogue, I give form to myself and I also give form to the other,

perceiving what I think the other is. At the same time, the other perceives me. I notice

what the other thinks I am and they become aware of what I think they are. In this action,

the other offers form as an aesthetic act and the self reacts to it. The reaction falls on a

continuum of negation or acceptance of the image. Here again, power dynamics and

critical awareness provide for the courageous step of awareness for the courage to present

one's differences and to accept diversity in relationship and community where dialogue is

present. This begins in a core philosophy of dialogue that does not seek consensus.

"Lived life tends to recoil and hide deep inside itself, tends to withdraw into its own inner

infinitude, is *afraid of boundaries* [author's italics], strives to dissolve them, for it has no

faith in the essentialness and kindness of the power that gives form from outside; any

viewpoint from outside is refused. And, in the process, the *culture of boundaries* [author's

italics] (the necessary condition for a confident and deep style) becomes impossible"

(Bakhtin 1990, 2003). A person's self definition and self-perception is formed through

relations with others (Bakhtin 1990, 32).

Biblical scholar Barbara Green uses the image of the author drawing a self

portrait while at the same time drawing the other. Seeing oneself in the mirror is never

the same as the drawing or observing of us by another (Green 2003, 166; Morson and

Emerson 1990, 74). *I-for-the-other* (how I look to others outside of me) is not identical to

I-for-myself (I as I see myself on the inside). This allows the form known by the self and

the form offered by another to go beyond what either is, creating open potential (Morson

and Emerson 1990, 180-184). "To author in such a dialogic way is both to recognize the border between myself and an other and to sense that it is permeable, porous, repeatedly crossed in more ways than I can ever take in" (Green 2000, 35). The process is reciprocal in that the self, through outsideness, also bestows form to others through *the-other-for me* (how outsiders appear to myself) (Bakhtin 1990, 32). "I enter as deeply as I am able the space of the other – their particularity – perceive it to some extent with their ear and eye – and then return to my own space, remembering, marking – integrating – what I have experienced" (Green 2000, 34).

Dialogue, informed by the concepts heteroglossia, dialogue, outsideness and authoring carries implications for an anthropology that is relational.[91] Understanding a relational anthropology from the perspective of difference means multiple views and difference provide opportunity. People are most productive and reach their potential when accepting the responsibility to listen to a variety of views in dialogue, allowing the self to grow (Morson and Emerson 1990, 50). [92]

Critique of Bakhtin: Complex, Challenging, Critical

The sheer vastness of Bakhtin's work and its complexity makes appropriating and pushing Bakhtin's work to new areas such as practical theology daunting. The original Russian texts of Bakhtin's work render the concepts of some Russian words difficult to fully translate into English, leaving the scholar unaware of the layered contexts embedded in Bakhtin's work. This can make the concepts confusing and less rich in their

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[91] A choice not to dialogue turns an attempt for dialogue into monologue, where one voice is left unheard. Monologue is defined as finalized, abstracted, transcribed, and systematically dialectical. All of these value abstract control and order over the messiness of actual ordinary life and dialogue (Bell and Gardiner 1998, 221-224).

[92] Bakhtin insists that learning is a reciprocal process progressing from the outside dialogic event to the inner self.

implications. Bakhtin's work demands years of study to effectively use his work responsibly because of its sheer volume and because of the difficulty for non-Russian scholars to deeply appropriate the context and culture of Russia during the time of his work. Bakhtin's work, however, is rich in insight about relationship formed in dialogue, challenging, and inviting of deeper examination. His work is deeply ethical and he weaves his insights into literature, dialogue, and the reality of self (Green 2000, 3). "Ethics demands a match in word and deed, requires embodiment and particularity with all of its messy, painful, and joyful challenge, calls for a signature on a customized life: 'for him ethics [is] always generated from within and never imposed from without'" (Green 2000, 31). He is said to have utilized his insights about dialogue and communication in his own life, listening respectfully. Accepting of difference, he avoided blaming others for choosing viewpoints contrary to his own, finally saying when he could say nothing else, "That is very interesting" (Clark and Holquist 1984, 254).

One person cannot mandate another's self understanding. Authoring in dialogue speaks of independence and interdependence. This presents the dilemma of living the difference of our individualities, our histories, our cultures from the perspective of affirming both connectedness and independence (Kwok 2010, 65). It requires a rethinking of our tradition and history to take into account the particularity of our context and to respect the individuality of our history (Kwok 2010, 4).

Dialogue That does Not Seek Agreement or Consensus

Dialogue that includes the necessity of constant and vital difference presents a dialogue that does not seek consensus. Bakhtin insisted that dialogue is not an instrument to be used to impose one's will on another, but rather is an active interaction between

people in the world. Dialogue deconstructs monologues to identify the silenced voices

and the nature of their otherness, realizing that both one's own and the other's voices are

equally feasible value-orientations. It enables those in dialogue to listen mutually to the

other, seeking creative understanding. Fusion and diffusion as well as order and disorder

are of equal importance in dialogic encounters through the relationship of identity and

difference (Bell and Gardiner 1998, 221-225).

As dialogue authors the self and the other, it privileges outsider voices and calls

for a relationship with those who are on the margins. "Within a Bakhtinian universe, it

appears, dialogue *must* be primary – not because there is necessarily love or compatibility

in that universe but because all participants are equally unprivileged: unity, plurality, and

uniqueness are equally indigenous in each human personality, realized in an answerable

act on the border and before the person of a unique other" (Bell and Gardiner 1998 227-

228). Dialogue is non-consensus seeking. The interconnectedness and difference in

dialogue provides space for creative action, if dialogue and realtionship are nurtured and

allowed to flourish. Bakhtin's work on authoring, dialogue and outsideness contributes to

my practical theology methodology, informing the methods used, and the outcome of my

research.

The non-consensus seeking dialogue of multiple voices, the doctrine of God as

Trinity, and the scientific symbol of mirror neurons function as sources for my

understanding of anthropology as relational and of the margins as relational, dialogic

space. In the next chapter we turn to the Church and examine ecclesiology with an

understanding that a relational dialogic anthropology is integral to welcoming diverse and

different voices to the dialogue. For a sense of the Church as relational community we begin with discussion on a Trinitarian ecclesiology informed by pneumatology.

> So, how do we help people find their own authority, their own authority to live in a relationship with their own self and other folks and in the universe with their God? How do we help them to do that? Because life is all about relationship. (Sarah 2009)

4

Using Our Imagination, Our Intuition, Our Compassion: Catholicity

Dialogue and Communion

> Nothing draws me. I think what is missing is that invitation to grow deeply,
> spiritually outside of the familiarity of the liturgy, outside of kind of a safety that
> provides. Where is there an invitation for community at a shared dialogue level? I
> wasn't finding it. (Mai 2009)

The Trinity as foundation for relationship grounds people as individuals and as

community and invites all into the community and shared dialogue for which Mai

hungers. Building on the discussion of Trinity from the last chapter, I begin with an

examination of deep structures present in an identity as Catholic: sacramentality,

mediation, and communion. Following this, I move to a focus on the anthropological

foundation of the ecclesiology of Church based in Trinitarian theology. Trinitarian

ecclesiology summons the Church to a transformative vision of catholicity and

communion that includes communion as koinonia, the praxis of the church, and dialogic

communication. The polarity and diversity in the Church today springs from different

viewpoints surrounding catholicity, communion, and dialogic communication as well as

reactions to modernity and the social crises engendered by the existing polarity and

division. A discussion of several models of church pertinent to today's Church follows.

These models, proposed by Dutch practical theologian, Johannes van der Ven, and

Hebrew Scripture scholar and theologian Walter Brueggemann enable a look at church

within the context of plurality, diversity, and difference. An examination of models

allows for the acknowledgement of one's own model as one among many and provides

impetus for assessment and rethinking of one's own model of the church and those seen

in church communities.

The official Church, the hierarchical Church, is crumbling from the center, I think. Just listen to the idiotic policies they're coming out with. It is an insult to all of us. It's crumbling from the center, and it's going to come from the grassroots. I don't know if I'm going to see it in my lifetime, but I can see it dying around me. Our religious congregations are dying, and I feel bad for my own congregation because I think we brought something to society, to the world that will be lost. But that's the way life is on the planet. It's birth, it's chaos, and it's destruction, and it's rebirth. Right now it's the chaos, and the destruction is pretty alive and well, but still there's life. So the chaos and destruction is going on, but I believe it's balanced. I don't want to look at this in a negative way because God continues to be God. (Sarah 2009)

Sarah's struggles with the Church today, balancing her struggles with her faith in God and her hope for new life because "God continues to be God." Church is "a community of faith and struggle working to anticipate God's New Creation by becoming partners with those who are at the margins of church and society" (Russell 1993, 12). Its transformation is continually undergoing change. Structurally, as an organization, it aims at accomplishing its vision and mission as the People of God bringing about and proclaiming the kindom[93] of God (Van der Ven 1996, xi-xii). The lenses of community and struggle allow the church to connect through action and reflection with those who are marginalized in the church and society (Russell 1993, 12).

It's Just a Living Faith Model

I am pulling my suitcase through the streets of downtown as I head for a Sunday service at an Intentional Eucharistic Community. I arrive as a large group of people prepare the hall where it will be held. The room is abuzz with laughter and people calling greetings. I am welcomed by people with whom I dialogued over the last few days as well as by those who recognize me from a flyer that was distributed asking for dialogue partners. I help set up chairs in concentric circles, put out liturgy pamphlets, and watch as

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[93] Kindom is a term used by Mujerista (Hispanic) theologian, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, for a less hierarchical, less patriarchal term than kingdom. Others would say 'reign of God,' and still others like Van der Ven use the original term *Basiliea*.

a simple table is prepared with a Bible and flowers. It seems everyone is helping.

Musicians begin tuning their instruments and as the time for beginning approaches people

start to settle in, waving at the 'latecomers.' The theme for this week is Non-Violence:

Dismantling Racism. During the dialogues two days before, Shannon shares that she and

her partner wrestled with a choice of Church community for themselves and their

children. They settled first at the parish of St. ___ and now at its 'offshoot,' their

Intentional Eucharistic Community "that re-invented itself as a community that worships

together." She talks about finding and staying in the parish community. "I'm real glad we

stayed because it was just the right community for us and they were very welcoming;

they were very excited we were having kids. It was amazing how well we were accepted

and welcomed and blessed and my parents were shocked when they came up for the

Baptism of our oldest to know that he would be baptized in the Catholic Church and

lightning didn't strike" (Shannon 2009). The service is led by many people and no one

person stands out. The homily with the theme, 'What am I afraid of?' is given by one of

my dialogue partners who is an articulate young woman in her early thirties. She says,

"You should have the kind of faith that would move mountains, but when I saw the

'mountain' it moved my faith." A dialogue with the community ensues. They then move

to the prayers of the faithful and communion. As I participate, I shift to a deeper

understanding of Andrew's comment the day before that the social justice aspects at this

community all start as part of the liturgy, and Kate's comment that, "They talk about

issues and even more so than I because I had done so much demonstrating in the

seventies that I was kind of done with that. It is spiritual and it is active politically. It is

just a living faith model" (2009).

Ecclesiology: Integrating Experiences of the Spirit

Rapid cultural changes, increased globalization, plurality, rapid technological changes, and the blessings and curses these engender in the lives of people lead to recurring questions. These along with changes in ecology, medicine, and economics bring questions of social justice to the fore and foster a renewed interest in the movement of the Spirit and the movement of the Spirit in Jesus Christ. Ontological changes that once emphasized objectivity, truth, and rationality are moving to an understanding of truth as plural and imperfect that is formed in the context of historical time. Epistemological changes are also moving knowledge to a theory of knowledge as created by humans and produced by human consciousness.

Added to these are changes in lay ministry within the Church. My dialogue partners in an Intentional Eucharistic Community speak of their present and past involvement in every area of ministry from liturgy planning to social justice work. They continue their involvement in leadership and ministry in the variety of small Christian communities of which they are a part. Such growth in lay ministry has been the reality for the past few decades throughout the United States (Fox 2010, 5-7) Fox cites Thomas O'Meara, OP concerning his work *Theology of Ministry* (1999), "His theological judgment of what is happening today is that there is an explosion of ministry throughout the world which 'suggests that the Holy Spirit is intent upon a wider service, a more diverse ministry for a church life that will be broader in quantity and richer in quality'" (Fox 2010, 7)[94] These contribute to a renewed interest in a Trinitarian ecclesiology by emphasizing the Holy Spirit.

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[94] Zeni Fox is a professor of pastoral theology at Seton hills Seminary of the Immaculate Conception. Her work focuses on lay ecclesial ministry and the process of handing on the faith in Catholic parishes.

The turn to a Trinitarian ecclesiology is informed by three historical happenings. The first is a postmodern turn that questions modern epistemological and ontological bases of theology (Hinze and Dabney 2001, 19-22). The second is the presence of opportunities for ecumenical dialogue provided relationship with other Christian traditions as well as other faith traditions. The third critical development is the emergence of new charismatic movements in all churches emphasizing the Spirit especially within evangelical and pentecostal churches (Hinze and Dabney 2001, 19-22). The advent of charismatic experiences within mainline denominations began to be heard in the 1950s (Hinze and Dabney 2001, 18). Since then, Pentecostalism has spread globally, particularly in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Henze and Dabney explain, "These charismatic movements can be viewed as a part of a much larger renaissance of interest in spirituality and mysticism, and experiences of smaller Christian communities that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. But taken as a whole, these various experiences of the Spirit have raised disturbing questions about how to integrate dynamic personal experiences of the Spirit of Jesus Christ within the doctrinal and liturgical life of the churches as well as the significance of these experiences for evangelization and catechesis" (2001, 19).

Ecumenical Dialogue

A renewed emphasis on ecumenical dialogue continues both within the Catholic Church since Vatican II (1962-1965) and within Protestant denominations. This ecumenical dialogue led theologians to question the use of a solely Christocentric approach to creation, cultures, and ecclesial matters and to begin a move to pneumatological approaches and a trinitarian ecclesiology (Hinze and Dabney 2001, 19-

21). Pneumatology functions as a unifying source for the many communities of worship and their witness to Jesus Christ in the fellowship of the Spirit (Hinze and Dabney 2001, 19).

With a focus on the doctrine of God as trinity, new forms of spirituality became Spirit-centered. A turn from tradition and classical philosophy to interdisciplinary discussion with biologists, physicists, and philosophers continues to generate interest in a common language of Spirit that speaks of something more and something 'other' (Hinze and Dabney 2001, 21). In this talk of the Spirit a renewed understanding of communion, koinonia, dialogue, and universality are providing a summons to understand the work of the Spirit in the Church both for those perceived in the center and for those on the margins. Gail's prayer group is an example.

> I was part of a prayer group in [place] and it was an interfaith prayer group and we decided we wanted to experience God's power and His acting in our lives. We decided as a group that we would pray every day, and every Wednesday we would go to a prayer group at a Methodist church. We would meet beforehand to pray together. Those Wednesday nights were really significant. We would go around a circle, we were probably maybe seven or eight, and we would ask each other what do you want us to pray for? And we were amazed at how our prayers would be answered when we would pray for other people's concerns. We fasted that day too. I think it was Wednesday we fasted. We saw amazing things happen. God is Jesus for me, but "No one knows the Father except through me," so there's a separation of some sort there. And of course there's the Holy Spirit. My partner Fern cannot understand God in three ways, there's one God. That is so massive. Who knows how many parts there are to God? We call it three. (Gail 2009)

A Trinitarian Ecclesiology Lost and Found

Loss of a Spirit-Centered Ecclesiology

In 1825 Johann Mohler, a Roman Catholic theologian, proposed a Spirit-centered ecclesiology stressing the presence and action of the Spirit as the beginning of Christian conversion and formation of Christian community (Hinze 2001, 345). The Spirit draws people into participation in communion with God and with each other. "He also identified

the Spirit as source of a dynamic unity in diversity in the Church which disavows both a rigid uniformity and egoistic versions of diversity" (Hinze 2001, 345). In later years he moved to the more doctrinal tradition of the hierarchy and espoused an Incarnational ecclesiology setting the stage for an ecclesiology that was singularly Christocentric. He used this to justify the visible, sacramental, and hierarchical character of Church, restricting the dynamic role of the Spirit, while still emphasizing Pentecost and the Incarnation as defining moments of the Church (Hinze 2001, 346). Thus, he influenced the adoption of a neo-Scholastic paradigm by Roman Catholic theology and official doctrine that would stress the mystical Body of Christ and incarnational ecclesiology over a Spirit-centered ecclesiology (Hinze 2001, 346).[95] The Thomist or neo-Scholastic movements emphasized the role of the Spirit in the decisions and teachings of the magisterium and each person's obedient participation in the life of the Church (Holland 2003, 122-123). While these movements emphasized the Spirit, their philosophy made the active role of the Spirit in the entire Church and in the universal charisms of both lay people and clergy in ecclesial ministry difficult to be seen or heard. Yet, Mohler's early work on a Spirit-filled ecclesiology led to a fuller Trinitarian ecclesiology in the second half of the twentieth century (Hinze 2001, 349).

 Recovery of a Trinitarian Ecclesiology

 Three theologians helped initiate a fuller recovery of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Catholic theology leading to a Trinitarian ecclesiology: Yves Congar, OP,

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[95] Thomists sought to provide moral guidance for the Church, the culture, and the state through papal authority, feeling that the Protestant rejection of the Church and objective authority from the pope undermined all authority and the social community, and was the main root of the modern crisis (Holland 2003, 120-121). They placed emphasis on hierarchical structure in society and reassertion of the values of human reason and freedom within the context of faith (Holland 2003, 122-123). Thomists also stressed an understanding of the need for the human to be rooted in community under legitimate authority justifying a hierarchical ecclesial authority, and the need for religion to be restored to a public position (Holland 2003, 122-123).

Heibert Muhlen, and Karl Rahner (Hinze 2001, 360). "Together these theologians set the

Roman Catholic Church on a path away from a rigidly institutional and juridical vision of

Church, and laid the groundwork for a renewed anthropology and ecclesiology that drew

inspiration from pneumatology as well as Christology" (Hinze 2001, 360-361). Congar

challenged the judicial and institutional understanding of Church, insisting on the

indwelling of the Spirit in each person and in each of the marks of the Catholic Church

(Hinze 2001, 353). He affirmed the Christology of the Church, while also affirming the

necessity of a strong focus on the Spirit, emphasizing ecclesial communion (Hinze 2001,

353-355). Muhlen "advocated thinking of the Spirit in personalist terms as the 'we' that is

the bond between I and you, emphasizing the inner life and person to person relationship

of the Trinity, as well as the corporate identity of the Church" (Hinze 2001, 355-356). For

Muhlen, perichoresis provides the basis for the understanding of the interconnectedness

of the Trinity (Hinze 2001, 357). Finally, Rahner discussed the Trinity as the self-

communication of God, providing the basis for a dialogic Church. Rahner not only

recognized the communicative mission of the Spirit as the participation of the individual

in the life of the Trinity, he also recognized that, as part of the Trinity, the Spirit provides

the incarnational and pneumatological foundation of the Church (Hinze 2001, 358-359).

Acknowledging that the Spirit bestows charismatic gifts of the Spirit on both the laity and

ordained, he emphasized the need for recognizing the charisms of the Spirit, particularly

as seen in new ecclesial forms and heard in prophetic critique of the Church (Hinze 2001,

360). Joe and Miriam's dialogue about the Church are examples of the fruit of this

theology.

> Baptism is a source of all ministry. Not ordination, but Baptism. We're all
> baptized. Ordination gives us a function within the Christian Church and certain

responsibilities, but, uh, my ministries stem so much more from my Baptism. (Joe 2009)

One thing I do take offense at is that I don't like the word, laity. I think laity is divisive.
What would you use?
People of God. We are the people of God; we are all the people of God. And we are all called by our Baptism to be priests in our own way. Jesus calls us and God calls us to do different things. He gives us different talents so that we can grow and nurture each other. As I see it, beyond the central piece and the focal piece of the seven sacraments, we have a lot of room and a lot of room for creativity and understanding of how people, all people, can participate. (Miriam 2009)

Called to Catholicity, Dialogue and Communion A Trinitarian Ecclesiology

Deep Structures: Catholic Both-And Thinking

The deep structures of sacramentality, mediation, and communion enable a renewed awareness of the presence of the Spirit in the Church. The stories of Catholics on the margins of the Church describe religious identity as Church, the meanings one has of oneself and the community as well as the meanings others have of both. They also describe religious belonging involving commitment, participation and membership in a religious organization. "Personal and social identity [in the Church] are shaped and maintained not primarily by the specific differences that an individual or a society possesses over against others, which may be many but superficial, but by what might be called 'deep structures' which may be few and shared with others" (Phan 2006, 178). Peter Phan, an Asian American, Catholic theologian, contends that these deep structures, which may contain doctrines but also contain ritual, art, and behaviors, help constitute Catholic identity (Phan 2006, 179). Deep structures are often shared by others in other faith traditions (Phan 2006, 179). These deep elements include a 'feel' and an 'instinct' about catholicity. My dialogue partners refer to "what is in my bones," or "what is in my blood." For Catholics these include *sacramentality* – God revealed in the everyday

including the cosmos, human love, and the experience of community. It also includes

mediation – God's grace always available to all people, God present and active in daily

life and people co-responsible with God for the common good of all. Finally, it includes

communion – people's way to God and God's way to people is in community as relational

people (McBrien 1994 1192-1200, Phan in Heft 2006, 179). Also included is analogical

imagination (Phan in Heft 2006, 179). "These structures are characterized by the

inclusiveness of *both-and* rather than *either/or* thinking, a positive appreciation of their

divine creator, a high regard for the community as the locus of God's self-

communication, a basically optimistic attitude of hope for redemption of everything"

(Phan in Heft 2006, 14).

Analogical Imagination

Phan points out that while analogical thinking is present in the Catholic

imagination, it is not restricted to Catholics only. Analogical imagination understands the

Catholic self through analogies to our own experiences and our analogous understanding

of others' experiences and God's saving work in history.[96] Catholic identity is not

effectively formed by accentuating differences from others including other

denominations and religions, as long as these remain superficial, but rather by

acknowledging and exploring these deep structures of sacramentality, mediation, and

communion (Phan 2006, 14). [97] "The analogical imagination does not, however, cancel

out differences and dissimilarities in its search for ordered relationships and analogies;

rather, it clarifies them, even intensifies them, as the particularity of each position-

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[96] David Tracy, who has contributed much to practical theology, covers analogical imagination in his book by the same name (1998).
[97] This brings about the value of dialogue and ecumenical dialogue as a means of fortifying Catholic identity (Phan in Heft 2006, 288).

understanding gains in intensity and becomes clearer to itself and to others, in the course

of the conversation" (Hunt 2003, 71).

These deep structures and analogical imagination present in conversations from

the margins, assist hearing similarities as well as differences in views. One dialogue

partner, Colleen, speaks here about her experiences in her Church community. She

innately understands the presence of the deep structures of *sacramentality* in the valuing

of each member of the inclusive community and of *mediation* in the ways God works

through the poor and the experiences of people's lives. She intuits *communion* in the way

the community, through the Spirit, is able to realize God's presence in the community,

and change itself to bring a just inclusive community.

> Yeah, what did we have that made us realize that no, God is not a word talked
> down? You know, I really think it was, I'm guessing now, we were located in the
> inner city and we had a lot of inner city programs for poor people. You know we
> listened to the "down and outers." We listened to the marginalized, you know. So
> there were people who were coming to that Church who were not talked down to.
> People knew, I think, you listened. You learned from the street people, from the
> poor, from the marginalized and all that they said. "If you want us here, then you
> have to take us as we are." Perhaps that was it. We were not just a white invader
> just out of the suburbs. I think we learned from the 'down and outers' and the
> marginalized and the poor and the derelicts. Well, we always had a ministry for
> the special needs. We always had a special needs program for people, whether
> the derelicts or the special needs people. If they are going to fit into Church, you
> have to give a little. You can't just say, "Stick your tongue out for communion,"
> and somewhere along the line that changed. Someone caught on that was goofy.
> Thank God, somebody catches on along the way. (Colleen 2009)

Beside the deep structures of sacramentality, mediation, and communion required

to provide renewed awareness of the Spirit, a relational anthropological approach is also

needed. "An anthropological approach to the need for community and church considers

the ways in which the invitation of the Spirit through the deepest aspirations of the

human person toward identity and mission reflects the *Imago Dei* in each person that can

be fully received, purified, and realized in the communion of persons" (Hinze 2001, 368).

The anthropological foundation for the human as relational is the doctrine of God as Trinity (LaCugna 1991, 289). Likewise, a doctrine of God as Trinity provides a theological anthropological foundation for a Trinitarian ecclesiology.

A Trinitarian Ecclesiology

Trinitarian ecclesiology grounds the Catholic Church as a dialogic Church and a communion of God's people (Hinze 2006, 11-12). The foundation of the dialogic Church is the communication of God with God's self in the Trinity and with God to humans: listening, speaking, and acting (Hinze 2006, 11-12). This calls the Church to *catholicity*, an awareness of the inclusive nature of the Church and communion with all people. It actively seeks the inclusion of all the People of God as Church, encouraging *communication, dialogue*, and a way of being together that is genuine relationship with each other and with God.

Catholicity - The Working of the Spirit

Pentecost provides a look at the early Church communities in which God's gift of understanding through the outpouring of the Spirit enabled understanding and difference to transform people's lives and the lives of their communities. "The Spirit does not so much create the structures and procedures but rather breaks open structures that confine and separate people so that they can welcome difference and the challenges and opportunities for new understanding that difference brings" (Russell 2009, 61). The working of the Spirit is integral to many dialogue partners' understandings of the diversity in the Church and the ways church communities are enlivened by it.

> Well, I think in our world we need to communicate. We have a responsibility to communicate. I don't like the word schism. Schism to me is Pius X. Schism is closer to Opus Dei, closer to legionnaires, but actually is found in Pius X. But they are more acceptable to the institution because they are closer to the right. But

the institution will not reach out to the people in the left like us. They will not do that kind of thing, because it is too challenging.
So what do you think will change that?
New people. The Holy Spirit. (Dan 2009)[98]

A Call to Catholicity

An anthropological understanding of Church based on a Trinitarian ecclesiology leads to a deeper catholicity. It requires a broad understanding of the universality of the Church's nature and mission. In the past, the Church emphasized a high Christology stressing the divinity of Christ, making Jesus' humanity seem less central. This correlated with a high ecclesiology. This high ecclesiology emphasized hierarchical and clerical forms of Church. Genuine diversity of voices exists in Scripture and in the tradition. In conjunction with these voices, the identity and mission of Jesus Christ empowered by the Spirit facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of Church today (Hinze 2001, 349-350). This ecclesiology roots itself not only in a renewed understanding of Jesus empowered by the Spirit, but also in an understanding of the Spirit at work in today's Church, the Church throughout history, and the early Church.

The devotion to the Spirit leads to a deeper communion and appreciation of the human communion with God and with the People of God who are the Church (Hinze 2001, 369). Hinze suggests, "The Spirit's call to catholicity, symbolized at Pentecost and epitomized by the initial Hellenistic mission, is but the realization and on-going evolution of the catholicity of Jesus' mission in Galilea to those at the margins, those religiously and socially disconnected, those who have yearned to be released from the destructive powers at work in the world and in their own personal lives by the power of God's reign"

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[98] Dan's reference is to the Society of Pius X, led by Archbishop Lefebvre, who consecrated bishops in a manner not in communion with Pope John Paul II. Pope Benedict XVI has recently offered a means to accept full communion.

(2001, 370).[99] An awareness of the risen Jesus who through the Spirit is free to unleash

the power of the charisms of all God's people empowers the Church (Gaillardetz 2006,

94). "Thus the reach of the cosmic Christ becomes the reach of the Church" (Gaillardetz

2006, 94).[100] The cosmic Christ, seen in the diversity of our cosmos, through the power

of the Spirit guides it to a greater catholicity. This catholicity is evident in the Second

Vatican Council's teaching on the universal call to holiness as the Spirit works in each

individual giving the Spirit's gifts to each person. It can be seen in the willingness of the

Second Vatican Council to consider catholicity of the Church from the perspective of

other religions, not just the Roman Catholic Church (Gaillardetz 2006, 51).

Communication and Dialogue

The self-communication of God in history through the Word and the Spirit offers

a model of effective communication in the Church (Hinze 2001, 369). Vatican II changed

the understanding of communication within the Catholic Church, moving from a

hierarchical communication espoused during the previous few centuries to an exploration

of both the individual and the community's dialogue with God and dialogue within the

Catholic Church (Hinze 2006 19-20).[101] Pope John XXIII's emphasis on aggiornamento

focused on bringing the Church up-to-date in the modern world. It also laid the

groundwork for a dialogic Church (Hinze 2006, 19-20). The Council's examination of the

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[99] Paul's writings to the various Churches of Corinth, Thessalonica, Galatia, Rome and Philippi reveal the early Church as community struggling to understand itself as Church – in Christ God's new community in which all were full citizens in the kindom of God (Roetzel 1998, 3, 51, 79).

[100] Hans Kung, Edward Schillebeeckx, Leonardo Boff, and Roger Haight, contemporary Catholic theologians, have developed an ecclesiology from below, starting with the people of God, making charisms the foundation and starting point for ministries and order in the Church (Gaillardetz 2006, 98). After Vatican II this became a foundation for lay involvement in the Church (Gaillardetz 2006, 98).

[101] Catherine LaCugna started with the work of Karl Rahner and Rahner's insistence that the Trinity revealed God's self-communication. "LaCugna believed, in contrast, that the God revealed in the Incarnation and paschal mystery of Jesus Christ is a God who acts in the freedom of love (which cannot be reduced to a freedom of choice) and that this love is indistinguishable from the divine being" (Groppe 2002, 336). Chapter 3 takes a closer look at Trinity and how our own human personhood is rooted in relationship because we are the *Imago Dei*, created in the image of the Triune God.

Church's identity and mission deepened its understanding of the identity and mission of

God. The Church summons people to dialogue to work for the common good, to

promote justice and God's kindom in communities and in the world. Vatican II's

Gaudium et Spes and the *Decree on Ecumenism*[102] encouraged ecumenical dialogue. The

affirmation of the parish as the communication matrix of Catholic Christianity brought a

renewed understanding of Jesus' humanity and divinity and renewed attention to the role

of the Holy Spirit in the world (Hinze 2006, 349).

Ecclesiologist Yves Congar argues "that the indwelling of the Spirit in the

individual, accompanied by cognitive, affective, and moral fruits and gifts of the Spirit,

needed to be more sufficiently integrated into an ecclesiological framework" (Hinze

2001, 353).[103] This understanding invites the Church to dialogue not demanding unity,

but rather reveling in diversity with the inner faith that our deepest relationships with God

and each other call us as a people to harmonious dialogue. "Once our internal geography

recognizes that, however much we are center, we are not the only one, we have no choice

but to affirm the positions of others not as 'marginal' to our centers, but as centers of their

own" (Carroll 2009, 313).

> Vatican II it invited all of us to change, right? So that change was an instrument
> for further change and the following of that thread, the flow of that. The externals
> changed, the priests were now facing the people...But the internals, like who is
> Jesus to you, they were still there. Suddenly we were doing the hand shake of
> peace, deep relationship, well, even revealing relationship. Jesus was the primary
> relationship and then the format the church took around that and the relationship
> with the diversity of people within the church. That was the whole underlying
> thing, unity and diversity. (Mai 2009)

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[102] *Unitatis Redintegratio,* the Decree on Ecumenism, suggests that as Christians seeking to know, love,
and understand others as they wish to be known and understood can best be done through a dialogue of
truth, justice and love.
[103] Hinze's work (2006) examines the role of dialogue in the Pre-Vatican II and the Vatican II Church.

Communion – Koinonia

A Trinitarian ecclesiology calls the Church to communion that is koinonia. This has both practical and social implications for the Church today. A Trinitarian ecclesiology moves the Church from a solely Christological focus centered only on Jesus, to a holistic understanding of ecclesiology based on a deeper understanding of Trinity: God, Jesus the incarnation of God anointed with the Spirit, and the Spirit working in the Church and the world. God, Jesus, the Spirit are each different, each unique, many, and one. This idea of Spirit relates to ecclesiology - the Spirit linking all Christians *in communio* – the communion between God and God's people and God's people with each other (Karkkainen 2006, 47). A Trinitarian ecclesiology insists on the Spirit's presence in the prophetic voice of not only the Church's official teaching but also of the multiple voices of the people of the Church. It insists on the movement of the Spirit in the tradition and in the new movements of remembrance and courageous witness in the Church today (Hinze 2001, 368).

In Harry's story of his Church community, the Spirit's presence presents herself in the life experiences of the Church and the prophetic actions of this community, in their communication, dialogue, and communion. Harry's story speaks about a community open to the multiple voices of the Church community who dialogue and theologically reflect on their experiences. This action moves them to action, and newness in their parish community.

> In the seventies they reinvented the parish and they said, "We're an urban parish, we've got all these poor people who are sleeping on our doorstep, let's figure out how we can help." I think it attracted people who believed it. They brought more people. I don't think it was the first two pastors, they weren't the nucleus of it, but they enabled it. In the Vatican II era there was lots of participation. The pastor

was a firm believer that he had such a big job already running all this stuff that was going on at ___ that he pretty much let the community run the liturgy and the music and so on. When our next pastor came, there was a proposal from the Archdiocese called Clustering. They were investigating whether they would cluster parishes so that there would be two priests for six parishes. This terrified us for two reasons: one, we were worried that we would be left out in the cold because we were so small with three or four hundred people; and we were competing with communities with three and four thousand in the suburbs. We would just get shut down. So, we had parish assemblies, and we had surveys, and we had focus groups, and we had dinner events to talk about it. I think we way over-reacted to it. One of the results of it was at a parish assembly they were sort of saying, "Well, (pastor) what do you think?" He's the pastor and he's just sitting in the pews like everybody else. He said, "We have to acknowledge that there probably will be a time when there is no priest, or not a regular priest, and we need to get prepared for that, and we want to continue." So, we started having lay prayer leaders and we started having more homilies by lay people. It used to be an unusual occurrence, and it became the norm. We started having the entire liturgy planning done by the worship committee. It was gradual. It was this idea that we've got this vision in the future that we may not have an ordained priest, and we've got to get ready because we don't want to lose what we've got. The people at (parish) are not shy, *s*o there were some people who didn't want to stand up and preach, but they were happy to make the bread. Or there's somebody who loves making textiles, so they would do the decorations. Somebody would take communion to the nursing homes because the priest couldn't do it all. (Harry 2009)

Vatican II appropriated the concept of koinonia as *communio*. Taking its understandings of the Church as Body of Christ, it looked toward Scripture to recover the biblical concept of koinonia. Paul's letter to Philemon, Philemon 4-7 speaks of sharing faith; the word used for sharing is koinonia (Osiek 2000, 135). In Scripture koinonia is the participation of the community in the life of the Creator God, Jesus, and the Spirit - the participation in the Trinitarian relationship of God (Fuchs 2008, 12).[104] This sharing participates also in the struggles of the community, the cares for the poor, the needy, and the marginalized in imitation of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 10:16 participation is seen as

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[104] Too often people speak of the Trinity in masculine imagery God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, a theologian who teaches at Fordham University in New York suggests that the female imagery has been absent but that the triune God could be imaged as creator, spirit, wisdom. Additionally, the triune God may be imaged in the images of mother, Sophia God, Sophia's child Jesus, Sophia spirit.

participation in the Body of Christ (Fuchs 2008, 14). Koinonia emphasizes a vertical

relationship with God, but also a horizontal relationship with the People of God and the

world (Gaillardetz 2006, 47).

<div align="center">Koinonia as Body of Christ - Relating</div>

A traditional understanding of the Trinitarian Church works to realize that a

koinonia with God in communion with Jesus Christ and the Spirit is relational (Brown

2006, 167). Koinonia involves the action of relating both to God and each other, the

action of participating, and the action of dialogue with Triune God and with others. Ken

understands this communion as a call to be Body of Christ.

> Well, Church [long pause] it's really tied into community, you know. Where do we contact the divine? Through the world you do, and through community you do, and through other people. It's like we are the Body of Christ and at the words of institution it's like, I think that's really strong that we are the Body of Christ and the bread is the symbol of us being the Body of Christ, not separate from us or Jesus made into a thing. (Ken 2009).

J. Y. Lee uses a "Christocentric" and Trinitarian approach to koinonia. The heart

of the Church's life is Eucharist, drawing people together to form the Body of Christ.

Eucharist allows people to experience in a unique way the presence of God in their midst.

From an Asian perspective Eucharist is a family affair, springing from respect for

ancestors and an ancestral rite that is not only remembering, but also service to one's

ancestors (J. Y. Lee 1996, 184-185). This adds a new dimension revealing family as the

primordial expression of koinonia (J. Y. Lee 1996, 197). Koinonia as family, in all of its

forms, reveals the interconnectedness and relationship of all God's people that koinonia

embodies.

Koinonia as Body of Christ – Acting

Koinonia begins in the understanding of the Church as Body of Christ (Schneiders 1999, 41). The body of Christ acts throughout history as the People of God who make Christ present and dynamic in the world from the resurrection of Christ to the end of time. This understanding brings the kindom of God here through the sacramental action of doing for others in the memory of Jesus, what Jesus does for us (Schneiders 1999, 41). "At the center of the Church's self consciousness as Church is its experienced oneness with the risen Jesus who is Christ and Lord...."(Schneiders 1999, 72).

> I don't know I do like the idea of Eucharist and communion and communion is bigger than wafer, that's for sure, and the whole, "This is my body" that's the whole action. You all here, you'll here, that's my body, so this finally for me stood for more than this hunk of bread, that this was all inclusive. (Colleen 2009)

This action toward communion, koinonia, by the people and by the Church is transformative praxis.[105] These actions, throughout history bring about a community of equal companions through the grace of the Spirit. "It is a kinship in hope that demonstrates the continuous movement of the Spirit of God in all times and places and peoples and cultures; a koinonia that demonstrates that the creed is not an abstraction but comes to birth in a continuous river of holy lives; a company of the friends of God and prophets today, in the past, and in the future" (Johnson 1999, 138).

> I would say that we need to gather in community, whether you do that in an established Church, however you do this, this is what we need to do. Community is very, very important. Breaking the bread of our lives together, sitting down and saying, "What kind of a month did you have?" We need to pray together. We need to hear one another's stories. We need to be compassionate with one another. That's the most important thing for us to do in this day and age because

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[105] It also speaks of the nature of Church not only as participatory and relationship but also as dialogical. This could be seen in the early Church where a synodal forum was developed as a means of articulating beliefs, reaching out to others, and corroborating these beliefs with others in the universal Church (Bliss 2007, 53). This drew the local Churches together in relationship.

we are so riddled by violence, people need to gather in a compassionate way.
(Sarah 2009)

<center>Koinonia as Body of Christ - Dialoguing</center>

As people gather in a compassionate way, as Sarah encourages, the Church deals

with diversity, divergence, and polarity. It is through the action of dialogue that it can

strive to realize a greater communion. The Church in its catholicity, communication, and

koinonia returns again to the necessity of non-consensus seeking dialogue. Dialogue in

the Church cannot happen without an ecclesial culture that wishes to listen, to discuss,

and to become responsive to all sides of the real questions and issues of all those in the

Church, including those on the margins (Hinze 2006, 240-243).

> There are a lot with us, so I don't know where the margins start. You know,
> we're a minority, but minorities are not always marginalized. Sometimes they are
> the essence. That's where the change, the potential lies. It's all involving.
> Someone might be marginalized and someone else might be way ahead of you,
> and you have to catch up. (Colleen 2009)

Hinze recognizes that "ultimately , an alternative theology of Church that

advocates dialogical discernment and decision making will be based on a more

comprehensive understanding of the communicative character of revelation, liturgy, and

the Church; on a revised understanding of all of the baptized faithful, and the ministries

and offices of the laity and ordained; and on a theology of the communion of the Catholic

Church in relation to other Christian communions and a theology of the People of God

that can illuminate the relations between all God's people in the world" (Hinze 2006,

266). Dialogue provides the most important ways for providing communion in the

Church as koinonia among its diverse members (Hinze 2006, 259).

Yet, catholicity, dialogue and koinonia raise questions as to their limits. What

priority do structures within the Church have? Is priority given to the universal church,

espousing an approach emphasizing a "Christocentric" approach rather than a Trinitarian approach? Should there be an emphasis on ecclesial authority, office, and ministry, protection of official teaching of the Church, and obedient response of the faithful? (Hinze 2001, 371). Or is priority given to the communion of the local church and the communion of churches emphasizing subsidiarity and the exercise of authority in ways that do not destabilize the working of the Spirit in the life of the Church? (Hinze 2001, 380). Can priority be given to a communion of churches which also include the margins in ways that do not suppress individual self-expression with authoritarianism? Diversity and polarity in the Church revolve around ideas of catholicity and communion, inclusion and exclusion and choice, authority and freedom. These are important questions in the Church today. They can be answered in both the affirmative and the negative depending on one's ecclesiology and model of Church.

Finding Common Ground

Cardinal Bernardin's Common Ground Project, founded in 1996 to address the acrimonious polarity present in the Church on a multitude of issues, is an example of the dialogic church. It gathered radical, conservative, liberal, and moderate Catholics together in dialogue to discuss pastoral issues in the Church in hope of coming to a consensus (Catholic Common Ground Initiative 2010).[106] Through dialogue and learning it hoped to avoid the distrust, polarization, and inflexibility in thinking about issues that characterized debate in the Catholic Church during the past few decades.

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[106] Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, chair of the U.S. Bishops Committee that drafted a pastoral letter on war and peace, articulated a consistent ethic of life from womb to tomb. "Those who defend the right to life of the weakest among us must be equally visible in support of the quality of life of the powerless among us: the old and the young, the hungry and the homeless, the undocumented immigrant and the unemployed worker" (Bernardin 1983). After Bernardin's untimely death, the group continued to meet and Bernardin's consistent ethic of life, a 'seamless garment,' in looking at the ethics of life from womb to tomb continues to give an opportunity for Catholics to move from one issue politics to a more systematic, consistent ethic of life.

Will the Catholic Church in the United States enter the new millennium as a Church of promise, augmented by the faith of rising generations and able to be a leavening force in our culture? Or will it become a Church on the defensive, torn by dissension and weakened in its core structures? The outcome, we believe, depends on whether American Catholicism can confront an array of challenges with honesty and imagination and whether the Church can reverse the polarization that inhibits discussion and cripples leadership. American Catholics must reconstitute the conditions for addressing our differences constructively, a common ground centered on faith in Jesus, marked by accountability to the living Catholic tradition, and ruled by a renewed spirit of civility, dialogue, generosity, and broad and serious consultation. (National Pastoral Life Center 1996)

In the twenty-first century polarization has become even more intense in the

Catholic Church, in the United States and throughout the world. The Church continues to

be challenged to enter the next decade as a Church of promise, confronting polarization

and difference, with honesty, imagination, dialogue, and generosity. Terry and Colleen

are anxious for the Church to be relevant and authentic in its approach to the challenges

they see today.

And again, what the Church stands for in terms of its whole social justice, you know? The other thing I do appreciate about the Church though is not well publicized; again we're not a one issue Church. You know one issue should not be the litmus. Nobody's for abortion. It is not the litmus test for every person. I have heard many, many priests and have read from other bishops that said we're not a one issue Church. And there are plenty of issues out there, you know womb to tomb, and the whole business. (Terry 2009)

Yah, I think that clinched it when they started to say that the gays couldn't be Catholic; and then the divorced and the remarried they couldn't be Catholic; and if you voted for someone who, they couldn't be Catholic. You know, it didn't make any sense. Gradually, they're kicking people out of the Church and then we set up programs for alienated Catholics. Well, we are alienating them. I thought, "There's something wrong here. We're alienating them and then the Catholic Church has a program for alienated Catholics to teach them how to get back into the Catholic Church." It didn't make sense. Logically it didn't make sense that way we were saying that they couldn't go to communion. So and so couldn't go to communion, you know. (Colleen 2009)

The Church is made for relationship; yet relationships are difficult. Because

understandings of Church differ, people's expectations differ. Some call for unity at all

costs understanding Church from one model. This model wishes to continue strict

ecclesial authority with little freedom of choice. This is seen as necessary to protect and

defend the collective wisdom of the Church tradition. Others are more comfortable in a

diverse Church, dialogic practices that agree to disagree, and a unity in diversity. "In God

there is unity in diversity and diversity in unity" (Orsy 2009, 5).

Catholics on the margins love the Catholic Church, identify deeply with it, and

are often pained by their alienation. Ted, one of my dialogue partners is an example.

> So we got word that a couple of weeks after Easter that our pastor is going to be
> gone. It was this feeling of, we are the branches, the whole thing about the tree
> and the branches thing. But it felt like the hierarchy is who's really in charge here.
> You can talk all you want and do all you want, but when it comes down to it, it is
> the hierarchy and it is a monarchy, and there is somebody in charge that can do
> anything they want. That really upset me. I work in organizational development. I
> work with people with transitions all the time and they brought in a transition
> team that was doing stuff that was fifteen years old; they didn't listen to the
> people. We had these wonderful things we were implementing and they put this
> associate priest in the role of the pastor. He says, "I've got this parish and I'm
> gonna take it for a spin," to quote him. I think the Church in a way is, at least in
> the U.S. from what I can see, is missing an opportunity to engage in community at
> a deeper level. I don't feel like I'm a child of the Church. I think we're kind of
> taught that. I feel like I'm an adult, mature. I want a mature relationship with the
> leaders of my faith and I don't think it's a mature relationship right now. The
> hierarchy needs to listen and I don't feel they're listening. I feel disconnected
> from the community. And that's it, not just from the hierarchal Church, the bigger
> Church - the big "C' Church, but also disconnected from the little "c" church.
> (Ted 2009)

Ted describes churches needing authenticity and listening. He also uses the terms

big "C" Catholic Church and the little "c" church, allowing a beginning appreciation of

his understanding of Church.[107] This suggests a move to ecclesiology, the theological

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[107] When talking about Church as part of society, Church as a large C can be understood as God's invisible
creation. Church with a large C can also be understood as universal, encompassing all members of society
and contributing to personal and social integration (Van der Ven 1996, 23). In the Catholic Church the
People of God are always seen as Church with a large C (Carroll 2009, 6). The Church with small c is the
visible institution. This Church can be understood as an association in which God is working in and
through people who come together as a community expressing their engagement in the world (Van der Ven

theory of Church, and consideration of the models of Church that arise in people's understanding of Church. This chapter uses a practical theological perspective rising from the praxis and experiences of Catholics. I write acknowledging the historical insight that the Church has continuously undergone change and is, in fact, undergoing change in this twenty-first century.

Ecclesiology: Models of Church

Institution, Denomination, Association

The Church as institution is one among many institutions in modern society. It can be seen as universal, encompassing all members of society. As a community of believers, with God as the source and destination of the Church, the Church is inclusive; made up of people who have not chosen each other, but rather ones who are brought together in solidarity and friendship as the Body of Christ (Van der Ven 1996, 43). The Church can also be understood as denomination that is one institution among many. It can also be seen as an association, open in freedom and choice to those who join, with autonomy to determine their closeness or distance in participation in the Church during their lives. Some on the margins of the Catholic Church, like Julia, understand the Catholic Church not only as Body of Christ, but also as an association, open to the freedom of choice.

> I wore something with bare shoulders and I was cold shouldered by all these old Italian women. You know, like they were making frumping noises around me and staring at me like I was inappropriate. At one point, one woman dropped a jacket on me before I went to Communion. I was angry, humiliated, and infuriated. Because I wouldn't walk into a Mosque with my shoes on. I respect other people's faith traditions. I was kind of like this is my faith tradition; I know what's acceptable and what is not. The fact is Jesus doesn't care whether I'm

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1996, 40). Tom's use of big "C" Catholic Church is meant to refer to the hierarchical Catholic Church, and his use of small "c" to refer to the Church parish.

wearing a tank top, and so I was so angry and really humiliated. I'm talking about this because I feel it might be useful, but it's not something I talk about. I walked out of the Church when it was over, I spat on the steps. I was pissed and I left. From that point on I would tell people I left the Catholic Church to beat the rush. So, for awhile after that I just didn't go to Church. (Julia 2009)

Many in the Church and on the margins call for dialogue and an adult relationship with Church officials and the wider Church community, despite the fact that sometimes their understanding of the Catholic Church is criticized by current twenty-first century official Church teaching and conservative Catholics.

I really would like Church to be more inclusive and I know that Catholic means universal and probably that is it was meant to be in the end. But something that accepts different perspectives would be good. You got to have structure, rules and guidelines but some of the arbitrariness that exists that we have discussed earlier, like women priests…A Church that looks at society and gives guidance to the current needs to the people involved in the Church, not necessarily based on whatever history or precedence told them to teach. I think that would be the main thing. A Church that looks at society and says this is what our followers need from us and we are going to give them that. Ultimately it will take a pope being appointed or voted on with the cardinals that has a more modern view. Ultimately it could be a decision could be made that individual communities could decide what to do within the framework of the larger teachings of the Church. So, I hadn't thought about it much, but maybe where individual communities have a little more say that goes on, but I can see how that could cause problems as well. (Terry 2009)

Well, I think the priest or the clergy in general, the hierarchy are teaching out of a fear mode rather than a freeing mode. I suppose a lot of it is fear of losing their status maybe, their bread and butter. I don't know, but I think there's a fear in them that I don't have. What priest would stand up there and not give you communion because you had a rainbow stole on. What would make them do that? I don't get it. I just don't get it. (Colleen 2009)

"It is self evident to everyone, Christians and non-Christians alike, that the community which calls itself the Church of Christ never lives in a social, cultural, or political vacuum" (Schillebeeckx 1994, 187). In this twenty-first century the Church is no longer the center of the society as it was centuries ago in an agrarian, preurban, and premodern time. The Church, along with other aspects of society (social, political,

economic, and cultural), is characterized by a certain specialization due to increased

institutionalization and differentiation of functions of society and the rigidity and

complexity of bureaucracy that emphasizes policies rather than personal loyalties (Jodock

2000, 338). A sense of individual autonomy and the leveling of social authority that arose

with modernity in the nineteenth and twentieth century's combines with this increased

institutionalization. The resulting polarization of the Church makes the Church, like

every other institution in society, an object of discussion, criticism and protest, as well as

the object of reflection, change, and conflict (Van der Ven 1996, 18).

Models of Church

Understanding One's Own Model of Church

The struggle with advances in technology and science and the resulting changes in

society and their effects on religion pits both a liberal reaction and a conservative reaction

rife with polarity, division, and diversity against each other. While diversity, polarity, and

division are not new, struggling with individualism, globalization, pluralism, and the

effects of moving to an urban technologically advanced society make this a contemporary

struggle. From this struggle models of Church arise (Van der Ven 1996, xiv). "To survive

in this skeptical world, theologians sought to make religion believable to rational,

scientifically attuned minds – and offered a set of moral precepts more than any claims of

miracle or transcendence. The liberal project, at least in the last century, has sought

uniquely modern forms from religious faith and practice, updating old doctrine and ritual

and eschewing any claims to timeless truth" (Ammerman 2006, 42-43). The conservative

approach has often claimed that more isolated sectarian communities with strict rules and

beliefs are necessary to endure the modern challenge. Yet, in this twenty-first century,

another paradigm may be more beneficial, one that brings in the *both-and* leading the

Church to the *in-beyond* understanding of being *in-both*. "The Church today is

experiencing, more acutely perhaps than in former times, an uneasy tension; but it is a

tension that ought to prove fruitful. Local Churches, and even certain groups within them,

are becoming ever more conscious of their distinctive characteristics within the universal

Church. There is a growing conviction that the grace of catholicity cannot unfold to its

full extent unless a genuine diversity exists between the ecclesial communities within the

same communion" (Pontifical Biblical Commission 1988, 5).

An examination of church models enables a consideration of the various

understandings of Church, and a chance to identify one's own primary working model.

"The Church is a mystery. It is a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God. It lies

therefore within the very nature of the Church to be always open to new and ever greater

exploration" (Pope Paul VI in Dulles 1987, 18). In the history of the Catholic Church

many images of church rise from Scripture.[108] "When an image is employed reflectively

and critically to deepen one's theoretical understanding of reality it becomes what today

is called a 'model'" (Dulles 1987, 23).

New paradigms for models of church develop in response to changes in the

church and society, helping the church to find its identity in a changing world. No one

model can effectively describe the church, as each has its weaknesses and its strengths.

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[108] Among these are communities of disciples sent to the world (Romans 15, Mark 13), community of visible witness through faith and virtue (1 Peter, Revelations, Acts), and community of healing and reconciliation (Matthew, Luke, John) (Senior 1995, 6-7). Paul Minear noted 96 images of church from the New Testament in his seminal work first published in 1960. These include members of Christ, communion of the Holy Spirit, unleavened bread, the people of God. (Minear 2004, 268-269). "It was really the pastoral orientation of Vatican II, so refreshingly enunciated in the *Constitution on the Church* (*Lumen Gentium*) and the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*), that gave rise to a variety of different models with strongly biblical roots. Re-imaging the Church as the People of God, Body of Christ, Sacrament, Communion, Servant, were obvious departures from the previous notion of the Church as "*societas perfecta*…." (Ciuba 1987, 66)

Questions of each model are pertinent to a discussion of models of church. In terms of

this model, what are the relationships that unite the church? Who are the beneficiaries of

the church's activities? What is the purpose of the church and its ministry? (Dulles 1987,

190-194). These questions enable an understanding of the strength that weaknesses of

each model and a deeper understanding of one's own model of church. Models of church

can synthesize what is already known, as well as point out inconsistencies and

incongruence reflecting problems in the models of church. Every model must be critically

contextual. "Models of the church must not be dictated by cultural reality, but they must

be voiced and practiced in ways that take careful account of the particular time and

circumstance into which God's people are called" (Brueggemann 1991, 129).

Models of Church in Context

Ted places his model of Church in the context of Vatican II, the turbulent 60's and

his family's experiences.

> I grew up in the sixties, Vatican II, and the social justice and the change in our communities. My parents started being right in the middle of that. They were older for that time period. But they were very much making that transition into the new Church. We grew up in [City, State] which was very conservative and it's the Mason, Dixon line of the _____ in many ways. There's a lot of racism and bigotry. Not many African Americans live, well, they couldn't live in the community for very long. They would be chased out, I remember as a kid. The reason I brought that up is that my dad went through a metamorphosis of sorts in the sixties with Vatican II. Even before that, things were shifting. He was a teacher. At that time, as a little kid, we would have two Catholic brothers stay with us, and they were African Americans. And it was the first experience of being with somebody who's black and living with us for a couple of days probably. May have been longer. We would have people come visit with us, stay with us. We would kind of welcome people of different orders, usually Catholic. They were very much making that transition into the new Church. (Ted 2009)

Van der Ven's Five Models of Church

Models proposed by Van der Ven are particularly interesting in the current

context of today's Catholic Church in the United States. Ecclesial models range from

church as the center of society and therefore coextensive with society to church as a

subsection or part of society. Echoes of these models can be heard in both conversations

about the Catholic Church and its needs in society from the margins of the Catholic

Church in the U.S. as well as in conversations within the hierarchical Church as well.

These ecclesial models because they are revealed in the context of economic, political,

social, and cultural context can be seen in the Catholic Church throughout its history in

the United States. The choice for a particular model suggests a preference for the position

of the church in society (Van der Ven 1996, 3-27).[109]

Van der Ven's five normative ecclesial models differ in their resistance or

acceptance of modernity (Van der Ven 1996, 27-31). Three of the models – the amodern

church, the amodern basic community, and the critical-modern basic community –

critique modernity. The first two models are marked by required obedience to the

authority of the church, a clear distinction between two classes in the church, i.e. clergy

and laity, based on the divine origin of its ministry, and an understanding that this church

bears universal truth that cannot be questioned (Van der Ven 1996, 28). Echoes of these

models can be heard as some within the Catholic hierarchy call for a smaller, holier

Church and retrenchment toward a pre-Vatican II Church. In the amodern church, as the

absolute bearer of faith, people want to return to a time when the church was the center of

society. It is the only model to insist that the church must become the center of society

again (Van der Ven 1996, 28). The amodern basic community's goal is to isolate the

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[109] Models for church suggested by Avery Dulles, a Jesuit theologian in the Catholic Church, are widely used and include five models originally proposed in 1978 and a sixth additional model proposed by Dulles in 1987. These are: institution, mystical communion, sacrament, herald, servant, and school of discipleship. These models seek to understand church as community in terms of a basic paradigm drawn from ordinary human experience (Dulles 1987, 15-33).

church from society as a small and holy few. Both the amodern and amodern basic

communities resist modernization, turning away from society. Weaknesses in these

models include a lack of dialogue with diversity, exclusion of those with differing views,

and benefits to those in power in the church. The third model, the critical-modern basic

community, does not turn away from society but rather engages actively and critically

with society with the purpose of transforming it (Van der Ven 1996, 30). The critical-

modern basic community, small in size, emphasizes the transcendence of the Gospel that

the church proclaims and the apocalyptic time of the kindom of God is happening now.

It is marked by demand for adherence to moral and religious principles and high personal

and communal devotion. This is the model found in small Christian communities within

larger parish communities. Bill and Lily speak here of their interaction with several of

these models of Church.

> I would go to Mass and get angry at the priest for what he was saying to the
> children. About if they don't go to Mass, if they don't go to confession, if they
> don't go to confession before going to Communion. It's like Jesus didn't say
> that. He said, "Sit down, I'll feed you." He didn't ask how old you were, he
> didn't ask you what you believed. He just said, "Sit down and I'll feed you." And
> the priest was getting really angry with the kids. "This is how you behave, this is
> how you believe." I would leave Mass and the kids would walk back to school
> and I would drive and I would just pray, pray, pray that I would let that go before
> I got back to school. I didn't want the kids picking up on it. (Lily 2009)

> I think I get more energy from the small faith community. You know, our
> liturgies are a couple of hours or so and they go by in a flash. I think most people
> would recognize it for what it is. It's more I think, in line with the early Church,
> you know the home liturgies, the home sharing, a sharing of faith and spirituality
> and trying to tie what's going on in our lives with readings, and kind of
> supporting one another. (Bill 2009)

In contrast, the final two ecclesial models – modern denomination and critical

modern denomination – both emphasize personal engagement and religious freedom and

accept modernization (Van der Ven 1996, 22-23). These are marked by open

communication between the individual and church tradition. In the modern

denominational model, church seen as one institution among many in society guarantees

freedom in the church (Van der Ven 1996, 28). In the critical modern denominational

model the people of the church are aware of the negative consequences of modernization

- economic injustice, social alienation, and loss of cultural meaning. Emphasis in this

model is placed on the transcendence of the Gospel through metaphors of time (Van der

Ven 1996, 28). God's presence in both the past and the future is revealed in the coming of

Christ into the world that both interrupts the presence and allows it to retain some

resemblance of consistency (Van der Ven 1996 27-30). This model of church tries to

contribute to the lessening of the needs and the suffering of the people. In these models

engagement with society and service to the world are key and create bonds within the

church (Van der Ven 1996, 22-30). While emphasis in religious freedom is more

congruent with modern American culture, the time needed to dialogue with diverse views

requires a commitment from all involved. Response to its members and society and the

community over church structures offers benefits to the church, but also requires

introspection so that the church maintains its mission and identity.

Dialogue partners on the margins of the Catholic Church call for a Church with

echoes of a critical modern denominational model. Anne and Harry describe their ideas

of this model of Church.

> What do I think of when I think of Church? A sense of community and the sense
> of change. The sense that the Gospel asks us to change things in the world we are
> in and not to rest and not to sit still. That sense of movement and momentum, I
> think is the most important thing about it to me. Some of that is personal
> momentum and change. And maybe that's part of what I identify with being
> Catholic because I grew up in a service and justice Catholic place, to me that's
> what Catholic means. It wasn't until I got farther out that I understood that that's

not everybody else's experience as Catholic but that's the only experience of Catholic that I'm interested in. (Anne 2009)

I think one of the things about it, I don't think we're returning to the roots intentionally by saying, "Ok, what are the roots? Let's go there." I think we're sitting there saying, "What's the right thing to do, Oh, look, we're just like a similar Christian community." I think it's more like we're choosing the things that are just, and the things we think are most empowering and most enlivening and they coincide with the early Church. So, we're not aiming to be a first century community, I think we're aiming to be, twenty-first century, and I think it has amazing correlations. (Harry 2009)

Brueggemann's Models of Church

Because people on the margins are asking questions about tradition, texts, and living into new, communal ways of being church in a church marked by increasing polarity in conservative and progressive views Brueggemann's models of church provide a helpful perspective. Brueggemann explores the Hebrew Scriptures to suggest models of church that are deeply reflective of social crisis and historical circumstance and applicable far beyond the worldview of Hebrew Scripture worlds. For Brueggemann, an examination of church models requires thinking about the place where the person and the community are situated with God and what modeling is appropriate in the present time and circumstance (Brueggemann 1991, 129). The three models, a premonarchic model as a *new church start*, a monarchic model as *temple community*, and a post-exilic model as a *textual community*, appropriates the past traditions and reshapes the earlier traditions for its own use (Brueggemann 1991, 136). [110]

A Temple Community

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[110] In the Hebrew Testament the temple community, at the center of society, was from 1000 BCE (Before the Common Era) to 587 BCE as Jerusalem established the monarchy and dynasty (Brueggemann 1991, 129). This is the core model for the people of the Hebrew Testament, the temple model, in which the temple, the role of kings, sages influential in the establishment, and prophets all played a part in the temples stability (Brueggemann 1991, 131). Early Israel and the new church start model can be located at the time of Moses to David 1250 BCE to 1000 BCE and incorporates the exodus period and a non-unified, socio-economically marginalized community (Brueggemann 1991, 131-132).

The *temple community* model is marked by a convergence of church and state,

relative stability, members whose lives moved from the religious dimension into

secularization, and a visible and funded leadership (Brueggemann 1991, 130). These

were present in ancient Israel, particularly around the time of David, and are present now.

For the Hebrew people the temple orders the civil imagination of the people of the time.

In the temple community model established religion serves the powerful by stabilizing

power and knowledge at the expense of others in the church and community

(Brueggemann 1991, 130). Prophets exist in this model calling for a more radical and

purer vision of faith. Analogies have been made between this time in the Hebrew

Scripture and the Constantinian establishment of the Church. Brueggemann suggests that

this is the governing model of modern established Christianity in the Western church

(Brueggemann 1991, 130-131).   Deb lives in an area where expected participation in a

church is part of the fabric of the community. Sarah talks about being a prophet in today's

Church.

> Coming down here, it's a very different dynamic from anywhere that I've been.
> I'm sure you've seen those differences, but you're in the Bible Belt where you can
> be washing the kitchen one day and your neighbor is banging on your door bell to
> offer you a Bible. There's just such a culture of religion and such a culture for
> even friendship around that religion. Even moving here and I'm in town with no
> family and no other real connection and I ask myself the question, well, ok I'm
> still trying to establish my roots in a personal kind of way, do I necessarily want
> to do it? I've gotten multiple offers. "Hey, come to this Bible study, come to
> church with us, come to this, that and the other thing." Do I want to make that my
> social outlet when I may not necessarily agree with a lot of the terms? I guess
> that has been something I've debated being down here. You're in such a dense
> environment, but I don't know that any part of being down here has led me to say,
> "Hey, I really want to do this like, I'll join the Church to fit in." (Deb 2009)

> You know, I do believe that a prophet is one who stands up and speaks when
> everybody else is seated and silent and who in their right mind wants to be called
> a prophet? My community knows that I stand in protest when we have these
> liturgies without inclusivity. I said to them, "If I am not present at the Eucharist

would it be o.k. if I come to dinner?" "Of course." One on one, that's what I get all the time, so I didn't go. However, Father ____ noticed that I wasn't there and I went over to greet him when we all sat down to dinner and he said, "Did you come to mass?" I said, "No." He said, "Why not?" I said, "It's another silent protest." He took my hands in his and said, "I get it." So, that's what I struggle with... Picture this, Jerusalem is under siege again, the barbarians are on the other side of the wall. The people within Jerusalem are starving, their water supply is cut off and they're skulking around in the shadows, once the sun starts to go down, so that they maybe will find a crumb around or something to eat, but they are skulking in the shadows because every night the barbarians come up on the ladders on the wall. They stand up on the wall and they taunt these poor people. Then one night, this one scraggly Jewish man comes out of the shadows and walks over to the wall and engages the barbarians in conversation and his call to his people is, "You have to come to the wall. You have to go to the wall." So I said to___, "We have to go to the wall." When you go to the wall, you're seen, you're heard. That was Isaiah, by the way. (Sarah, 2009)

A New Church Start

The *new church start* is a community birthed in marginality (Brueggemann 1991, 133). Such a community, while not having stable resources, is compelled by a shared commitment to a central story and a distinctive social passion (Brueggemann 1991, 133). Marked by improvisation and borrowing from the culture around it, what is borrowed is transformed by covenant and a passion for liberation and dependence on the movement of the Spirit. A *new church start,* such as Israel in the premonarchic period of Moses, "entails planting of an alternative community among people who were ready for risk and shunned established social relations because such resources and patterns inevitably led to domestication and bondage" (Brueggemann 1991, 133).

> Yeah, I think that's where we were operating, on the margins of the traditional Roman Catholic Church. I picked it because of what it was doing, and who the people were and what it stood for. It started an emergency shelter, a temporary emergency shelter in 1982 and it still is running. Its involvement in the neighborhood and its justice issues, and people committed and then the whole sense of an alive progressive community are important. Then the new priest wanted to see that we were regularized. What it meant is that they said we would have to cease the liturgy as it had been through three pastors. It would destroy our prayer, and destroy our community and no one, well, there are a few people, but

the vast majority were like 'no.' We had three discussions. The second meeting we said, 'What would it mean if people went through every part of the mass and what that means, and what this means and what we'd have to do, the detail in the order of the mass etc.?' A couple of people went through that really, from their background. Ones who really knew it. So then, at the third meeting, because we were conscious that this is our decision, that we have to go one of two ways, we voted. And there were 119 people there and the vote was 113 to 6 that we keep going. Why would we want to regularize? So we moved the liturgy six blocks away. I mean it's not mass according to the rubric, the *GIRM* [*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*]. But sure, Rome defines what that word means. So, I don't need to use the word. But it's Eucharist. (Ken 2009)

A Textual Community

Brueggemann's final model, the *textual community*, works at the development of strategies and mechanisms for survival in a universalizing culture where the community has little influence over public policy (Brueggemann 1991, 133-134). As a community on the margins, recovery of memory and rootedness and connectedness is a primary task of such a community as is the intense practice of hope (Brueggemann 1991, 134). A textual community is engaged in formulating and interpreting text in a way that does not search for consensus. It rather struggles with the text, engages, and enters into the tradition of speech, reflection, discernment, and imagination as they witness to another reality. This textual community uses the materials of earlier models but constantly re-imagines and reinvents the earlier texts for the sake of its marginalized community in its present crisis (Brueggemann 1991, 133). What happens is the textual community leads to a *new church start*. Brueggemann suggests that this is happening today (Brueggemann 1991, 134). This movement from temple to text is what some people in the margins of the Catholic Church are doing as they search for authentic ways of living out their Catholic faith.

I'm a traditional Catholic. I'm not someone who would necessarily rally for inclusive language, although I know inclusive language works and I use it. I wouldn't have said, "Oh, we mustn't say this mass unless we cut out all the lords, and ladies and all the men and male language." I'm also not someone who would go out there and change the liturgy so that people don't understand it; so that

people don't recognize it. I am someone who feels that we take our tradition seriously. There's a capital "T" Tradition and a small "t" tradition and both of them need to be honored in their own way. Both of them also need to have adjustments with every age. This generation is not new. As we are marching, we are pilgrims marching on the way to God. Every generation brings their own culture, their own understanding to the party. Jesus didn't say don't do that. Jesus said love one another. Be with one another. Care for one another, that's all Jesus said. What connects us is coming to the table and being included at the table, and I think we need to have an ongoing understanding of history. We need to have an ongoing understanding of what our rights and responsibilities are in this Church and we also have to have a healthy cynicism. We have to develop a healthy cynicism about what the hierarchy is telling us and how much we can buy, if anything at all we are going to bring out a new Church from the ashes. Because right now, what's happening. We're hospicing this old Church. It's very evident to me that this is a dying Church. People are disgusted with the secrecy; they are having a hard time buying into the old Latin that's coming back. The only ones that are, are the more conservative young people who've never even seen it before and it's interesting [to them]. (Miriam 2009)

Reimagining and Reinventing For the Sake of the Community

The movement to reimagining and reinventing the earlier texts for the sake of the community that is marginalized happens in this twenty-first century as the dominant models of church no longer hold. "A move from temple to text, requires a reconsideration of our social location, of the resources on which we can and must count, and of the work we have to do about the infrastructure that has largely collapsed" (Brueggemann 1991, 138). This movement from temple to text requires that those on the margins recover memory, examine their roots and the ways in which they are connected, practicing hope, studying, and interpreting texts imaginatively so that they can engage and discern ways of living to another reality (Brueggemann 1991 134-136).

Listening to other people's stories and some people welcoming us to share our story, where we were and where we were going, it was an incredibly enriching experience, and I think that was one of the turning points to experience that. And I think it began to raise questions in my mind. Then, I started doing some reading which is a dangerous thing, you know. You start looking at stuff. Suddenly the scripture classes that I'd been taking, New Testament, primarily the Gospels, the whole contemporary scripture scholarship, you can't really say, well, it's in the

Bible, this is what really happened. Oh gee! I went to hear a couple of lectures by Ray Brown a couple of years ago, and then I had a Gospel of Luke class and things just started clicking. So, between that and my own life experience, reading a little bit of the history of the Church. When you start reading about whether it's the whole line notion of celibacy, the history of ministry in the Church, you start studying about the early Church, the life of the early Church and what those early Church communities looked like and sounded like, who was doing what, and you start questioning and you start saying, why (Bill 2009)

Both Van der Ven's and Brueggemann's models of church speak to today's context. Van der Ven presents models seen within the church and within marginalized communities as they react to the stresses of postmodernity. Brueggemann describes how communities deal with and grow in their faithfulness to God as church models become more comfortable and a part of the center. Diversity gives rise to division, causing marginalization, and these marginalized communities begin to explore their faith commitment as a consequence. This gives rise to new ways of being church for that era. Brueggemann's textual community as the church today and a new church start provide one means of framing the experiences of my dialogue partners on the margins of the church.

The purpose of this chapter has been to elaborate a trinitarian ecclesiology of church and examine models of church that may suggest ways of seeing church on the "margins" today. In this sense, a trinitarian ecclesiology moves the church toward catholicity, dialogue, and communion through its understanding of itself as Body of Christ in union with the Spirit and as koinonia. Dialogue partners on the margins speak of these in their experience including within in small communities. An exploration of different models of church provides a route through a variety of models of church that can be seen within Catholicism within the United States today. It presents two very different lenses through which to explore the models of church on the margins. Both

provide important information. Van der Ven's models orient models of church in relation to postmodernity, bringing with it the availability of choice, plurality, and diversity. Brueggemann's models provide a focus through the lens of social crisis.

This next chapter addresses choice, plurality and diversity within the context of practical theology. It focuses on praxis and the dialogical without consensus. Looking at practical theology as a field that welcomes a diversity of voices, it examines the significance of other knowledges in practical theology and the privileging of outside marginalized voices.

> We are entering a new epoch where we humans need to engage in a profound listening to voices long forgotten: those of the sea, the rivers, the mountains, the forests, the stars, the moon, those arising from our genetic memory – our ancestors, both human and otherwise; those of our own bodies – mine, yours, the friend who has been abused, the new baby, the youngster, the old woman now wrinkled and worn, the earth itself. Key to this is a broader sense of kinship. In a very real way there is no 'other'; the other is myself, because we all come from the same source. (Ress 2006, 30)

> The church is basically a group of people who come together because of a common belief. There is a common belief in the sense that God works through people. Nobody is in lock step and we're not all the same...You look at things in different ways but there is a common belief and we don't exist just by ourselves. (Luke 2009)

5

Toward Pentecost Listening: A Trinitarian, Reciprocal Practical Theology

On Pentecost it says they all spoke in different languages so that everybody understood. We need Pentecost listening for all these Pentecost voices. (Cindy 2009)

Today with the polyphony of voices expressing a myriad of diverse opinions, clamoring to be heard, how does one wade through the anthology of ideas, judgments, and feelings? How does one make sense of those voices that are different or unusual because they have been rendered voiceless in the past? One of the tasks of practical theological action is to welcome all relevant voices as a part of the process of constructing the theological questions, voices that need to be part of suggesting and assessing the alternatives.

> As far as I'm concerned one of the most important things for the Church today is to understand the importance of change. It was good in the first century; it might not be good in the fourth, so you change. And it might not be good in the eighteenth, and it might not be good today. And this is the very foundation. What they had in those days was important, and it was the best they had. They had a big thing up above and then the thing down below. As time came along, they begin to realize that the earth is not the center, and as time goes on we find out that we are part of a tremendous celestial organization. And we change. And then, you get into the physics of the thing, the atomic structures and all of this kind of stuff and all of these things have to be integrated into what God brings to us; because God worked through the Jews of old, through mythology, and somehow now he works through us. We have to change. (Luke, 2009)

Change, according to Luke, is not only imperative but also inevitable. Practical theology involves change that is transformation. As practical theology takes place in the praxis of everyday life, it becomes embodied and theologizes from the historical and material contexts of people and communities. Theology, once just concerned with the church, expanding its theological spheres of action to the world and our local community (Davaney 2000, 168).

> Peter Berger's book, *The Heretical Imperative*,[111] is very specific – one of the major characteristics of being a modern person is choice. And you can't get away from it. And no one, no group of people in the history of the world had, are faced with the kind of choices we have. My contention is that Bishops do not live in the context of the fact, of the same context that people do, or they're denying the own modernity and that people are faced with choice. And their job is to help them make choices and choices through teaching and they've abandon the role as teachers. (Dan 2009)

A Methodological Understanding of Practical Theology

In this chapter, I propose a practical theology that is relational, engaging other disciplines, listening to diverse voices, and seeking dialogue that does not require agreement or consensus. I center this discussion of practical theology within a framework offered by Richard Osmer.[112] Following a brief description of Osmer's task-based approach to practical theology, I explore how a Trinitarian theological rationale might situate practical theology in relationship. Van der Ven's model of empirical practical theology suggests that practical theology privilege the social sciences, but above all makes the case for a cross-disciplinary approach. I conclude by exploring the sources of justification of my practical theology work – experience, scripture, tradition, and reason follows. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the hybrid transformative-emancipatory theological and social science paradigm that underpins my practical theological work.

Practical Theology Rationale

A theological rationale includes the central theological principles about why a

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[111] Peter Berger, a sociologist at Boston University has written books on sociological theory, the sociology of religion, and Third World development. His work explores the relationship of the individual to society and understands that the social structure revolves around the idea that language is the most important sign system for human society.

[112] Richard Osmer is a practical theologian affiliated with Princeton Theological Seminary. He proposes a cross-disciplinary model of practical theology model especially suited for use by in ministry.

practical theologian works in a particular way. My theological rationale begins with a

doctrine of God as Trinity informed by pneumatology. An anthropological understanding

of the person made in the image of the Trinity reveals the person in relationship with God

and others, interconnected, united yet diverse, and formed by each other's difference.[113]

Practical theology' s foundation begins with both the understanding of God's presence

with humanity and of God's acting in the divine economics of salvation in the world in

the past, in the present, and in the future without collapsing those together (Purves 1998,

224). Practical theology's appreciation of relationship fosters a welcoming of diversity,

reciprocity in action, a freedom that realizes potential in difference (McDougall 2003,

197).[114] This suggests practical theology includes other disciplines in the conversation,

incorporates divergent voices, and involves those who would not be normally included in

the theological conversation. It seeks the work of the Spirit in the world in these diverse

conversations.

Engaged with the World

Practical theology's history encompasses a variety of meanings in diverse

contexts, merging 'pastoral theology' to the interdisciplinary approach to practical

theology that includes the social sciences. Practical theology for some understands "its

task is to trace and think through the interactions or lack thereof between Christianity

inside the Church and the outside of it, as well as between religious and non-religious

phenomena in society" (Van der Ven 1998, 38). [115] As it accomplishes such a task, it

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[113] Chapters 3 and 4 discuss an anthropology that is Trinitarian based and an ecclesiology that is Trinitarian respectively.
[114] This could be understood in terms of Moltmann's notion of friendship in which a sharing of one's self and recognition of differences are the basis for reciprocity and equality (McDougall 197).
[115] Practical Theology arose from experience and practice in the Church (Woodard and Pattison 2000, 23). It has its basis, in part, within the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason and the turn to the subject that privileged experience as a source of knowledge. Thus, Schleiermacher was one of the first to suggest that

guides the Christian community theologically in its engagement with the world, helping it determine practices for Christian life in light of social, historical, and cultural conditions (Holmes 2010, 42). [116]

A Dialogic Action

Practical theology is a theology concerned with action (Purves 1998, 222). It can be described as a "practice" or a means of living life (Veling 2005, 3). As a practice, it opens a dialogue bringing contemporary experiences, questions, and actions from the praxis of everyday life experiences into conversation with religious belief, tradition, and practice (Woodward and Pattison 2000, 7).[117] Its hermeneutic process of interpretation and reinterpretation situates practical theology's concern for action both in the church and in the world. This hermeneutical process engages with the complexity of multiple, shifting perspectives in this multicultural and pluralistic world concerned for the influence of power, culture, gender, and race on traditional theological methods (O'Brien 1999, 317). This suggests the necessity of keeping all voices involved in the dialogue, and a need for a metacognitive and metalinguistic pause to critically take note of the progress of the dialogue, what is being said, how it is being said, and its effects (O'Brien 1999, 316-317).

Centered in Praxis and the Empirical

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human experience in religion connects the Christian faith and humanity (Heitink 1999, 19). Insisting that all theology is practical, he held together the two poles of description and evaluation as essential to hermeneutical understanding in theology, asserting the value of historical interpretation and knowledge of the person (Thiselton 2007, 124).

[116] Practical theologian Nathaniel Holmes, Jr. is an assistant professor of Religion at Florida Memorial University.

[117] James Woodward is canon of St. George Chapel Windsor, England and a Research Fellow of Cardiff University; Stephen Pattison is a practical theologian and professor of Religion, Ethics, and Practice at University of Birmingham, England.

Practical theology roots itself in praxis which is experience critically reflected upon in this global world. Praxis in practical theology is transformative action, involving both *poesis* that is making things, and *orthopraxis* that is authentic transformatory action (Forrester 2000, 7). A critical praxis is the starting point for theorizing about God's communication and action (Heitink 1999, 6-9). 118). Practical theology's hermeneutic and theorizing involves an individual and communal dialogue with experience, tradition, scripture, and the practical (Heitink 1999, 151; Browning 1996, 4). Being able to talk about God, in God's immanence and salvific work without collapsing the two together affirms that human experiences are of God. This affirmation of God's presence in experience points toward a practical theology rooted in a Trinitarian understanding which embraces the empirical, beginning with experience of the world and God's engagement with all humanity (Purves 1998, 224).

A Public Endeavor

Practical theology is contextual. It understands context in its spatial and temporal dimensions by using both memory and anticipation of the present lived into the future to attend to its overall work (Cahalan and Neiman 2008, 80). Given its engagement with the world, practical theology situates itself as a public endeavor that is not relegated to a public few but incorporates all views, engaging in dialogue with the reality of this world, and addressing issues at the forefront of society (Forrester 2004, 3-7). As a public discipline, it tries to integrate theology into the weave and fabric of everyday living (Veling 2005, 3). With the plurality and diversity in postmodern society, practical

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[118] Gerben Heitink, a practical theologian from the Netherlands, uses an encyclopedic approach to practical theology; Andrew Purves, a practical theologian from Scotland, who taught for many years at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, roots his understanding of practical theology in the Trinity.

theology searches for insights in the 'orienting concerns' of a community's central stories (O'Brien 1999, 318). This dialogue anticipates transformation with the intrinsic thankfulness that grace is causing new insights for bringing God's kindom present in the experiences of life (O'Brien 1999, 317).

Action in Service of the Common Good

The starting point of the praxis is the world as it should be. The essential purpose of practical theological action and reflection is to engage in a dialogue between a faith community's vision of the world, given whom God is and what the actual world is, leading to conversation and action that is both realistic and faithful to the faith community's vision (Cowan and B. Lee 1997, 71). "Practical theology is concerned for both the authentic appropriation of the communal religious story and the development of strategic commitment and action in service of the common good" (O'Brien 1999, 316).[119]

Practical theology rooted in the Trinity and the life and action of Jesus includes emphasis on relationship and communion with the poor and those who suffer. "A trinitarian practical theology of communion is a socio-critical theology that names the lies behind the present experience of the denial of fullness of relational beings wherever that occurs" (Purves 1998, 238). A preference for the suffering and the poor compels an awareness of the politics of exclusion/inclusion not only present in the everyday experience, but also in the work of practical theology. Paying attention to power dynamics and questioning whose voices are included and whose are left out brings attention to what a belief means for the local community and all affected by the actions of

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[119] Maureen O'Brien is a practical theologian and a professor at Duquesne University working in ministry education; Terry Veling is a practical theologian and head of McAuley School of Theology at Australian Catholic University. Michael Cowan is a psychologist and practical theologian at Loyola University New Orleans and Bernard Lee is a practical theologian at St. Mary's University in Texas.

the practical theological work. Practical theology with a trinitarian foundation calls for an

eschatological disquiet when this communion is broken or not established in any area of

human experience (Purves 1998, 238). A practical theology that works for the common

good in trinitarian ways suggests a politics of communion by seeking a life of

communion with God and one another in the practices of the reality of the day to day.

Practical Theology as Discipleship

Practical theology ultimately is the work of discipleship. The task of practical

theology is to promote authentic discipleship in its concrete and contemporary situations

(Cahalan and Neiman 2008, 67-70). Practical theologians Kathleen Cahalan and James

Neiman suggest practical theology as discipleship functions as a field and a discipline

containing a diversity of connected expressions including ministry, teaching, and research

(2008, 64-78). Practical theology practices its discipleship in communal, theological, and

practical ways (Cahalan and Neiman 2008, 67-69).

Models of Practical Theology

> We had a good background [when we were trained] in theology as young priests,
> but where did the background of theology come from? When we were in the
> ministry we never looked at the Bible as the foundation of theology, we never did.
> Before we could study theology, we had to study philosophy, a basic introduction
> to the sciences, and when we were in high school we studied general science and
> we studied chemistry, and that laid a foundation for the world. So it gives you a
> foundation, it makes you realize that the world is a much bigger thing; that God is
> not bound in a box by the Bible or by the world by itself, he's much bigger than
> that. The world is his creation. (Luke 2009)

Practical theology differentiates into different categories in several ways. Focus

can be on historical and philosophical underpinnings, as Luke suggests. It can also follow

geographical location, and ways of dealing with multiple disciplines in practical

theology, or methodology. [120] Practical theology is often categorized by the public to

which it speaks. Theologian David Tracy names three publics and divides theology into

three categories, fundamental theology, systematic theology, and practical theology

(Tracy 1981, 56-57). [121] He suggests each category tends to speak most to a particular

public: academia, the church, or society. Each helps theology approach its task of seeking

to understand experience. These categories and publics examine three contexts for

theological scientific work: the university, the church, and society and culture. Each

public utilizes a corresponding mode and approach. The university follows an intellectual

scientific mode and critical approach. the Church follows an ecclesial mode and dogmatic

approach and society and culture follow an ethical mode and existential approach (Tracy

1981, 22). Practical theology addresses all three publics. It engages with the Church's

pastoral needs: preaching, catechesis, worship, spiritual and moral formation (McBrien

1994, 55). Practical theologians who speak to this public are Don Browning (1934-2010)

and his fundamental practical theology, and James and Evelyn Whitehead.[122] Practical

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[120] Using a historical and philosophical focus, practical theology can also be categorized through studying the historical impact of the original sources, much as Johann Baptist Metz and Gerard West do. Within this category, a focus on systematic theology and a quest for truth is central in the practical theology of Clodovis Boff and Duncan Forrester, Johannes van der Ven, and Don Browning, respectively. In categorizing by geographical location, U.S. practical theologians focus on correlations and possible connections, European practical theologians search for possible distinctions and clarify differences, and Latin American liberation theologians give a central place to the position of the subject as an avenue toward knowledge. Ways of dealing with interdisciplinary issues in practical theology will be discussed later in this chapter. A categorization by methodological focus used by Heitink yields four focuses: empirical-analytical with an example in Van der Ven's work, political-critical seen in Forrester's work, normative-deductive in the case of Don Browning's fundamental practical theology being an example, and pastoral-theological with James and Evelyn Whitehead as an example (Heitink 1999, 171-178).

[121] Tracy is also known for his "revisionist" model for doing theology, expanding models of correlation. He espouses a postmodern framework that uses both critical reflection and reinterpretation of authentic Christianity and authentic secular thought in a revisionist model, understanding "a contemporary fundamental Christian theology can best be described as philosophical reflection upon the meanings present in common human experience and language, and upon the meanings present in the Christian fact" (Tracy 1996, 43).

[122] James and Evelyn Whitehead gave practical theology and Christian ministry formation a method of theological reflection. It brings the Christian tradition, personal experience, and cultural resources into

theology examines the public of society, including the technological, economic, political and cultural world, being mindful of the way in which the religious message is in relationship with public policy (McBrien 1994, 55). The public theology of Duncan Forrester, the social analysis model of Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, [123] and the political theology of Johann Metz[124] are examples. The practical theologian, who engages the public of the academy, does so by justifying solutions through rigorous academic, empirical, and pragmatic means. Van der Ven's empirical theology is an example. A brief look at representatives from each of these practical theologies will be a foundation for my addressing all three publics with this dissertation work in Chapter 6. This next section begins with a look at Osmer's development of a methodological understanding for practical theology.

Methodological Understandings

> The more you get involved with people's lives, the more horizontal the God concept is and your spirituality is involved with other people. So I think that is what happens, you become more involved with people's experiences. (Colleen 2009)

> We are the people of God, we are all the people of God, and we are all called by our baptism to be priests in our own way. Jesus calls us and God calls us to do different things. He gives us different talents so that we can grow and nurture each other. As I see it, beyond the central piece and the focal piece of the seven sacraments, we have a lot of room, and a lot of room for creativity and understanding of how people, all people, can participate. (Miriam 2009)

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conversation with each other for theological reflection to address concerns in ministry. See Whitehead and Whitehead (1995).

[123] Holland and Henriot employ a pastoral model of theology with roots in Liberation Theology. Their praxis model, a pastoral circle committed to story as the primary data of theology, centers all theological analysis in concrete, historical, and social experience which is always mediates. This social model begins with a commitment to the Gospel, to the poor, especially those whose situations constitute the lived reality of faith in the particular experience.

[124] These theologians are influenced by Karl Marx's critique of Christianity, its silence in the face of suffering, and his insistence on concrete analysis of economic, social, political realities. This gives rise to liberation theology's insistence that theology starts with the suffering poor and their concrete experience.

Practical theology engages in human life through what Colleen describes as involvement in other's experiences. The resulting turn to experience makes room for the creativity and participation that Miriam describes by a myriad of people with talents who add to the work practical theology. A practical theologian's multiple perspectives, different questions, and use of a multitude of different lenses that heighten awareness proceed from a theory of how practical theology should be conducted and should proceed by a methodology.

Four Categories for Methodological Reflection

Osmer's four tasks necessary for interpretation in practical theology provide a basic structure for developing a practical theology process. The descriptive-empirical task undertakes a gathering of information about the practical theology problem in a systematic way. The interpretive task contains the theories and patterns of interpretation that might help answer the questions posed in the practical theological problem. The normative task asks the question about what ought to be going on in light of who God is in the world, and enunciates the theological ethic the practical theologian uses. Finally, the pragmatic task utilizes strategies and actions to answer the questions raised by the practical theological problem (Osmer 2008, 4-10). While Osmer proposes his approach to practical theology for congregational leaders, he offers a structure for viewing the tasks of practical theology. These tasks interact with and mutually influence each other.

To do these tasks well, the practical theologian must have an awareness of the practical theologian's own theological, thematic, and methodological understandings (Osmer 2005, 305). Osmer further suggests that practical theologians make decisions and form their theory of how they are to proceed around four necessary key areas for a

methodological reflection in practical theology: a theological rationale, the theory/praxis

relationship, sources of justification, and models of cross-disciplinary work (Osmer 2005,

306-307). Each mutually influences the other. Each nuance shapes the method employed

and the tasks of practical theology and therefore the kinds of transformations and changes

that can result from practical theology.

A Cross-disciplinary Dialogue

Postmodernity - a Variety of Approaches

> To some extent I was probably questioning God, the existence of God, what
> makes people leave what we've been taught? At the same time to this day, I do
> believe in God, but also, I think maybe, is my conception of God accurate? It
> doesn't matter if it is accurate, for that matter. The teachings that I've been told or
> exposed to, are they really the best way to live your life? Is that the best guidance
> that I could follow in terms of leading a good life and being happy and for those
> around me to be happy? (Terry 2009)

> When I think back, life was so simple then. Things were black and white; I knew
> what was right and wrong and did my best to follow…thought I was following.
> And there's no black and white now. I don't know whether it's my age or my
> spiritual growth, but what does that mean? I don't know. (Judy 2009)

Judy and Terry's dialogue is about the difficulty of certainty and truth in a

postmodern time. Theologian Paul Lakeland categorizes approaches to the crisis of

modernity in theology as late modern, countermodern, and postmodern. Cahalan suggests

these three approaches also exist within practical theology. The late modern continues to

explore ethics and politics to find universal principles that can move toward truthful

engagement with the world (Cahalan 2005, 65) Cahalan identifies Browning as a late

modern practical theologian. Countermoderns integrate concern with ethical relativism

and loss of religious authority in the world. The countermodern Christian practice work

of Dorothy Bass and Craig Dykstra is an example. (Cahalan 2005, 64-67). For those in a

radical postmodern category, a return to the premodern or modern era is not an option

because those discourses oppress people cultures and communities (Cahalan 2005, 66). Political and liberation theologians are examples of a radical postmodern approach, addressing society and the problems encountered there (Cahalan 2005, 64-67).

Van der Ven proposes an approach to postmodernity that moves practical theology out of walls of the university into dialogue with the church and Christian community. He suggests the use of an empirical theology to combat the problems of postmodernity which are individualism, secularization, church diversification, and privatism (Van de Ven 1998, 91). For Van der Ven, only an interdisciplinary model of practical theology that encompasses the social scientific sciences can address the questions of the postmodern age.

The Empirical Practical Theology of Johannes van der Ven

An Emphasis on Experience Through Empirical Means

For Van der Ven, no theology is complete without empiricism (Van der Ven 1998, viii).[125] Empiricism emphasizes the primacy of experience and the application of observation and experimentation through the social sciences. Concerned with describing and explaining the hermeneutic, it grounds arguments in hermeneutic intention. This hermeneutic-communication stresses dialogue and merges social scientific and theological categories to unfold meaning.

Practical theology, as an academic discipline, involves theory and practice in a hermeneutic spiral. This hermeneutic-communicative approach functions as a frame of reference in investigating praxis. "By placing the height, breadth and length dimensions of religious experience and religious attitudes in a communication-theoretical framework,

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[125] Empiricism, particularly that represented by Dewey, presents a style of thought that elevates the role of science as beginning in experience, subject to objective observation and experimentation (Van der Ven 1998, 6).

we seek to obtain not a product but a process. For communication which is the basis of the Church as a community of believers, consists of a dialogue between people sharing and discussing their different viewpoints"(Van der Ven 1998, 24). The empirical theological approach uses both intra and interdisciplinary dialogue with other disciplines in the social and human sciences, and with theological disciplines, scripture, and tradition.

Practical Theology - An Empirical Intradisciplinary Approach

The phases of Van der Ven's practical theology begin with the development of a theological problem and goal and proceed to theological induction, theological deduction, empirical theological testing, and finally theological evaluation (Van der Ven 1998, 225).Van der Ven's model proposes that empirical practical theology stand alongside literary, historical, and systematic approaches in practical theology not as a sub-disciplinary approach but rather an intradisciplinary approach. In this, practical theology borrows the methodology, concepts, methods, and techniques from the social sciences (Van der Ven 1998, 2; 101). To Van der Ven, every theologian must be able to handle the theories, methods, and techniques of empirical science so that the methodology of this discipline is adopted by theology. This requires that theology itself become empirical and expand its range of instruments beyond critical-historical and systematic methods and techniques to empirical methodology. Thus, practical theology as intradisciplinary, utilizing empirical methods, takes up and critically assimilates these new methods and techniques developed in other areas of science and develops these in practical theology work. The adequacy of this approach is seen in the fact that practical theology explains and develops theoretical presuppositions which are oriented toward complimentary

qualitative and quantitative approaches (Van der Ven 1998, 40). These theoretical

presuppositions, drawn from the critically reflected on praxis, are in need of verification

so there is not indirect falsification of theories (Van der Ven 1998, 40).

Critique

A basic epistemology that suggests that value free research methods can obtain

objective research findings and positivism are often associated with empiricism.[126]

However, feminist empiricists, countering this positivistic understanding, improve the

collection and interpretation of empirical research by including women's voices, the

voices of the oppressed, and the other. They seek to overcome the shortcomings and

omissions that render past positivist findings as non-objective, non-neutral, and affected

the generalizability of them (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007, 10-11). I find affinity with

postmodern and poststructuralist perspectives that emphasize bringing the 'other' into the

research process and reject notions of universality, objectivity, and universally applied

truth. I understand interpretations of experiences as multiple, situated, and constructed

(Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007, 10-21).

Van der Ven's inclusion of the social sciences is integral to practical theology;

however, his intradisciplinary use of social sciences can lead to a separation of the

empirical portion into its own cycle, separate from the cycles of theological development,

induction, deduction, and evaluation. He uses a correlational approach to this

intradisciplinary work. I suggest a different perspective allowing practical theology and

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[126] Positivism, based on the scientific method, understands knowledge as formed through logic and empiricism. It looks for truth that can be discovered if one can be objective and neutral. It begins with deduction from a general theory, positing causal relationships that depend on testing hypothesis deduced from that theory (Hesse-Biber 2007, 7-8).

social science to function as an intertwined discipline, each participating together toward

the work of practical theology in cross-disciplinary ways.

Three Approaches Incorporating Other Disciplines for Interdisciplinary Practical

Theology

There are three approaches to contemporary practical theology seeking to define

the relationship practical theology and other disciplines including social science (Osmer

2006, 339).These three approaches address practical theology, and its relationship with

other disciplines through the emphasis that they place on the importance of the practical

theology. Each approaches the dialogue with other disciplines with a slightly different

perspective and a slightly different weight given to practical theology.

A Correlational Model

Much of the interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary work of practical theology

focuses on using the revised correlational approach of Browning, Tracy, and Van der

Ven. The revised correlational model focuses on the praxis of each dialogue partner in a

dialectic approach. Theology stands in a mutually influential relationship to the

intellectual resources and emancipatory praxis of culture (Osmer 2006, 339). Tracy calls

for a collaborative exercise of mutual critical correlation using the whole of human

experience and language, both the questions and the answers, correlated with the

religious texts Tracy 1975, 43-45). This is done while staying in conversation with other

theological areas, such as the confessional, symbolic, doctrinal expressions of the

tradition (Tracy 1975, 43-45). Tracy's model for theological engagement functions in a

pluralistic, theological, and cultural context, as a "philosophical reflection upon the

meaning present in the common human experience and language, and upon the meanings

present in the Christian fact" (Tracy 1975, 43). It correlates secular thought with Christian thought, by investigating experience and indentifying Christian symbols that will evolve into action to address the experience. For Tracy, culture and Christian symbols are important to the theological process. Browning takes Tracy's revised correlational method and applies it to practical theology that sees all theology as essentially practical. Fundamental practical theology is "critical reflection on the Church's dialogue with Christian sources and other communities of experience and interpretation" (Browning 1996, 16).

This approach, while welcoming the other disciplines, ends up incorporating and reducing their contribution to the dialogue to the single voice of practical theology. Additionally, Van der Ven's incorporation of the work of other disciplines into the work of the practical theologian means that the practical theologian needs to be versed in the discipline incorporated. Critiques of this method suggest that there are difficulties for the practical theologian in this method because each discipline enforces its own line of reasoning and the practical theologian must be versed in all of them (Cartledge 1999, 2004).

<div align="center">A Transformational Model</div>

A transformational approach to the interdisciplinary work of practical theology, particularly that used by James Loder and Deborah Hunsinger, is based on a Christocentric understanding of the Trinity (Osmer 2006, 342). Loder proposes that practical theology and its interdisciplinary partners are situated in an asymmetrical, relational, bipolar unity that is analogous to the unity of humanity in relationship with Christ (Gilbert 2004, 129). In this way, practical theology 'marginally' controls the other

disciplines involved in an interdisciplinary approach. This model understands academic

disciplines in a hierarchy by differentiating the disciplines in terms of their degree of

complexity and comprehensiveness (Latini 2009, 1). Each discipline uses it own

internally generated objectives, methods, and linguistic conventions to interpret the

practical theology phenomena (Latini 2009, 1). Theology is judged the most

comprehensive of the disciplines, as it is the only one that can speak to questions about

God and the ultimate purpose of human existence (Latini 2009, 1). For Hunsinger, the

theological work takes its bearings from God's self-communication in Jesus (2009, 346-

347). Any reliance on assumptions from non-theological fields that are inconsistent with

Christian theology and Christian revelation must be negated, so that the positive

contributions of these fields to religious practice can be appropriated (Latini 2009, 1-2).

<div align="center">A Transversal Model</div>

A final model, the transversal model, fits well the practical theology methodology

I advocate. The transversal model for cross-disciplinary fields, in dialogue with practical

theological work, facilitates an embodied practical theology. It bases itself on a social

doctrine of the Trinity in its relationality and focuses on the experience of embodied

people. "In the dialogue between theology and other disciplines, transversal reasoning

promotes different but equally legitimate ways of viewing specific topics, problems,

traditions, or disciplines, and creates the kind of space where different voices need not

always be in contradiction, or in danger of assimilating one another, but are in fact

dynamically interactive with one another" (van Huyssteen 2007, 1). A transversal model

for practical theology encourages thinking that is concrete, local, and contextual, but

willing to reach beyond its own discipline into other trans-disciplinary concerns (van

Huyssteen 2007, 1). Because we enter cross-disciplinary conversations with individual

beliefs, commitments, and prejudices, a transversal model enables realization that in a

cross-disciplinary discussion there is much to share in terms of rational resources, as well

as much that we can find that is radically different. While Hunsington's and Loder's

approach allows Christian theology and Christian revelation privileged access to

questions of God, in a transversal model other disciplines share in the discussion.[127] This

interdisciplinary approach allows the practical theologian to identify shared resources in

the many different forms of knowledge, permitting a cross-contextual, and cross-

disciplinary practical theology.

The transversal cross-disciplinary model facilitates a reciprocal methodological

understanding of practical theology. It also encourages accountability to the wider public

of society and dialogue with the variety of voices coming from this public. This is

undergirded by a Trinitarian understanding of practical theology. A reciprocal practical

theology creates its own publics, movements, and discourse audiences in the twenty-first

century.[128]

Reciprocal Practical Theology with a Transversal Cross-Disciplinary Approach

A reciprocal methodology in practical theology involves the people in making the

practical theology knowledge without privileging one voice over the other. This

reciprocal methodology invites dialogue partners into the practical theology conversation

in a reciprocal give and take that shares and builds practical theology knowledge based

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[127] An example of this is the contemporary use of cosmology, genealogy, biology, and sociology in the human search for meaning by cultural historian Thomas Berry and mathematical cosmologist Brian Swimme. Such work awakens us to God's relational work in creation and the universe, and calls us to be earth community. *See* Swimme's work, *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era* (1992).

[128] Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza envisions just such a move in Biblical Interpretation, moving the interpretation to the people (Fiorenza 2001, 5). I am grateful for her shared vision.

on dialogue and shared, examined, and reexamined knowledge. This produces a collaborative, multilayered, and polyvocal understanding of practical theology that is not fixed because another understanding may appear with the next dialogue. This reciprocity in practical theology celebrates the individual narrative. It also celebrates the corporate narrative alive in the myriad voices of the narratives into which practical theology enters in dialogue. Practical theology, informed by a transversal cross-disciplinary understanding, thus provides another frame for practical theology as it searches for meaning within the academic, the Church, and society sectors. In so doing practical theology continuously and collaboratively interprets and integrates this meaning and transforms itself.

There are limitations to this approach. Because a practical theologian relates to the world through mediation of interpreted experiences, the theological and scientific modes of inquiry are affected by the practical theologian's perspective. This leads to a certain bias, and a selective emphasis on some subjects and neglect of others. As Osmer observes, "At present, no comparable principle of selectivity has been articulated in the discussion of transversal interdisciplinarity" (Osmer 2006, 343). The practical theologian can reduce these limitations by emphasizing context and contextual understanding. The use of a transversal, cross-disciplinary methodology requires the ability to dialogue with multiple disciplines. As the practical theologian uses the transversal methodology, rather than opening or closing the self off to other disciplines, the practical theologian pays attention to "what it means to discover an epistemic space that allows for the kind of interdisciplinary critical evaluation that includes a critical self-evaluation and optimal understanding" (Muller 2009, 226).

Sources of Justification

I move now to Osmer's last area that is sources of justification. The practical theologian uses Scripture, tradition, theology, and reason to reveal insights for practical theological action. The methodological issue here revolves around how the sources are used and what weight is given to each (Osmer 2005, 307).

"Justification in the most general sense is simply a matter of being able to give good reasons for beliefs" (Davaney and Frisina 2006, 84). Experience, scripture, tradition, and reason function as traditional sources of truth. I utilize these sources for justification, following Browning, within practical theology's understanding that they equally give insights into the practical theological problem and help the practical theologian undergird practical theological proposals (Browning 1996, 15-33).

Dialogue between these four sources, scripture, tradition, experience, and reason formulates the theory in a practical theology that rises from praxis. Equal weight in dialogue with the practical theologian and the public with whom the practical theologian works helps all of these sources provide the hermeneutic material for speaking of God in the practical theological dialogue. There are limitations in assigning equal weight. Other methods claim their bias toward one or the other of the sources. Authenticity and fairness in assigning weight to each source for the particular practical theological context are necessary. Each source's input must be balanced dialogically in order for all the diverse voices to be heard. Over reliance on one source over the other will result in a silencing of the difference and diverse input that each source brings. If reason is given too much weight, then the faith aspect may be lost. If there is over reliance on the tradition, then

faith practices that need changing may not be questioned. This reflects the need for the

practical theologian to discern epistemological, ontological, and axiological groundings.

Explicating a Practical Theology Reciprocal Ethnography Methodology

In social science as in practical theology, "A method is an interpretation"

(Marecek 1989, 370 in Hesse-Biber and Yaiser 2004, 271).[129] Choosing a social science

method for practical theology is a critical epistemological decision. It is also an

immensely theological decision.

My practical theology model can be broadly placed within a feminist model,

informed by Trinitarian theology. It is informed by the work of Elizabeth Johnson, Mary

Elizabeth Moore, Yvone Gebara, and Barbara Reid as feminist theologians as well as by

the work of Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Patricia Leavy, and Elaine Lawless as feminist social

scientists. Dialogue is an essential tool to build knowledge in feminist social science

research. Dialogue empowers research by employing the strengths of diversity to produce

more trustworthy and authentic research. "To dialogue means to 'invite in' ideas and

interactions regarding points of view, to lay bare one's thinking about an issue and be

willing to change course, be ready to make discoveries – be willing to entertain multiple

points of view, not just similarities" (Hesse-Biber 2007, 535).

Methodological Understandings of Epistemology, Ontology, and Axiology

Claiming My Bias

My epistemological and ontological underpinnings root my practical theology

method in postmodernity, which is particularly a participative emancipatory paradigm

(Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007, Mertens 2005, Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003, Lincoln and

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[129] *See* Appendix F, "Technical Appendix," for detail on the method employed in this practical theology research.

Denzin 2008). [130] This methodology seeks the empowerment of those on the margins and the redressing of the power imbalance for the marginalized. Its epistemology understands social knowledge and active construction as the co-creation of knowledge by human agents through the process of dialogue. Knowledge is embedded, never neutral, within value systems that are political, cultural, and historical. This understanding of knowledge basis it on difference, realizing that there are multiple constructions of knowledge (Davaney 2000, 23). [131]

This paradigm sees praxis itself as a meaningful and important outcome of the inquiry process. In so doing, it folds ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology into one another. All become oriented toward seeking participants' genuine participation as a means of empowering a community through a redress of power imbalance for the marginalized. Thus, it advocates for forms of social actions in overturning unjust practices with the purpose of transforming society.

My practical theology method tries to ensure that a dialogic community is involved in the process of seeking practical theology theory. The welcoming of dialogue from all those who choose to respond is core. A practice of reflexivity, which was developed by feminist social scientists, places the beliefs and practices of the practical theologian (the subjective element) open to critical scrutiny so that the conditions where knowledge is constructed are transparent.

This paradigm proposes that there is no ultimate criterion for universal truth, only those agreed upon in certain times and under certain conditions (Hesse-Biber and Yaiser 2004, 14). Rather than seeking truth in my practical theology work, I explore meaning

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[130] Tashakkori and Teddlie refer to this as the Transformative/Emancipatory paradigm.
[131] Foucault notes that power produces knowledge. This necessitates that theories and conceptualizations "must be constantly confronted with praxis, reflexive thought aimed at action (Flybjerg 2001, 124-126).

and relationships with participants. Methodological suppositions about the validity, fairness, and authenticity of any practical theology work understand that this work is not merely a method that delivers one set of local and context grounded truths. This work also includes processes of interpretation, community consent, and reasoning to ensure rigorous, valid interpretation. It aims for methodological fairness by welcoming and hearing all voices, thus preventing further marginalization. Finally, I endeavor to bring authenticity, being aware of my own ontological suppositions.

In sum, the sources of justification for this practical theology work together equally. A transversal model of cross-disciplinary work allows multiple voices and a variety of disciplines to join the practical theology conversation. I engage this methodology in my practical theology work from these epistemological, ontological, and axiological presuppositions, grounding my practical theology methodology in a transformative-emancipatory model.

The next chapter looks at one final area of methodology, the relationship of praxis to theory, and examines a dialogical hermeneutic that does not seek agreement or consensus,[132] that forms the individual and the community through difference and privileging outsider voices.

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[132] This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. Bakhtin's concept of authoring and outsideness from which this view grows is discussed in Chapter 3.

6

Practical Theology – A Dialogue Privileging the Voice of the Other

Continuing the Conversation – A Methodological Understanding
Of Practical Theology

Don Browning's fundamental practical theology and Duncan Forrester's public theology lay the foundation for my own practical theological approach. Johann Baptist Metz's work adds an additional foundation emphasizing the crisis of people's suffering and three basic categories of individual and corporate praxis: narrative, dangerous memories, and solidarity. Critically reflected praxis utilizes these individual and communal memories and stories in dialogic action to move toward new knowledge and transformation. This leads to an examination of hermeneutical understandings of dialogue that does not demand consensus, and a related privileging of outsider voices. A praxis orientation and non-consensus seeking dialogue establishes a foundation for my practical theology understanding.

A Practical Theology Understanding of Praxis/Theory

Practical theology's praxis/theory includes the philosophical, theological, and sociological decisions practical theologians make concerning praxis and its relationship with theory (Osmer 2005, 306). Praxis, purposeful critical action toward transformation, generates new knowledge, values, and social patterns. "Decisions about the theory-praxis relationship influence in fundamental ways the phenomena investigated in empirical work, the interpretive framework used to understand what is found, the norms offered to assess both Church and society and the models used to guide and reform present praxis" (Osmer 2005, 307). Harry, below, narrates a story about his community that is praxis-oriented.

> One of the things we were asked to conform to was GIRM, that we
> had to serve communion in gold, silver or platinum and we estimated
> that we would need eight to ten chalices and it was going to cost $8,000
> to buy these chalices. I said, 'I was in the shelter last night as part of my
> volunteer stint for the month, and we don't even have enough cereal
> bowls, so are we supposed to buy $8,000 worth of gold chalices and
> these guys have to wash out their bowls so that they can have breakfast
> after the other guy?' How silly is that? And so we voted it down. We're
> not going to spend that money and that got us in trouble. (Harry 2009)

Praxis Rooted In Alterity

The foundation of praxis is its disclosure of alterity (Graham 2000, 106). This allows praxis to promote empathy and solidarity, expanding understanding and commitment to one another as people of God. Praxis rooted in alterity fosters the ability to broaden perspectives of the human experience and divine reality inspired by the doctrine of God as Trinity (Graham 2000, 106). As practical knowledge, phronesis (practical wisdom), and habitus, praxis uses a hermeneutic of alterity that draws on the 'dangerous memories' and individual and communal narratives that allow voices to be heard that have previously been silenced. This appropriates Metz's work on dangerous memories and narrative (Metz 2007, 105-106). Forrester's understanding of practical theology and its concern for the practice of what the Triune God in human behavior and in the world offers further nuance (Forrester 2010, 208). Affirmation of alterity, inclusivity, difference, and diversity leads to a unique understanding of the praxis of practical theology. It moves to an understanding of praxis as conversation, dialogue where we are formed individually and communally by difference and diversity.

Fundamental Practical Theology - Don Browning

Conversation about Practical Practices

Don Browning's fundamental practical theology engages in critical conversation and dialogue between the Christian tradition and the experience of modern culture (Browning 1996, 36). "We come to the theological task with questions shaped by the secular and religious practices in which we are implicated – sometimes uncomfortably. These practices are theory-laden…Christian theology should be seen as practical through and through and at its very heart, historical, systematic, and practical theology (in the more specific sense of the term) should be seen as subspecialties of the larger and more encompassing discipline called fundamental practical theology" (Browning 1996, 7-8). Browning identifies theology as primarily practical. His method puts the experience, reflection, and questions of Christian tradition with its sources into conversation with the experiences, reflections, and questions of Church communities for the purpose of transformation. Dialogue partners on the margins of the Church speak of varying experiences that question its practices.

> The Catholic community needs to watch its money. It's dying; the Catholic Church is dying because it's losing money. There was a time when it was supported by a lot of families; the support is dwindling, and I really don't know what's going to happen to all the Catholic churches when they don't have an influx of money coming in. Somebody else is gonna take over the culture and if they don't decide how the Catholic Church is going to contract, then someone's going to make the decision for them. There's going to be some kind of vacuum of power as the Churches get emptier and good priests don't take the place of the older ones that are just getting older. (Lance 2009)

> I hope the Church will change in my lifetime, but what I think must happen [is] it has to burn down into ashes. I think so. They keep shooting themselves in the foot, everything that comes out of the hierarchy is distressed, is totally distressed. (Gail 2009)

I spoke with a man one time who was divorced many, many years and was an extraordinary minister and his pastor called him in and said, "We really need to talk and I know you have been divorced for a very long time and you've never remarried, Are you dating?" He said, "Yeah, I date here and there". And he said, "I'm going to have to tell you that you have to step down from being an extraordinary minister if you're dating". (large silence) So, my whole thing kind of came up with this being divorced now. I'll go to other churches, it doesn't feel the same. It doesn't feel good. Do I still feel uncomfortable? Yes, literally. When I see my friends who are Catholic who wholeheartedly believe in all of it I'm looking at them saying, "Doesn't this rub you wrong? Doesn't this bug you, any of it?" The Church is not my hangout anymore, because it's so family-based and my idea and what I wanted you know, married in the Church, raise my kids in the Church, have a Catholic husband and do all of that. I don't like to go to Church by myself. I don't know. It's painful. (Sade 2009)

Establishing Faith Assumptions and Theological Ethics

Practical theology that begins with praxis could start by describing and analyzing the experiences of my dialogue partners, declining Church enrollment, dissensus, the sadness that comes from divorce, or the alien feelings in one's own church. Fundamental practical theology moves from theory-laden practice experienced in the present to normative theory-laden practice to generating new theory-laden practices (Browning 1996, 7). Core to the practical theology practice is the purpose of transformation, addressing the needs of the community in a creative way.

Browning's method for practical theology lies within a narrative envelope and in theological ethics and moral theology (Browning 1996, 142-43). The narrative envelope establishes faith assumptions that in turn give rise to narratives and metaphors that carry these assumptions. Theological ethics develops the criteria for testing the practical validity of claims of Christian faith. Theological norms develop in reflection about the practices and actions of the Church. Practical thinking rather than theoretical and abstract thinking, grounds the model as it works through Browning's four sub-movements.

Moving Through Four Sub-Movements to New Theory-laden Practices

Browning's first movement of descriptive theology using the hermeneutic context serves as the foundation for the next movements. It uses full descriptions of the psychosocial and religio-cultural histories pertaining to the practical theology problem, clarifying them as the ground of praxis (Browning 1999, 62-63). Historical theology and systematic theology, the second and third movements, appropriate the normative theory-laden practice of the Church in relation to the experiences. They articulate and retrieve the Christian faith. The historical movement includes Biblical studies, church history, and the history of Christian thought in its disciplines (Browning 1999, 49). It questions the implication of the normative texts that are already part of our effective history for our praxis (Browning 1999, 49). The systematic movement investigates the broad thought of normative Christian texts in relation to the questions of the culture (Browning 1999, 52-53). Finally, the strategic practical theology involves a thick description[133] of the problems involved in churches and critically examines the practices of the churches through the lens of the historical and systematic theology articulations and retrievals (Browning 1999, 8, 58).[134]

Browning's Hermeneutical Foundation: Habermas, Gadamer and Ricoeur

Browning's practical theology method develops through the philosophy and consequences of hermeneutic philosophy and pragmatism (Cahalan 2005). With a basis in the hermeneutic philosophy of Jurgen Habermas, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur, Browning's practical thinking centers on his understanding of human

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[133] "Thick description" is a term used by Clifford Geertz, an anthropologist, to discuss not only the experience but also the context that helps give it meaning in a rich description (Geertz 1973).
[134] Browning's work utilizes the thought of David Tracy, who emphasizes theology as springing from common human experience, informed by the Christian texts, and utilizing the methodologies of allied disciplines (Browning 1996, 43-49). Tracy calls for a collaborative exercise of mutual critical correlation using the whole of human experience and language. Both the questions and the answers correlate with the religious texts, while staying in conversation with other theological areas (Tracy 1975, 79-80).

thinking.[135] Habermas distinguishes communicative action as development of an action or understanding of a situation by subjects. This action or understanding develops through conversation that seeks agreement or consensus (Habermas 1973, 2). Communicative action involves experience, action, or practical knowledge and discourse. Discourse entails communication that expresses truth claims justifying them through reasoned argument. Habermas suggests that both action and discourse are necessary for social interaction and a democratic society. Gadamer, in turn, understands dialogue and conversation as the fundamental structure for human understanding. A understanding starts with human practice are influential to practical theology (Kinast 2000, 53). Gadamer's insists on the role of effective history, bias, and preunderstandings, and the fusion of horizons in meaning-making (Kinast 2000, 53). This allows Browning to situate the human being as a being in language and opens Browning's hermeneutic to an understanding of dialogue as a process of interpreting texts, both individually and communally. This insight into the human as a being in language and the process of dialogue as important to practical theology is very much a part of my own understanding of practical theology. Ricoeur offers the understanding that interpretation begins when dialogue ends, suggesting that both dialogue and interpreting are necessary for understanding (Schneiders 1999, 140-141). He also proposes an understanding of phronesis as communal practical moral reasoning (Thiselton 2007, xix).

Critique

Browning's use of Habermasian and Gadamerian hermeneutics appropriates dialogue with the purpose of consensus as "a consensus that may break up and is

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[135]Jurgen Habermas identifies four kinds of action: teleological (strategic), normatively regulated, dramaturgical, and communicative (Habermas 1984, 85-86),

reformulated repeatedly" (Browning 1991, 50). Browning encourages a critical hermeneutic dialogue for the sake of the common good by looking for positions mutually acceptable to all (Browning 1991, 22). This move to consensus and agreement is consistent with Gadamer's argument that the ideal is "the transformation into communion in which we do not remain what we were" (Gadamer 1975, 341). The danger of this communion is that it is too often ignorant of the politics of power and can move to a false communal voice at the expense of those who lack voice and power.

A hermeneutical understanding forms life, thought, and concrete action. It includes difference and similarity and otherness in its formation (Thiselton 2007, 114). Genuine conversation "occurs only when our usual fears about our own self image die…Understanding happens in…intersubjective shareable, public, indeed historic movement in authentic communication" (Tracy 1981, 101).

Browning's practical theology movements propel and call practical theology toward strategic action. Given its hermeneutic foundation and the fact that his practical theology work begins in descriptive, historical, and systematic movements, it appears to prefer an anthropology of the person as one who moves toward action through thinking. As a consequence, the privileging of thought over action allows the separation of the human person into a mind/body dichotomy that privileges the mind. This encourages dualism and seeing the person only as subject rather than as a person who acts, prizing thinking about something over acting in relationship. This dualism leads to objectification particularly of those who are different. From another perspective, I understand the person as a person always in relationship, who acts, and in this action forms thought (Bakhtin 1984, 293).

The task of reconstructing our faith experience and amending and reconsolidating a picture of the world when viewed privileging action and relationship begins in an understanding that action is the primary way a person understands. With knowledge starting within this action, theology cannot continue to understand the self by separating the body from the mind/spirit. I understand *self* from three standpoints. The first is based on the foundation of a doctrine of God as Trinity that affirms the intrinsic nature of God as relational and humans as made in this image. The second, neuroscience's visual confirmation affirms that humans are indeed created to function relationally. Finally, Bakhtin's work on dialogue shows that people need each other to most fully be themselves, to form themselves and their understanding in the action of dialogue.[136]

A practical theology with a foundation in relational dialogic action suggests that hermeneutical understanding include all voices and difference by welcoming them rather than reducing them to a single "truth." In the Christian tradition, response in faith to God's invitation of relationship through Jesus Christ and the Spirit begins individually but moves into a communal relationship. Such practical theology engages in dialogue and dialogue necessitates listening to the other. Below, Maggie speaks for such communication, and Katherine models it.

> I think the Church is determined to go back to old pre-Vatican stuff and they'll get it done because that's who's in there right now. [Name] from the parish showed me a letter that a gay man had written to the Archbishop here asking for a meeting with him to talk about the fact that they, one Sunday a year, they put a rainbow stole on them and get refused Communion because they're gay. So, he wrote this letter saying could we talk about what's going on and how we are disrespecting them by withholding the Eucharistic. Just talk, open dialogue. And the Bishop wrote him back the most cold, inhumane letter. (Maggie 2009)

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[136] See Chapter 3 for more on each of these standpoints from a relational anthropological perception.

I attended a rally at the cathedral about a year and a half ago and the people were coming out of Church and for woman's ordination what they did was, bought those miniature cupcakes from the grocery store and they put a toothpick with a little message on each one about the organization. It was very friendly because they weren't yelling when they came out so they said, "Hi, how are you? Have a nice day." I was holding up a banner, I wasn't actually handing out the cupcakes, and the people coming out of Church would nod, smile and thank you and a lot of them would… I could just see in their faces. I can't believe we haven't ordained women yet. A lot of them, they're well educated and they know the stats. They know the history. But there's also people who walk by who didn't agree. There was this woman, who was probably in her late forties and had a thick accent, but spoke very intelligently on why it's not right in the light of the pope; or why the pope wouldn't agree. So she talked to someone else of our group who was just like, "I can't believe this woman, da, da, da." And this woman stood her ground very well and I was very impressed. This was the first time that I was actually at an event, standing up for something in the Church politically. In fact, I remember keeping my sunglasses on because there were cameras and everything. So she walked away. She knew she had to walk away because she was so upset. And I just looked at this woman and I said, "I love the Church so much, which is why I choose to stay in the Church. And I really feel God and I really feel welcome in the Church a lot of the time. Do you feel that way?" And she goes, "Yeah, yeah." And I looked in her eyes and said, "Some women don't. Some Catholic women don't feel welcome because they feel this strong." She looked at me and it was the first time she actually stopped talking. She was a talker and she kind of looked to the side and well, "If the pope says it's ok, then I wouldn't mind." (Katherine 2009)

Browning brings together the use of the social sciences and humanities with theology. He situates practical theology in conversation that provides a clearly defined model that allows a conversation with the experiences of people, the church, and society. For Browning, practical theology's central task reconstructs our faith experience, amending and reconsolidating our more general picture of the world. Yet, as practical theology moves from theory-laden practice to normative practice and to new theory-laden practice, he uses hermeneutics that move to dialogue that seeks agreement. This model encourages a critical hermeneutic dialogue for the sake of the common good and looks for positions that are mutually acceptable to all (Browning 1991, 22). Yet, consensus seeking dialogue can mitigate the different voices and give preference to the most

powerful and silencing the others. From another perspective, I propose the use of a

hermeneutics that does not seek consensus that is rooted in an understanding of dialogic

action as the epistemological ground of knowledge as the primary way a person grows to

understand.

Public Practical Theology – Duncan Forrester

Action in the Public Sphere

Forrester defines practical theology as a study concerned with questions of truth

in relation to action in the public sphere (Forrester 2000, 23). Practical theology that

offers fragments of truth in the public debate moves from truth to action and from

experience to a higher truth while continuing to work with and in the church (Forrester

2000, 152-157). For Forrester, all theology is public theology that is done in the reality of

the whole world in face of the public. It dialogues with the greater public in the world.

Theology engages in advocacy for and listening to the poor and the marginalized

(Forrester et al. 2004, 26-27). His practical theology approach looks to the past for

wisdom in order to live a Christian life in the postmodern context. Crisis provides the

context for discerning truth and summons the Church to a renewal of practice. An

important part of the task of public theology is "to identify and address the deep

underlying issues that are often too painful or awkward for politicians and others to

address in public debate, and to identify the coming agenda, to articulate in the public

square it convictions about truth and goodness, and to offer insights received from the

tradition of which it is a steward" (Forrester 2000, 128).

> There are multiple reasons that I wouldn't support the death penalty. Just the fact
> that sometimes innocent people are killed is a huge. If you believe that people can
> forfeit their lives and that innocent people are being killed, that to me is enough
> to say with our human fallibility, it's not right. (Terry 2009)

So, how are we really living out the social justice issues if we remain white centered? Where's our hypocrisy and how do we deal with that? So, that kind of thing that was going on whether there was a book group or children's education, whatever. (Andrew 2009)

One of my early childhood memories from that place, it must have been in the mid-eighties, having voting booths set up in the social hall because they voted to become a sanctuary community for the refugees who were leaving El Salvador and Nicaragua and getting to Canada because they weren't allowed to stop here during the civil war. I found a community here and I also found political activism which is really important. I got there, maybe in October, and they were already planning their trip to Ft. Benning, to the School of the Americas and that was sort of how I knew I found kindred spirits. So, I actually got on that trip and rode the bus all the way to Georgia from [city] with this group of people, and I actually made one good friend. Otherwise, it was a way to get to know these people; we rode in this bus for twenty-eight hours together. There was a fair amount of singing and sharing and thought process and whatever. It was very comfortable. It's very much like home. (Anne 2009)

These narratives detail public, political issues that are also issues in the Church communities where my dialogue partners have found community: the death penalty, racism, immigration issues, and the government's support and education of governments implicated in torturing their citizens. They also form a part of Tim, Andrew, and Anne's habitus which is their faithful practice. Forrester's model of practical theology addresses issues such as these by using social science. He put practical theology in dialogue with other disciplines, particularly social science. (Forrester 2007, 6-7). Yet, because social science is not inherently theological, he utilizes it discriminately cautioning about leaving out a connection to Christian beliefs and a theological reflection (Forrester 2007, 7).

Offering Theological Fragments

Various levels of practice concern the practical theologian. Forrester articulates these concerns. "As a theologian she is necessarily concerned with the practice of the Triune God, with discerning what God is doing in the world; with human behavior

considered theologically and with what God is calling us to do and be today; with the being and activity of the Church; with practice of Christians; and finally with what virtually monopolized the interest of practical theologians for far too long, the activities of the ordained ministry and other ecclesiastical agents" (Forrester 2000, 7). This allows practical theology to be about attending to and arbitrating the voice of the other by hearing them tell their narratives and letting their voices speak (Forrester 2000, 126). Practical theology offers theological fragments that are relevant, true, illuminating, and helpful in the Church as it humbly looks for a just practice. Rather than proposing a whole system of truth, Forrester proposes glimpses or fragments of truth that are aimed at specific concrete situations as resources for action and understanding (Forrester 2005, 4). This interjection of theological fragments in the postmodern arena is a way to recover the Christian social vision in the public debate laboring in the world arena (Forrester 2000, 152-154). For Forrester, truth fragments are those fragments that do not consist of the whole truth, but may contain some truth for the particular situation. These fragments may be challenging and disturbing or encouraging and healing. They result from "a disciplined reflection on practices and happenings, on specific ethical dilemmas, life choices and experiences, all in the light of the great tradition of faith and the witness of scripture" (Forrester 2005, ix). Forrester suggests that practical theology should first of all and above all be concerned with the practice of the Trinitarian God, with discerning what God is doing in the world (Forrester 2007, 8). For Forrester, the way to know the practice of a Triune God is to attend to the communicative practice of Jesus, to the actions of Jesus' life that are communicative of God and to the work of the Spirit in the Church. Practical theology as public theology is relational, not individualistic. It is a discernment

of what God is calling people to do today, a discernment of where and who are about God's activity on the ground with real people and in real communities (Forrester 2007, 11-12).

Hermeneutical Understandings - Segundo and Habermas

A grasp of the hermeneutics underpinning Forrester's approach to practical theology allows for a deeper sense of his methodology. Forrester's hermeneutics appropriate a hermeneutic circle proposed by Juan Luis Segundo who uses Habermas' hermeneutic philosophy. "In the hermeneutic spiral, engagement, action and understanding interact with one another to seek a strengthening of commitment, a reform of the Church, and a more just and caring social order, which all reflect the coming Reign of God" (Forrester 2000, 30). Forrester's hermeneutic paradigm develops interpretation within a hermeneutic circle to bring about change by critiquing ideologies and helping to create new meaning more adequate for the poor and oppressed. This action enlivens the Church. Within this hermeneutic understanding, Habermas' philosophy contributes to Forrester's recognition of dialogue and argumentation as action. It seeks ways to reconcile pluralistic views with possibilities of reaching agreement or consensus. Forrester, understanding dialogue as ethical discourse, addresses the power and presuppositions involved in dialogic situations. He calls for dialogue in the academy, and ideally, conversation concerning the 'signs of the times' rooted in the life of the ecclesial community as public theology. This communication holds up the universal 'fragments' of truth that are part of a larger truth for public debate and beckons the practical theologian to continue to 'mine' the tradition for truth (Forrester 2000, 154-55).

Critique

What is remarkable about Forrester's hermeneutical method is that while it calls

for transformation to build God's kindom and for practical theology to move to the public

square, it still moves toward consensus based on its hermeneutical model. This action

also moves toward a consensus that presumes equality and shared goals (Pereen 2008,

101). Segundo's hermeneutics use Scripture to reduce power dynamics through ethical

rules and truth, biblically based to address the power dynamic itself. Elisabeth Schussler

Fiorenza critiques Segundo's hermeneutic circle indicating that while Segundo's approach

does not claim objectivity and an unbiased approach, it fails to be suspicious of the

Scripture itself as interpreted text (Fiorenza 1986, 101). The use of a biblically based

approach to power dynamics imposes a power dynamic itself. When the

preunderstandings of Scripture interpretation are not exposed and defended, as in

Segundo's model, Fiorenza suggests that the failure to critically evaluate the

interpretations of biblical texts comes close to using Scripture for proof texting (Fiorenza

1986, 101-102). It is necessary to expose and critique any preunderstanding of Scripture

interpretation. This addresses the need for critical evaluation of the texts and their effects

on the poor and oppressed.

Moving from Contextual Truth?

Forrester understands practical theology as theology moving from truth to action,

and from experience to higher truth with shared goals. He understands the Christian faith

as having the capacity for truth and being about truth. At the same time, normative truth

often can move to exclusion. Looking for fragments of truth may take for granted that a

truth found in the wisdom of the past traditions will be applicable universally to all

Christians in this present time. This is particularly true if truth fragments are thought to exist only in the center of the Christian faith. For Forrester, truth is not a matter of a complex thought system. It is rather an awareness that may challenge, encourage, or disrupt something that rises in the milieu of what is lived and loved within a community (Forrester 2000, 18). The word 'fragment' indicates that these truth fragments may exist on the margins, reflecting not only a piece of the tradition in the center, but also a piece of the tradition in the margins (Kee 2004, 368). I would propose that a 'truth' offered for a particular public welcome the *both-and*, being attentive and receptive to the multiple voices. It may offer options for action that are transformative. This mandates attentive listening and awareness of the contextuality of the truth offered for specific publics. As other voices are heard, the action and the truth offered changes with the context.

In sum, Forrester's theology is public theology seeking to address those issues too painful for politicians and others to address in the public debate. "It has a Gospel to share, good news to proclaim. Public theology attends to the Bible and the tradition of faith at the same time as it attempts to discern the signs of the times and understand what is going on in light of the Gospel" (Forrester 2000, 128). While Forrester uses the term 'truth,' for Forrester truth, rather than being a complex thought system, is an insight appearing in fragments, hints, clues and questions (Forrester 2000, 18).

The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz

Narrative, Dangerous Memories and Solidarity

Metz too looks to the past. He does so through dangerous memories and the narratives of suffering, offering hope to those who are marginalized. Metz's theology emphasizes the communal dimension of our faith. Theodicy, a defense of God's goodness

despite the fact that evil exists in the world, is the question for theology for Metz (Metz 2007, 119-121). According to Metz, practical theology is political theology (Metz 2007, 100). The questions of catastrophic, massive, and systematic suffering in the world involve practical theology, knowing that humanity has the resources and the will to put an end to it (Metz 2007, 123-127). The task of theology is this to give an account of hope that is within us. Metz turns to praxis, a critically reflected action, and suffering with a focus on eschatology. He proposes that theology needs to start from the fundamental categories of Christian praxis, narrative, dangerous memories, and solidarity (Metz 2007, 66-67).

> Well, I think the priest or the clergy in general, the hierarchy is teaching out of a fear mode rather than a freeing mode. I suppose a lot of it is fear of losing their status maybe, their bread and butter. I don't know, but I think there's a fear in them that I don't have. What priest would stand up there and not give you communion because you had a rainbow stole on? What would make them do that? I don't get it. I just don't get it. (Colleen 2009)

Colleen, above, stands in solidarity with people who are gay and lesbian and their supporters who are refused communion each Pentecost in her area. Anne, below, is wrestling with the directive from the new pastor to their community that they must either conform to new liturgy guidelines or leave.

> This is another thing. The people who are actually living the Gospel, and actually serving the people, and feeding the poor, and finding ways to make life better for other people, those are the people you want to kick out? That makes me mad. I think I'm aware of how unlikely change is in that structure; it won't happen in this lifetime and it probably won't happen in the next two or three, you know. And that makes me sad and not angry. This makes me feel, "You poor old men in your fanciful clothes, you don't really understand." I don't even know what Bible you're reading, 'cause the mandate is so obvious to me, the mandate of service is so obvious to me that I don't know any other way to judge my faith except on action and I'm so lucky that I grew up that way. (Anne 2009)

These are stories of people and communities seeking to be embodiments of

koinonia. These are also stories of pain and suffering, brought about by their

marginalization in a Church that they love. My dialogue partners are typically socially

active in peace and justice issues, progressively oriented, and liturgically centered. They

are the lived reality of people on the margins living their faith and putting their 'God-talk'

into the reality of their context on the peripheral of the Church.

> The thing about the liturgy was that the lay person and the cleric would open the liturgy and call people to worship, welcome people, invite people to be recognized, would share in the opening prayers. They would move back and forth or pass the microphone back and forth so the priest would say one part and the lay prayer leader would say another. Then the gifts would be taken to the altar by lay people and they would be accepted by, actually the coordinator, who was a lay person. We had a team, we would accept the gifts, pour water into the wine, wine into the cup and set the bread on the altar. Then after that the lay prayer leader and the ordained would come and do the prayers of consecration. The community would participate and speak those prayers in unison with the priest. Everybody would be welcome to Communion; everybody would help distribute Communion and then go on to the end. So, all through, lay people had a role to play next to the priest. Eventually the new young pastor was very concerned about the fact that lay people would say prayers that were reserved for the priest to say, so he did not want us to repeat the words of consecration as he repeated them, which we didn't stop doing, because it was a tradition we had grown accustomed to and felt we were part of the liturgy. It was the intention of the community that we are responsible, we are priests in many ways, baptized into the common priesthood of the faithful, yes. (Andrew 2009)

Andrew, Anne, and Colleen tell the narratives of an intentional eucharistic

community. People acting in history are united by dangerous memories in solidarity with

the suffering. This leads to praxis as discipleship, and the primacy of praxis speaking to

the larger world. If the Church is to be the Church of the people, then our task as practical

theologians is to listen to all people. "All men [sic] are called to be subjects in the

presence of their God" (Metz 2007, 68).[137] For Metz, all modern theologies do not take

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[137] Metz's foundation for his theology includes *Gaudium et Spes*, the Second Vatican Council, and Vatican II's concerns for human rights and historical transformation. His converses with Marxism in Marx's critique

the turn to the subject seriously enough. While Metz uses the modern term 'subject,' he is arguing that the turn to the subject is too often privatized and idealized rather than focused more radically on the need to understand the poor and oppressed as people. Once the poor and oppressed are taken seriously, the Church unites all people, both the poor and the oppressed, and the spectators of the suffering together in the communion of the faithful (Metz 1997, 136).

Critique

While Metz's method is incompletely detailed, Metz defines knowledge as practical knowledge evidenced and tested in the praxis of following Jesus that is nourished by dangerous memories of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection and the memories that allow humans to become subjects together in light of memories that connect them to their past (Metz 2007, 226). Dangerous memories for Metz are challenging memories of suffering that interrupt the ways things are and reveal new and dangerous insights for the present (2007, 105). Narrative, as the main genre for communicating human experience includes the faith experience and is particularly adept at allowing marginal movements to access the dangerous memories that connect the people with each other and their past. Anne and Harry continue their stories of connecting.

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of power, including Marx's thought on the historical and transformative nature of all action and his critique of the ownership model and the idea of exchange which eventually led to people being expendable (Metz 2007 114-116). This critique leads to a new understanding of history and anthropology and the demand for new political options, which figures in Metz's theology. Metz's theology also incorporates the modern theology of Karl Rahner and the theology of salvation mediated by the historic self (Metz 2007, 147-152; 198-207). These conversation partners led to Metz's critique of the neo-orthodoxy of the person asserting that the person is always social leading to the eschatological nature of political theology (Metz 2007, 81-81).

> When I started going to [Church], when it was still inside the parish, and this has changed dramatically since we left and took off, and the funding has just fallen through the floor; but at the time we left they had a homeless shelter with about forty-five men a night. They had a soup kitchen which fed 300 people a night, an early childhood center for kids, crack babies, children with development disabilities. We still support a house for women leaving abusive and drug abusive relationships. I mean we had outreach that just blew my mind, which was probably why I stayed. Since we left and we took the money with us, a lot of that has fallen away, which is extremely hard for us because we carry guilt. We know we were the life-blood of that and because we were told we had to leave [there is] that suffering! (Anne 2009).

> The Bishop sends us a letter saying how much he appreciated what [Church] does for the poor and in the same letter, said, 'O.K., the people that are going to the 9:00 Mass cannot be members of the parish anymore.' It was such a non sequitur, like what we are doing for the poor is not charity, Mister, what we're doing for the poor is because justice is demanded and we have the same demand for ourselves. So, how in one letter he could say, "Wow what you're doing is so nice for people," and at the same time do something so unjust and so cruel. The people at [Church] demand justice because they believe God does. (Harry 2009)

The centrality of stories and storytelling give a sense that dialogue springs from our otherness, and then the sense that narrative is sacramental. This leads to a theory of the action of solidarity that is a category of assistance, support, and encouragement for each person in the face of their suffering. It acknowledges their dignity and personhood seeking to overcome their suffering and pain (Metz 2007, 208). Narratives can be sacramental signs as they tell the story of the salvific event, stories of life, and suffering. In this they become themselves "a narrative of salvation within these stories" (Metz 2007, 190). The stories that Harry, Anne, Colleen, and Andrew narrate may well become the dangerous memories of this intentional eucharistic community. Their stories and the stories of their faith in Jesus the Christ connect their work for the poor, the homeless, and the marginalized with the larger community of the people of God. For Metz, memory and narrative become practical and Christian as they connect with global solidarity. Memory and narrative orient toward a future where all people can live together in God's kindom.

They look toward the past for what is distinctive human experience and delve backward into the past for the humanitarian in Christianity (Metz 2007, 208). Metz calls for the Church to be a Church of the people rather than for the people (Metz 2007, 128). That is what Harry, Anne, and Andrew are seeking as well.

In summary, Metz brings a political and liberative approach to practical theology. With an emphasis on community, he understands that dangerous memories told in the narratives of those who suffer result in discipleship that includes action for the poor and the suffering. Listening to the voices of the marginalized fosters plurality of meaning. It also provides a means of fostering justice and liberation and moves interpretation in practical theology to the task of transformation that uses the creative potential of dialogue on the margins.

Browning, Metz, and Forrester address various publics in their praxis. Browning does so by putting the experience, reflection, and questions of the Christian tradition with its sources into conversation with the experiences, reflections, and questions of Church communities for the purpose of transformation. Forrester addresses public issues by finding fragments of truth that helps in discerning action for the public good. Metz addresses the praxis for those who suffer through narrative, dangerous memories, and a preferential option for the suffering other.

A New Hermeneutic Paradigm – Dialogue That Does Not Seek Consensus

Dialogue That Does Not Seek Agreement or Consensus

A hermeneutic understanding of dialogue most often designates dialogue for the purpose of reaching agreement or consensus. Yet, the differences and gaps in dialogue are as important as the harmonies and similarities. I suggest a dialogue rooted in alterity

that does not seek agreement or consensus. A hermeneutic paradigm for non-consensus seeking dialogue enables an understanding of practical theology dialogue from the standpoint of relationship. This enhances our effectiveness as practical theologians, and allows us to work in interdisciplinary, intradisciplinary, and cross-disciplinary ways. This is congruent with an understanding of the transversal model of cross-disciplinary practical theology

Dialogue for the purpose of agreement has been examined by Martin Heidegger, Jurgen Habermas, Hans Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur. An alternative dialogic hermeneutic paradigm for practical theology is informed by the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, a communication theorist. Bakhtin's work espouses a dialogue that does not necessarily seek agreement either in relationship or in truth claims. It emphasizes the ordinary rather than the ideal situation. Through an understanding of the contribution of heteroglossia (multiple conflicting voices in a text), it welcomes multiple voices as necessary for dialogue. Bakhtin's dialogic understanding resists control of meaning, providing a process of looking at alternative perceptions, emphasizing human freedom and responsibility of the individual while maintaining interdependence. Two Bakhtinian concepts discussed in Chapter 3 are important for this dialogic hermeneutic in practical theology: dialogue (often called dialogism) and outsideness.

Bakhtin understands language as learned continuously through social contexts that demand a response. Dialogue, the constant starting point, begins with the act of communication itself. "We cannot break out into the world of events from within the theoretical world. One must start with the act itself, and not from its theoretical transcriptions" (Bakhtin 1986, 50). Through dialogue as participatory experience we

enter into social interaction and relationship, and through this we are co-responsible in dialogue for shaping others, just as they are for shaping us. This is not a fusion but an engagement that results because from transversing the porous and permeable boundaries between ourselves and the other in dialogue. In this encounter with the other in dialogue the self is changed and knowledge and meaning are developed. Such, dialogue is mutually constitutive, avoiding domination, control, and the collapsing of one into another.

The sphere in which the self shapes and organizes in our expression is within the intersubjective space. Creative understanding is formed in the action of dialogue as dialogue partners respond to each other with some kind of meaningful exchange that checks and tests the other's talk for places of agreement or difference. This exchange is more than passive understanding or mere observation. It does not result in a merging or duplication of selves for consensus. Rather, engagement, outside of the self, in creative understanding, reveals possibilities and educates each side about the other (Morson and Emerson 1990, 55). According to Bakhtin, the difference allows those in the dialogic encounter and away from that particular dialogic encounter to more fully know themselves (Bakhtin 1981). This process of creative understanding, positioned outside of the entity of understanding in time, space, and culture – outsideness – creates the possibility of dialogue and allows for new questions which generate new potentials (Morson and Emerson 1990, 99-100).

Bakhtin's dialogic understanding provides an important hermeneutic paradigm for practical theology in its awareness that dialogue is enhanced by the difference of the

'other.' [138]   In fact, this difference is foundational. The formative effects of multiple

different voices and dialogue's social and historical contexts challenge all reductive

meaning (Green 2000, 59). A dialogic hermeneutic paradigm moves a priority of thinking

to the primacy of praxis.

A dialogic hermeneutic that does not seek agreement or consensus offers the

practical theology dialogic community an opportunity for a change of consciousness. A

dialogic hermeneutic interpretation is a commitment to practical theology and the

multiple disciplines with which it is in dialogue. It is a commitment to thinking and

validating theology though relationship and experience, and to different multiple-voiced

dialogue of those participating in the transformation of practical theology.

An honoring of difference does not imply an indiscriminant stance of appreciation

that leads to no action. Rather, it is in the reception of the other that one begins to act in

relationship. It is in the action of hearing the difference, the edges, surfaces, and depths of

the reality of one's self or a community, or a practical theology work that one enters into

relationship with the reality of another. The difference in this reality critically generates

an opportunity in the praxis to come to a new understanding. This new understanding

helps each to reveal and actualize potential (Morson and Emerson 1990, 54-55). Those

involved in the work of practical theology respond to images given by others through

dialogue and allow themselves to mutually create a response and actively shape

themselves from the response. Practical theology is compelled to wrestle with the

difference and to actively engage with the alternative perspectives that may reveal new

possibilities. This can happen even when these new possibilities appear as the opposite of

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[138] There are challenges in Bakhtin's thought. He was a person of his time and did not explicitly address
gender issues in his writing. However, feminist scholars using his thought have found it to offer an impetus
for embodied knowing and inclusion of excluded voices (Bell and Gardiner 1998).

the other's perspectives. With such openness, one may grow to understand one's own position more fully. Dialogue changes each person who participates in it. The privileging and honoring of difference allows for the chance to actively grow in *both-and* knowledge[139] and brings the opportunity for change, to all who partake in the dialogue. This change may be an agreement that consensus cannot be found at this time or it may be something unforeseen or unanticipated. It might even be consensus, but it importantly encompasses all the voices without a demand for agreement, and without denial of someone's perspective.

Conclusion

I propose a cross-disciplinary reciprocal practical theology that uses a transversal model of interdisciplinary thinking and practical theology rooted in the Trinity. The practical theology I appropriate is deeply rooted in a theological rationale of the doctrine of God as Trinity, affirming relationship, difference, and diversity, and action for the world. I understand the practical theologian as a cross-disciplinarian who uses the tools and techniques from multiple disciplines to reveal the myriad ways the Christian faith acts within the context of everyday life to transform the world. Dialogue as dialogic praxis is generated in everyday experience forming theory through multi-voiced dialogue. Drawing from this methodology, the final chapter considers the implications of this practical theology study in the voices of my dialogue partners in light of reciprocal ethnographic practical theology.

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[139] J. Y. Lee defines *both-and* thinking as inclusive, open-ended, and creative (J. Y. Lee 1995, 67). It is a holistic and open-ended thought process" (J.Y. Lee 1995, 69)

7

Practical Theology Implications of the Margins

Three main concerns drive this practical theology exploration of the margins of the Catholic Church. First and foremost, my interest is to explore the dynamics of the margins of the Catholic Church. The second concern is the implications of these dynamics on the relationships and meanings that emerge for others on the margins of the Catholic Church, for those today who talk about God and seek to understand God's relationship alive in their everyday experiences, and for those who minister in the Catholic Church. These are the topics of this chapter. My third concern is the use of dialogue that does not seek agreement, a welcoming of multiple voices, and a preference for the voice of the other in practical theology. This will be addressed in Chapter 8.

Addressing the dynamics of the margins begins with the names that my dialogue partners use to identify themselves. These reveal much about their understanding of their lived experiences of the margins in the Church. Dialogue also conveys individual and communal understandings of the dynamics of the margins, the difficulties and problems my dialogue partners encounter with the Catholic Church, and the implications of these. Many envision an emerging Church within the Catholic Church itself. I use the voices of my dialogue partners in describing and highlighting all of these. Following each participatory account, I reflect upon their conversation by exploring the implications and meanings of their experiences both in the Church and on the margins. I then consider the implications of this dialogue and its meanings and relationships.

"I'll Tell You Who I AM and You Listen!"

These reflections about meaning and dynamics reveal dialogue partner conversations. They also incorporate reflections made in a communal process of practical theology reciprocal ethnography. Dialogue partners insist on the importance of their voices being heard. Dan comments to those in the Church. "Don't you tell who I am. I'll tell you who I am and you'll listen. And, this is an exchange. I know who you are. I have some of who you are. You have no idea who I am. And you are trying to tell me who I am? You are wrong" (2009). Focus groups consisted of dialogue partners in two different regions. They volunteered their participation identified themes and sub-themes from the dialogues. They took these and linked them relationally in a way that expresses their own understanding of their experience of the margins in the Catholic Church. This chapter incorporates these reflections.

Naming Oneself

One goal of this practical theology study is to allow those on the margins to name themselves as they talk about their marginality. Names express a range of feelings, a sense of belonging and non-belonging, and explanations of their marginality. Often, dialogue partners name themselves with humor as when Julia uses the name 'recovering Catholic' "because it gets the most laughs" (2009). Sometimes, they label this place on the margins in sadness as Maria does describing herself "a wandering Catholic, I guess, because, there is no place to stop and feel at home" (2009). Dialogue partners use names that depict their own process, such as Bill's use of the term 'journeying Catholic' because he is "in process," always exploring, learning, growing, or Lance who claims the name "a 'non-tithing Catholic' who only goes at Christmas or Easter" (2009).

Either Belonging or Not Belonging

Dialogue partners use names that express their perception of the margin as *either/or*, *both-and* or *in-beyond*, reflecting Jung Young Lee's understanding from his theology of marginality. Some dialogue partners' names suggest that they are outside of the center of the Catholic Church, understanding the margins as *either/or* places. Their sense of belonging reflects the dynamic of choice or lack of choice in moving to the margins. Jane's use of 'absented Catholic' is followed by the observation that she removed herself from a "sick system, a toxic system." Jean's naming of herself, "I call myself Christian, I don't call myself Catholic, except culturally;" indicates a sense of not belonging by choice (2009). Sade's "disenfranchised Catholic but on the fringes, I don't belong anywhere" places her away from the center and on the margins, but not by her choice (2009). She states, "You know in the Church there's still a certain amount of shame in not being an intact family. My idea was that I wanted to be married in the church, raise my kids in the church, have a Catholic husband, and do all of that. I don't like to go to church by myself; it's painful" (Sade 2009). Her divorce and Church regulations figure prominently. She feels her marginality is due to circumstances out of her control.

Cindy and Miriam describe not only marginalization, but also exclusion. They present very different reasons for this exclusion. "The priest is kind of very rigid, not really warm and open and he approaches the church in a very rigid fashion. I feel like it's almost like a mini Inquisition. You're out, out, out, and so there's a lot of exclusion in the parish absolutely." Miriam describes her marginality as an ordained woman priest in the

Woman Priest movement. "The church is exactly saying to me, I do not exist." She continues "Well, I guess I'm a figment of my own imagination and if I am, I can do anything I want, right? And what I want is to be God's witness, and so that's what I'm doing and I'm a priest. It was very important for me to be ordained. I'm a very traditional Catholic." Here, ordination and her marginalization from the institutional Church is her choice. Perlman's findings that those who are excluded are excluded from the benefits of the social system are pertinent here (2005, 12). Not only are these dialogue partners excluded, but the Church excludes itself from receiving the gifts that they offer willingly to the larger community of the people of God.

Margins are Open to Multiple Meanings

Caroline and Terry, both Post-Vatican II generation Catholics, use a concept of the margins that indicates a space away from the center of the Catholic Church but leaves room for their return at a later time. Caroline's comment suggests she is wrestling with her place on the margins, "I'm in limbo right now...Am I done with the Catholic Church? Like, I don't know if I really want to be done with the Catholic Church. There are things that are drawing me back there." Terry's comments indicate a standard name for himself, yet he defines it positively, using the term to indicate temporality. "I don't know the term I would use, lapsed maybe. I always looked at this period in my life as a kind of, I still do to some extent, as a temporary lapse from the Church. I expect that at some point I'll come back into the Church and be involved again."

Both in the Margins – And In the Center

Some of my dialogue partners understand the margins with a sense of being in *both-and*, both in the center of the Church and on the margins. Cindy's 'underground

Catholic,' and Lily and Ken's 'progressive Catholic without the Roman' indicate they're both on the margins but in some way still a part of the center. Many have begun to name themselves as catholic as Harry and Anne do, "catholic with a little c – catholic," yet they still also claim themselves as "Catholic." Dan asks, "Well we called ourselves Catholics, and my question is: What does that mean? Let's put it in context. If we are Catholic, we are part of the whole is some way and what is that way?" Shannon is questioning what it means to be Catholic in her Intentional Eucharistic Community. "I remember for a while I began thinking I don't even know if we're Catholic. I don't know what we are…probably catholic with a little c. But I kinda feel like we are Catholic still, but still very much on the margins of the big Church."   Her beginning use of 'catholic' as one name for herself, while also speaking of being part of the Catholic Church, suggests her struggle to understand her own community can be placed where on the continuum, a struggle others from this community named and discussed. It also suggests her movement to a *both-and* understanding of the margins where both being in the center of the Church and being on the margins exist together.[140]

One of the paradoxes of the margins is that as one moves to a *both-and* understanding, the positive points of the margins are stressed (J. Y. Lee 1995, 61). Colleen, calling herself a discovering Catholic, says, "I just keep discovering new ways of discovering community, and God, and worship, and new things. It's always new, that's how I like to see myself" (2009). Julia likes the margins and being with her small Christian community, a group of people her age. "Ummm, I like it out here, and if it weren't for this sort of group, and feeling like I got sort of pulled into it kicking and

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[140] See J. Y. Lee's work of the margins in *A Theology of Marginality* (1995) and chapter 3 for more information on these either/or, both-and, and in-beyond concepts of the margins.

screaming, I wouldn't be in the Catholic church at all, so I guess I feel like the margins are a good place to live" (Julia 2009).

Catholic and catholic? In-Beyond

A number of my dialogue partners simply refer to themselves as 'Catholic,' indicating a space in the *in-beyond* where they understand themselves as part of both worlds – the center and the margins without these worlds merging (J.Y. Lee 1995, 62). Six dialogue partners state with Andrew simply, "I am Catholic." Kathy calls herself a 'realistic Catholic,' Steve named himself a 'sensible Catholic.' and Mattie says, "I probably still say I'm Catholic but I'm not Catholic in the traditional way. I am finding I am the true spirit Catholic." Katherine names herself a "Vatican II Catholic." As Katherine names herself a Vatican II Catholic, she is moving into a differentiation of her space in the Church relative to others, based on a reflection about the contemporary Catholic Church.

Many dialogue partners, like Bill, carefully distinguish their marginality. "Well, from the institution, I am on the margin yes, the hierarchy and institution, [but from] the People of God, no, not at all.″ Coleen and Ted express their feelings this way, ″Well I feel very divorced from the Roman curia and the Pope, and all that hierarchal structure because in my heart I do not believe that was the establishment of Jesus at the Last Supper. 'You'll be a pope, and you'll be a cardinal, and you'll be an archbishop, and you'll be an altar boy.' I do not believe that was part of the Jesus idea of agape and the Last Supper" (Colleen 2009). "Yeah, I want a mature relationship and I don't think it's a mature relationship right now between the leadership, the hierarchy and the people. They need to listen and I don't feel they're listening" (Ted 2009).

Assessment

The name given to any endeavor, a social movement, or a way of understanding

reality is significant (Isasi-Diaz 2010). A name not only identifies those being named, but

it also influences how others, and those named as well, think about and conceptualize

what is named. "To name oneself is one of the most powerful acts any human person can

do. A name provides identification as well as being a conceptual framework, a point of

reference, a mental construct used in thinking, understanding, and relating to persons,

ideas, movements" (Isasi-Diaz 2010)

While those on the margins of the Catholic Church have been named in Church

discussions as 'fallen away,' 'lapsed,' 'disconnected,'[141] the names dialogue partners

suggest are different. These names reveal multiple experiences and multiple dialogues

that exist side by side rather than merging into each other. Using a hermeneutic of

marginality, an understanding of belonging and non-belonging allows those on the

margins to begin to understand the margins as places of choice. Following this

hermeneutic understanding, the place of the margins is fluid and changeable. When some

dialogue partners perceive their place on the margins in an either-or space, their dialogue

reveals a perception of the institution as overly authoritarian and in control of their

marginality. For these dialogue partners, the institutional church marginalizes them

because of it's adherence to rules and teachings. For others who view the margins in an

either/or fashion, the margins are a place in some ways that they choose. Sarah and Joe, a

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[141] Names vary for those on the margins of the Catholic Church. Traditional names for Catholics who do not attend Mass include fallen away Catholics or lapsed Catholics. The website *Catholics Come Home* reaches out to 'fallen away' Catholics. http://www.catholicscomehome.org/about-what-we-do.php. The Paulist Brothers have a program for Catholics who are named as 'inactive Catholics' called *Awakening Faith*. http://www.paulist.org/pressroom/paulist-fathers%E2%80%99-national-office-launches-nationwide-movement-for-outreach-to-inactive-catholics/.

priest and religious sister, understand their space on the margins as a place of ministry and prophetic place. While this is difficult, it is from this space that these dialogue partners are called to speak to the Church who at times does not seem to want to listen.

Names reveal an *in-beyond* space where belonging to the Church and to the margins exists without merging the two. This generates living with ambiguity and paradox as dialogue partners feel the tension of belonging while voicing their critical analysis of the tradition.[142] Those naming themselves as "Catholic" signify this space. This *in-beyond* place brings together both the "roots and branches" of the traditions of the past with the traditions of the Church today. While respecting both, they sit in the paradox of their relationship with the Church hoping to understand a fuller meaning" (Veling 1995, 135).

Interestingly, only those who belong to some form of spiritually nourishing community named themselves with the name "Catholic" which is an indication of the margins as an in-beyond place. In this in-beyond space, those on the margins sit in the paradox of being *both* in the church *and* on the margins at the same time (J. Y. Lee 1995, 66-67). Those who named themselves as belonging to an *either-or* or to a *both-and* place include those who belong to small communities, as well as some who have yet to find communities.

When my dialogue partners name themselves in positive terms, they image themselves as the *Imago Dei*. In this, they begin speaking of God not only understanding God in positive terms but understanding God as welcoming of diversity and present on the margins. Jung Young Lee suggests that understanding people as made in the image of

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[142] See Chapter 2 for Jung Young Lee's theology of marginality and a description of the margins as either/or, both-and, and in-beyond places.

God implies the Trinitarian nature of God (1995, 104). What is created must be plural in nature. For Lee, marginal people are the People of God (1995, 4). "We are created to be different because we have inherited God's plurality" (J.Y. Lee 1995, 204).

Many dialogue partners speak of choosing to lose an image of an angry, punishing God. Rita remarks, "Jesus, He preached a positive message of hope and love, but as I've looked back on my faith journey, it's the dark, scary parts that have stayed with me longest - the black splotches and terrible fear of dying in my sleep; the stern priests and nuns; the angry, vengeful, judging God who kept track of all my sins; the dark confessional" (2009). Many dialogue partners wrestle with their images of God. Tom says, "We make stories about God and we make God some kind of dictator, some kind of a punisher, all of these things" (2009). One partner Dee speaks of her struggles with understanding herself as made in God's image and the work she does for good to try to prove it. "I'm probably all wrong in this, but my whole thing of that is that I'm trying to prove I'm good enough. By doing these things, by making up for mistakes and other things, the one bad one I did, plus not treating people always good along the way. So, it hopefully proves that I'm a valid person and worthy" (2009). Dee expresses human identity as relational. She is talking about her relationship with God and an understanding of God as relational.

Dialogue educates each person about themselves, about the other and about God. Dialogue partners find the benefits of dialogue in the struggle to understand God as a God of love, welcome, and plenitude. Sarah remarks, "So, through my experiences I began to become more and more aware that the God I'm coming to know is a God of openness and great love" (2009). This is the language of hope. A continued look at the

dynamics of marginality on the margins of the Catholic Church will reveal the ways in which people on the margins live and practice this hope.

Naming Relationship and Feelings

What's In a Name

Connections and hope for something new, albeit "Maybe not in my lifetime" (Gail 2009), present the margins as places where relationship is lived intentionally. My dialogue partners point to the margins of the Catholic Church as places of authenticity. "I feel I am a more authentic Catholic Christian now than I was when observing all the rules and regulations" (Sarah 2009). It is also a place of questioning. "Some theology classes I've taken, they had the depth that was so wonderful. They really made you think; you had to squirm around in your theology gut and see what do I really believe? It is good for me to do that kind of thinking" (Colleen 2009). "We went to Jerusalem, to Israel and listened at a mosque as part of the process. That was a real eye-opener. Hearing the stories my whole life and then going and actually seeing the place where many of these stories happened, something in me just shifted. There was a deepening that happened and a deepening in my questioning too" (Ted 2009). And finally, margins are a place of discernment, "Being Catholic is not about following the rules; it's about knowing what God's expectations for you are, and it's discernment, and learning throughout your life" (Harry 2009).

Dialogue partners feel themselves joined in relationship with a larger communion of Catholics who have gone before in history. Sarah and Bill observe. "There was a fork in the road and I had to make a decision, and I followed other Catholics who came to know God in this way, but we are all the same root" (Sarah 2009). Bill expresses himself

as a person in relationship, even though he is on the margins. "In Chartres, there is a door, the image on it is that each person is holding on to the heel of the person above them...And it's just a reminder that we're not in this alone, we're holding on to our ancestors, and it's part of who I am...It's very much that we're in this together" (2009).

Marginality developed gradually for many of my dialogue partners in the context of their life experiences and spirituality. Most often these feelings of marginality are food for critical thought and prayerful reflection, as Julian states, "I did debate with myself for awhile, is it better to stay a Catholic and try to change the Church as a Catholic? You know, try to make changes in the Church, because it's the only way you can change it, if you leave it no one is gonna listen. But then I went to my kids and thought whether I want to teach my daughter their stance on women, where women are not allowed to be leaders at the highest level" (2009). Bea expresses, "I actually agonized a long time about what are the essentials" (2009). Sarah describes her process "I see myself growing more deeply into what it means to be as Catholic. I feel I'm [pause] I want to use the word transforming and growing is very simplistic, I don't know what else to say, but it's like I'm becoming more Catholic in that I'm more authentic, maybe I could use the word 'authentic.' I feel I'm a more authentic Catholic Christian now than I was when I was observing all the rules and regulations" (2009).

Feelings about the Church are expressed by my dialogue partners. They speak of embarrassment and anger at the Church and its image. Rita points out. "I'll probably never leave the Catholic Church, but I am embarrassed at the image they have created for themselves" (2009). Jean states, "Again I was embarrassed. Even recently, you shut your eyes and wince when the Pope was talking about the Islam and the Muslims being second

class or whatever he said. I wanted to throw up"(2009). Maria and Judy speak of the hurt

and anger. "Being treated as if we were nothing! We didn't matter. 'We have our agenda.'

That was very hurtful to realize that in spite of all that happened there, the people didn't

mean a thing" (Maria 2009). Judy speaks of her anger. "In the beginning, my anger was

at the church and the women in my prayer group who had children abused by priests,

their anger was at specific priests and how the church dealt with it, you know, because a

lot of the anger was around the sexual abuse scandal" (2009). Anne explains, "This is the

point at which I get mad. Wait a minute, the people who are actually living the Gospel

and actually serving the people and finding the poor and finding ways to make life better

for other people, those are the people you want to kick out? That makes me mad" (2009).

Assessment

Not only Cindy and Miriam speak of exclusion in the Church. Numerous dialogue

partners speak of the exclusion happening in the parishes of their diocese around voting

issues, support of political candidates, and involvement in progressive Catholic

organizations. Julia states, "So it's some of the real teaching that's going on that excludes

people. I think these have a certain amount of shame or guilt that is tied to them and

should we really feel that way?" (2009). Is the Church of the twenty-first century moving

toward exclusion as an alternative to marginalization? From a perspective of Van der

Ven's model of Church, this may be one sign of the amodern basic community. Some

indications of this model are required obedience to authority, two classes in the church

(laity and clergy), and the understanding that the universal truth the church bears cannot

be questioned (Van der Ven 1996, 28). This model reacts to the plurality and difference

in postmodernity by striving to become a small and holy few, separating itself from

society (Van der Ven 1996, 28). As this model turns away from society, it resists modernity. Dialogue partners note, as Mattie does, "Well, we're going backwards for sure, and the pope is saying if people leave we'll have a smaller, more pure Church" (2009). Andrew remarks, "Being judged against the 'pray, obey, and pay' model we did not fit the mold" (2009). My dialogue partners note the same weaknesses in the institutional Church that Van der Ven identifies in this model: a lack of dialogue with diversity, exclusion of those with differing views, and benefits to those in power in the Church.

Remarkably, not one dialogue partner indicated that people in the center of the Catholic Church needed to be pushed out, ignored, or excluded for their opinions, beliefs, or practices. All suggested values of inclusivity prizing non-denomination. They often said like Cindy, "We need to listen to all the voices" (2009).

Still, many dialogue partners expressed a disconnect between the hierarchical Church and the church as People of God. All but one of those who specify a difference between the institutional church and the Church as the People of God presently meet in some kind of spiritual community whether it is a small Christian community, a prayer group, or an Intentional Eucharistic Community. Dialogue partners at all ages expressed this suggesting a kind of unvoiced movement into Brueggemann's textual community model of Church. This textual community does not demand consensus but rather struggles and engages with the tradition to recover memory and rootedness while striving toward connectedness and the practice of hope as its primary action (Brueggemann 1991, 134).

Carrying the Good

The practices of hope by those on the margins include a remembering of the traditions and memories of what they understand as good in their Catholic faith tradition. They "balance" their feelings of anger and embarrassment with these memories letting them stand and harmonizing them with their 'core values.' One focus group stated, "We individually carry what is good and re-create [that] with like-minded people" (2009).

What is good is often expressed as something intangible. "It's like it's in my bones. It's like, I can't not be Catholic" (Judy 2009). "Being Catholic sorta gets into your DNA" (Jean 2009). "It's so much woven into me, but not only history, but by some deep level of choice" (Mai 2009). Most often this dialogue topic generated a long pause and then a thoughtful answer when this intangible was explored. Dialogue partners Sarah, Scott, and Bill mention the sacraments particularly Eucharist. Sarah explains, "I came to know God through the Sacraments. I celebrate liturgy at the table, I make a thing out of having meals with folks." Bill suggests, "Maybe I'd be kinda poetic and just say bread, bread and wine, which is very much a part of who I am... Eucharist is not just something we do, but something we are" (2009).

Others mention liturgy and ritual as Lily does, "It is the ritual that draws me" (2009). Mai says that what is in her bones is "something about regard for the transcendent which something in liturgy invites, promotes and provokes" (2009). For some dialogue partners it is the teachings on how to live that they still find important. Sam declares that he was taught as a child about "not judging" (2009). Judy remarks, "The church gave me such a rich beginning, I have a foundation" (2009). Terry notes 'the basic premises' that

he maintains. "I truly believe that all life is sacred and I'm for the anti-death penalty" (2009).

Many dialogue partners point to a sense of family and being part of something larger. Dan suggests, "Well, my Grandma had the same belief, the same faith" (2009). Julia, like Lance says, "I think it's like history, it's like family. You can't really cut yourself off from family ever really" (2009). Laura, like Anne, comments on the history and being part of a tradition of 'one of the first churches,' "Part of it is family history. Knowing that we're part of something bigger that's been around for 2,000 years, knowing that there have been mistakes; there's been healing; that the church isn't perfect; that it's evolving; that there's things that Catholics know that are different" (2009).

This sense of being Catholic also involves a cultural identity. As Julia explains, "It's very cultural, my mom is Hispanic too so, you know, it's part of that culture, part of her upbringing and part of my upbringing" (2009). Ted suggests, "I think there's the cultural identity of being Catholic" (2009). Colleen "I can't not be Catholic as well as not be Irish, you know, I'm stuck with it, and Catholic is something in you" (2009).

Finally, dialogue partners identify with social justice traditions as Jean suggests, "The thing that I value most is the social justice perspectives, for sure" (2009). Maggy also remarks, "And the peace and justice tradition, I don't know, the good people and the good things that have come from the church" (2009).

<div align="center">Assessment</div>

People on the margins even though marginalized value the Catholic tradition. J. Y. Lee's theology of marginality suggests that "what the contemporary and self-affirming definition of marginality attempts to do is to affirm the wholeness of its nature and shape

a new creative image from the old image of disgrace and shame" (1995, 50). These 'good things' that dialogue partners see as part of the wholeness of the Catholic faith reflect the deep structures of Catholicism, identified in Chapter 4 as sacramentality, mediation and communion. Whether it is a sense of the rich understanding of how to live their everyday life with the "basic premises" they learned as Catholic, a sense of God's presence at work in the breaking of bread and the sharing of self, or the importance of inclusivity and connection to family what is good about the Catholic faith continues to inform and influence my dialogue partners.

Brueggemann's model of church as a textual community becomes evident in these descriptions. As people on the margins, my dialogue partners are engaged in formulating and interpreting text in ways that struggle with the tradition, engage and enter into the through reflection, discernment and imagination (Brueggemann 1991, 133). Through this engagement, they find what is sustaining about the tradition.

Delving Deeper: Personal, Structural, and Systemic Problems with the Church

Dialogue partners also speak of what bothers them in the Church including those disillusioning issues that contribute to their marginalization as well as deeper issues such as the cover-up of the clergy sex abuse scandal. Focus group discussion tended to see classify the problems in the Church as systemic, structural, or personal. Structural problems with the Church relate to the way it is put together such as its hierarchical or centrally organized structure. Systemic problems are widespread and affect the whole Church and its functioning, as well as those in it. My dialogue partners frequently indicate that systemic and structural problems in the history of the Catholic Church have caused successive systemic, structural, and personal problems. One group of dialogue

partners in focus groups states "The use of 'Church' on this sheet is often really the institutional Church. We don't want to give over the term 'Church' to those who would define it so narrowly" (2009). This is an important statement. In another area of the country, I even had to designate that I was looking for dialogue partners on the margins of the *institutional* Catholic Church in order to find volunteers.

Another focus group suggested that if Church problems had been addressed adequately, anger would not have caused people to be marginalized or to stop attending Mass. Still another group suggests the systemic and structural problems are leading to a dying Church and they are hospicing this dying Church. "The background causes leading to the emerging Church involve the fact that they did not teach us to think before Vatican II, both priests and the people have a limited knowledge of contemporary post-Vatican II theological currents, and the Pope is in tension with the 'emerging church'" (2009). They note as Sarah does, "It's birth, it's chaos and it's destruction and it's rebirth" (2009). They suggest, "We need this to happen and we need Pentecost listening and thinking and questioning for our becoming" (2009). In their listening to divergent views, they trust something new will rise from the ashes.

Yet another group suggests "We are not hospicing this old Church. We have work to do on 'being Catholic', discerning and dealing with identity, anger, the religious right, Vatican II teachings and the retrenchment from Vatican II teachings, priests, adult religious education, interconnections, and social justice" (2009). As they deal with these issues, this group sees a new paradigm growing that connects the early church with the emerging Church. They relate to Harry's comment, "We are not aiming to be a first

century community. I think we are aiming to be a twenty-first century church and I think it has amazing correlations" (2009).

One group remarks that the priests leaving the priesthood in the 1970's, "especially the ones we liked, who were the best with relevant homilies," the antiwar culture, and the cultural changes of this time led Catholics such as themselves to take more notice of the Church. This in turn led to thinking and questioning. This group feels that they are balancing the systemic and structural problems in the hierarchy and power structure of the church that they term "the disruption of relationships which is sin" with their response of inclusivity, finding voice, and re-appropriation of the communion of saints. They see a relationship of counterpoint, as they carve something new. The current centralization of authority, lack of consultation and silencing of divergent views, and a male-centered church is being counterbalanced by thinking and questioning, an egalitarian and democratic way of being Church, inclusive language and a movement to the margins. On the margins they find community, dialogue, relationship, and an inclusive space where "Everyone is welcome at the table" (2009).

Focus groups all corroborate that systemic and structural problems are causal factors in their marginality. As one group said, "We are questioning all the negatives. We are breaking the silence" (2009).

The Church Is Out of Step with Its Own Purpose

Naming the Problems: Personal, Structural and Systemic in the Church

"There is growing disillusionment with the Church's attitude. The Church is out of step with its own purpose" (Joe 2009). "The church has a reputation for taking five hundred years...I don't hold out a lot of hope for the institutional church. I actually think

the institution has a very good chance of going out of business or becoming irrelevant because on the one hand, millions and millions of Catholics are becoming 'unchurched' because they don't see opportunities" (Harry 2009). Dialogue partners referred to the Church as sick and dying. "The church is alive and well here though it is a very sick place" (Jane 2009). Some, like Miriam, refer to hospicing a dying Church. "We are going to bring out a new church from the ashes. Because right now, what's happening is we're hospicing this old church" (2009). "They keep shooting themselves in the foot, everything that comes out of the hierarchy is distressed, is totally distressed. I don't think it will change in this generation, the church takes forever, just look at Vatican II, still, it will take hundreds of years" (Gail 2009).

Retrenchment

Dialogue partners discuss the 'retrenchment' they see happening. "I am suggesting that, the way that I experience the hierarchy today, I am expected to deny that vision and deny the culture that I live in and the kind of society I live in, to deny myths or the symbols of my vision. And I am supposed to leave it outside the Church as I walk in the Church door so that I can adapt a pre-17th century language. For example, when they defined homosexuality they had no position in defining that. It is again, it is clearly Galileo revisited and to me these are intelligent people" (Dan 2009). Mattie longs for Vatican II teachings, "Vatican II, Well they're going backwards that's for sure!" Dan states, "I can understand what is going on today in the context of my own experience which is pre-Vatican II" (2009).

Personal Problems

Personal problems are named as causing marginality: divorce, annulments encouraged by the Church for their husbands when they wanted the marriage to continue, the church's teachings on homosexuality and relationships, and abortion are included in these personal issues. Sometimes, as in Mike's case, a lack of knowledge about current Catholic teaching today exacerbated the problems. Matt speaks of the Church's teaching of no salvation outside of the Church and his love for his non-Catholic brother-in-law. "We learned as kids, like oh, my God, if you're not a Catholic then something is wrong. So, that's not fair. This guy is nice. And then I started wondering, that was the first big question I had. Why should he be punished? "(2009).

Dee speaks about getting pregnant as an eighteen-year-old and the mother of her boyfriend suggesting and then taking her to get an abortion. This has been a burden for Dee throughout her life. She says, "The really great thing about being Catholic is that I can go to confession; I've been to confession a few times, but haven't confessed this yet. This is how bad I feel about it. It is one of those things I still need to work on" (2009). Dialogue partners express a hesitancy to go to confession to priests they perceived as ultraconservative, authoritarian, and lacking empathy. These personal problems in the Church lead to feelings of marginalization and, according to one focus group, are "among the causal reasons for not going to Mass and for leaving the Church altogether" (2009).

Personal and family issues often were aggravated by Church communities, causing people to move to the margins. Janet was asked to leave her church as a young girl because her parents did not have the money to pay for school or the religious education. In her fifties, this incident still marginalizes her.

The church's teaching on homosexuality was mentioned by over half of my dialogue partners as unjust. "The church shames gay people" (Harry 2009). Pat and Steve agreed, "Like we said to you before, sexual equality is the civil rights issue of this generation, so that bothers us a lot" (2009). "I feel that something in the concept of religion gets incredibly screwed up when you disown your child for being gay" (Dee 2009).

Other personal issues also push people to the margins. The church's stance on annulment, irregular marriages, and the reception of Eucharist cause much pain and anger for those on the margins of the Church. "You know, there's still a certain amount of shame of not being an intact family" (Sade 2009). "I kind of left the church temporarily after I was divorced; actually I got the marriage annulled, which I would never do again because I think the annulment process is meaningless" (Lily 2009). "What about divorced people, how about my aunt who was in an abusive relationship for six years, the guy beat her bloody. She left him, found my Uncle Jack, they got married, they've been together for forty-five years, happy. She has been going to mass every weekend for forty-five years and not receiving communion because she's divorced, That's not fair" (Harry 2009). "I said at the annulment hearing I am going to read to you why the sacrament is valuable. The judicial vicar at the time, said to me, his actual words were, 'We don't care about the sacrament here, we only care about the law, Canon Law.' It's so hypocritical" (Jean 2009). And James decided against annulment. "The only thing I would have got out of that is that I would tell the kids, we were never married, well, what does that make you? Ha, ha. So, I said no" (2009). Kim speaks of being told her parents' marriage was annulled. "I called my sister a bastard. It was a joke but at the same time, wow, it ticked

me off. How can you - you were married for twenty-five years how can you say it's okay because you gave the church $2,000?" (2009).

Issues that decrease Mass attendance include boredom, irrelevant homilies, a difference in emphasis on worship style and a loss of a sense of community. "But like at St. ____, it's just like it was growing up, the same thing, its routine, and it's kind of boring" (Sam 2009). "We had a Charismatic mass once every month and the Spirit just flowed. I still wonder what happened to it. I've asked a couple of priests, I don't get an answer" (John 2009). "If we're really going to take the essence of the Last Supper, we're so far away from it in Mass. I often say, the big cathedrals with people just sitting there doing nothing, that doesn't resemble the Last Supper to me at all. It was always meant to be community in sharing and action. How are we going to take care of the poor? That was the purpose of liturgy, [it] was to give you enough strength to go out and do what needs to be done" (Colleen 2009).

The single most mentioned personal problem for my dialogue partners is clergy sex abuse and its cover-up. Forty-six of my dialogue partners mentioned this as an issue that moved them to the margins of the church. Most knew people touched by the abuse personally speak of their friends' anger and sadness and their move to the margins of the Church. Many say that their friends have left the Catholic Church completely. Jane's experiences, detailed in Chapter 3, tell of her getting sick at church concerning this issue. Jane says, "Abuse is never ancient history, people don't get that" (2009). James talks about his experiences with a priest who was a close family friend throughout the years his children were growing. "Absolutely, to me the Catholic Church lost all its common sense, they lost their integrity and this, I felt this before it got personal, and my kids might be

involved" (2009). My other dialogue partners, like Sarah, demand those responsible take personal responsibility. "That's one of the things that led me away, the hypocrisy of it all. And then we get this prayer card sent to each parish. The priest said we would pray this at the end of all the liturgies for this terrible crisis we're going through. Within that prayer card it was 'we have sinned.' So fortunately some people were saying, 'Wait a minute, we have sinned?' Take this prayer card and <u>hmm</u> with it because, we have all sinned but what you're talking about is not 'we'" (2009). This problem in the Church is structural and systemic as well as personal.

Structural Problems

According to my dialogue partners, the Church is experiencing structural problems. These structural problems include an unhealthy hierarchical organization, too much control, and authoritarianism. "There are things that really bug the hell out of me. You know, the way the church flaunts its authority, the hierarchy, the way woman are treated, the way sexuality is hidden, the way homosexuals are ostracized" (Bill 2009). "Well part of my sense about that is we still have to address some deeper issues in the church around abuse, around power, around dispensation of the sacraments. Doesn't it bother people that we have few priests to do Eucharist, so they're going to do Communion Services where this poor priest will consecrate a bunch and dole them out. I mean, does that make any sense theologically to people?" (Jane 2009). "So, the church itself creates feet of clay people. They form dependant people in dependant ways, so that there is a lot of dependency in the mentality" (Jean 2009).

Dialogue partners identify overall trends in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church toward retrenchment from Vatican II teachings, a lack of understanding of U.S. culture,

and expectations about uniformity from Rome as having created a general disenchantment. There is growing disillusionment with the church's attitude. "It's power and structure, power through structure" (Dan 2009). "The rules are more important than the people. The Pope started saying you have to kneel here and then you have to bow there, and it was over and over again. We were told this is what you have to do. Who cares what we do? Who cares if I bow at the right time before I receive Communion? Who cares? Does God care?" (Cindy 2009). "This is the church that needs new thinking and we kind of thought there was hope for it, but I don't know after how many years of Pope John Paul's attitude and then Benedict; I still don't know what he wants to do besides make the church leaner and meaner" (Lily 2009). "The Catholic Church, I feel the big institution is very judgmental, exclusive, and focused on material things and not so much on social justice" (Shannon 2009).

Dialogue partners have concerns related to parishes as community, and pastoral effectiveness, and involvement. Issues of misuse of power and authority in the church, and related problems with young, conservative priests who want to exercise their power exclusively are also part of structural difficulties driving people to the margins. Ted describes, "He says, 'I've got this parish and I'm gonna take it for a spin,' to quote him. Let's take it for a spin, totally shutting out people who had done wonderful work, and it felt like, 'I'm not welcome here'" (Ted 2009).

Finally, a lack of intellectual stimulation, a lack of spirituality in Church liturgy and community, as well as a lack of enrichment and discussion, are also noted as structural problems. Judy remarks, "I think I got more and more disillusioned with them not listening to the laity or not realizing what our struggles were. When the GIRM

(General Instruction for the Roman Missal) came out [in 2002], it just seemed that they isolated the priests further" (2009). Harry states, "To me the elements of the mass are being genuine and having integrity and being real and being true to the teachings of Christ, it's not whether you're following GIRM or not. And GIRM was sort of a retrenchment of previous rules" (2009). Tim remarks, "For the most part, I'll hear a sermon and a lot of times, forget about it in a week or a day, or whatever" (2009). Luke states, "My kids don't go to church. They are good kids; they're both married. They're both strong in social justice, but when you talk about the church it doesn't resonate. Now, what went wrong? What was happening in the church did not make sense" (2009).

Personal and structural problems in the Catholic Church are connected with systemic problems. With a lack of leadership systemic problems added to a general disenchantment with the hierarchy causing people to move the margins (Joe 2009).

Systemic Problems in the Church

Systemic difficulties abound in the Church. Parish mergers and closing without any regard for the type of alternative leadership possibilities, limited connection by current Church hierarchy with Vatican II theological currents, and lack of leadership are just a few of the problems. In turn, lack of leadership leads to a lack of consultation and a silencing of divergent perspectives (Joe 2009). Exclusivism in belief, ritual, and attitudes, a culture of arrogance, and increased centralization are other systemic problems. The leadership maintains a sense of inequality and a canonical rigidity contrary to the Gospel (Bob 2009; Jane 2009; Joe 2009; Sandra 2009; Dan 2009).

Dialogue partners spoke to all of these issues. "No, no, it's systemic; it's a much bigger issue. I think the issues around priests and relationships are more a symptom of a

bigger systemic issue of not being honest with naming, well the abuse scandal is an example...the abuse scandal would be good, an example of not walking the talk, of saying one thing and acting in another" (Ted 2009). "I think the Church is determined to go back to old pre-Vatican stuff and they'll get it done cause that's who's in there right now" (Maggy 2009) "Well, I think the priest or the clergy in general, the hierarchy are teaching out of a fear mode rather than a freeing mode. I suppose a lot of it is fear of losing their status maybe...." (Colleen 2009). "

Assessment

These systemic, structural, and personal problems in the Catholic Church produce tension within the present day Church. For my dialogue partners, these result in a growing disillusionment with the church's teachings and demands for justice. Miriam suggests, "It is very evident to me that this is a dying church, people are disgusted with the secrecy" (2009). Rita explains, "The greed, the accumulated wealth while people die of starvation, the self-serving, arrogant attitude of the church - surpasses all other faith traditions in ego. The secrecy, I can no longer be one of the 'sheep' - one of the never-questioning, apathetic followers" (2009). Harry says, "You know you can't continue to oppress groups and expect people who demand justice to acquiesce" (2009).

Personal problems with the Church at times reflect Church teachings learned at an early age. Adult religious education with an emphasis on Vatican II teaching has enabled a many more to hear current understanding of the Church's teachings in question. Such education is needed by both laity and clergy alike due to inadequate education and retrenchment from Vatican II teachings.

Systemic and structural difficulties reflect issues in a Church that understands itself in a way that appears to be similar to Brueggemann's temple community model. Such a model is marked by a convergence of Church and state, relative stability, members whose lives moved from the religious dimension into secularization, and a visible and funded leadership (Brueggemann 1991, 130). Brueggemann suggests this is the governing model of Western Christianity. I would suggest it is the governing model of parishes to which my dialogue partners belonged before their move to the margins. Established religion in the temple community model serves the powerful by stabilizing power and knowledge at the expense of others in the Church and community (Brueggemann 1991, 130).This model 'defaults' on its God-given vocation as Church and is eventually swept away by upheaval (Brueggemann 1991, 1331).

Dialogue partners speak of the Church as dying, remarking they are "hospicing this old Church." They point to a lack of social justice, a lack of meaningful liturgy opportunities, and an emphasis on rubrics and rules. Harry remarks, "I was in the shelter last night, as my volunteer stint for the month, and we don't even have enough cereal bowls, so are we supposed to buy $8,000 worth of gold chalices and these guys have to wash out their bowls so that they can have breakfast after the other guy? How silly is that, and so we voted it down" (2009). Bea states, "This emphasis on things. The priest had all the Eucharistic ministers...come to a meeting and so we did, and there was a five page packet for us, lots of bold print, sacramental, thick, it was all about how to behave. Actually, at one point a friend of mine was a Eucharistic minister, former Catholic, now she's retired, and she said, 'Bea, that place is toxic'" (2009). As the Church seems to focus

power and control of knowledge, prophets keep calling it back to its roots. That is one of the roles my dialogue partners play in their communities.

In their analysis of the problems in the Church, some in my focus groups speak of those on the margins as if they are in conflict with some in the hierarchical church. Because of these problems and because of their experiences on the margins of the Church, they see an emerging church rising. While there is growing disillusionment, there is also hope.

We Carve Out Something New: The Emerging Church on the Margins

Those on the margins of the Catholic Church live and imagine creative new potential for an emerging Church in the liminal space of the margins. Dialogue with my dialogue partners and conversation in focus groups paint a picture of this emerging Church taking shape. One does not live into or imagine an emerging Church alone but rather in community. The envisioned emerging Church insists on relationship, dialogue, and community. One focus group of dialogue partners noted, "We don't go become Lutherans or Episcopalians; we don't stop being Catholic, we carve out something new." They state, "While some may consider the hierarchical Church as the more traditional church, the emerging Church more connects with the ancient tradition of our Catholic Church." One dialogue partner remarks, "People are leaving but I think we are going to bring out a new Church from the ashes" (Gail 2009).

Another focus group images this emerging Church relationally as a "horizontal circle" (2009). Still another suggests that the emerging Church "is where we are and where we want to be. We have work to do" (2009). Another focus group indicates that as

they "hospice this old Church, a new Church will emerge from the ashes of the present Church. There are conversations moving us forward to the emerging Church" (2009).

Relationship

The emerging Church that is marked by relationship is inclusive. Those on the margins call for inclusive community. This includes the GLBT community (Gay Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered), those with developmental disabilities, the poor, and the immigrant communities. They also want equal opportunities for women and married priest leadership. They suggest the use of inclusive language so all feel welcome. "You learned from the street people, from the poor, from the marginalized and all that they said. 'If you want us here then you have to take us as we are'" (Colleen 2009).

An inclusive faith community is seen as democratic and egalitarian. It is a place of divergent views that is open and welcoming. In its equality and acceptance of difference, communities are described much as Harry describes his old parish community before a change in pastoral leadership. "We were the place that if you were divorced and feeling unwelcome or you were gay, or you were radical or something, you would come to St. _____ because it was the place where you were accepted, you were nurtured, you were welcomed and cherished. I never felt that people tolerated me at St. ____. I felt that people just loved the fact that I was there" (Harry 2009).

Those on the margins of the Church describe a spirituality of relationship. Lily suggests this is "not being a child of God anymore, but being an adult in relationship with God" (2009). Spirituality involves vulnerability and sharing of everyday lives. Kate suggests that people can find a peace in relationship with God and others as they bring their bad experiences to a community where "people listen and they care" (2009). God is

present on the margins. As James notes, "God isn't going to take you out of your situation; he'll leave you there, but he's going to be with you there and that is a huge difference, huge" (2009). Shannon suggests, "The phrase that I always remember that I like so much is 'bread for the journey,' which reminds me that this is not just a Sunday thing. This is your life; this is what you try to do all week. We know things about people's lives in our community that are so important to know. You know, whether it's their health or things they're going through or their kids or their jobs or people losing jobs, all kinds of things, you know things about people. And that kind of vulnerability brings a different level of spiritual understanding, I must say" (2009).

Dialogue

Such actions involve dialogue. As one focus group notes, "The Spirit evolves in dialogue" (2009). Dialogue in the emerging Church is dialogue with God and each other, dialogue with the tradition, and dialogue with education partners such as the history of the Church, Scripture and theology. A Trinitarian theology suggests an understanding of a dialogic God in conversation with the world. Colleen notes, "I think the revelation of God is constant and I hope forever." Dialogue with God and each other includes as one focus group noted "ritual and liturgy, sharing spiritually through prayers and dialogic homilies that are lay led, and thinking and questioning."

A dialogue with tradition suggests 'recovering and revaluing traditions.' Jane states, " I love ritual, I love a lot of how the tradition addresses mystery and how the tradition, I mean the long tradition, even our mystics, there was very much a sense of universality and transcendence along with imminence that is not so much the rubrics and the high church and the funny hats and all of that, but just the tradition itself. This is a

love affair with a God who loves us, you know, so immanently" (2009). Pat remarks, "Well, there are a number of things over the millennium that the Catholic Church has done very well, there happens to be a whole lot of Catholic music written that I happen to agree with. There is a whole lot of tradition which has dealt with social justice; there has been a whole lot about life" (Pat 2009). They include conversations about the experience with the hierarchy of the Church and conversations about how people "find their own authority to live in a relationship with their own self and other folks and in the universe with their God" (Sarah 2009).

Dialogue in the emerging Church allows people to speak, to have voice. One focus group suggests, "They did not teach us to think before Vatican II." As Ted and Sarah remark, "You've not converted a person if you silence them" (Ted 2009). "What's going to happen to us if people speak up and stand up and be counted?" (Sarah 2009).

Dialogue with education that facilitates continued spiritual growth is valued by my dialogue partners. They note that it needs to focus on "a more dialogic education rather than a spoon-fed education" (2009). Dialogue partners suggested education themes that I group into three areas: history of church, Scripture, and theology. They affirm the necessity of a continuing study of theology and ask the larger questions about their community's authenticity and relevance because of their studies. Dialogue partners note that Scripture study is necessary. Some believe that the use of the Bible in history has led to violence. Others such as Caroline note that further study allows a community to say, "This is what it says in the Bible...I know that it's going to be hard, but from my life experience these are the things you are going to face and let's do some practical work" (Caroline 2009). Bill suggests knowledge of Church history is needed. "I don't know if

we're really honest with our own past, I think if we all knew history better I think the world would be a much different place, not just the church, but the world. If we all knew history better, I'm not sure there'd be much in the way of war, I'm not sure there'd be much in the way of poverty" (2009).

The need for listening as part of dialogue is suggested both for those on the margins and for the hierarchical Church. Colleen explains the results of her parish community listening. "Yea, I think that's what saved us from becoming "girminated" [following the GIRM guidelines]. That we have marginalized people telling us a thing or two. You know we listened to the 'down and outers.' People knew, I think you listened, you learned from the street people, from the poor, from the marginalized and all that they said" (2009).

Community - Koinonia

The way dialogue partners speak about community seems to suggest a kind of koinonia, an invitation to communion beyond itself. "It is this communion of the Trinity that grounds the life and unity of the Church" (Fuchs 2008, 28). The emerging Church is envisioned as a Spirit-led community. Maria, Anne, and Bill who are all in different small communities, talk about the importance of these communities to their place on the margins. "That was the thing that kept us going and I think that we were together and experiencing the same things and encouraging each other. I don't know what would have happened if we would've been alone" (Maria 2009). "A sense of community and the sense of change, the sense of the Gospel asks us to change things in the world we are in and not to rest and not to sit still, that sense of movement and momentum, I think is the most important thing about it to me" (Anne 2009). And Bill's notes "I think I get more

energy from the small faith community. It's more I think, in line with the early church, you know the home liturgies, the home sharing, a sharing of faith and spirituality and trying to tie what's going on in our lives with readings, and kind of supporting one another" (2009).

Those on the margins who are living into this emerging Church describe themselves as educated and involved people who are also concerned with "what they do when they are not at the table." The array of social justice ministries my dialogue partners engage is impressive. Even for those who have grown to an age or health where active involvement is not an option, prayer ministries continue. Some are involved in political activism on behalf of the poorest of the poor in their communities. Others are involved in fighting the death penalty, war and instruments of war, hunger, and homelessness. This action involves giving of time, talent, and money. This social justice ministry arises from a spirituality sometimes nurtured in small communities, and sometimes when no community is available, nurtured in prayer with God alone. Anne suggests, "I found a community and I also found political activism which is really important" (2009). Bea states the importance of a community rooted in social justice. " The Gospel values were important...social justice, well it's justice, it's love, well it's just all the good stuff that comes out; justice, love, how to act in the world" (2009).

<div align="center">Assessment</div>

The emerging Church on the margins provides new theological vision. This is similar to Brueggemann's model of a new church start. The new church start is a community birthed in marginality (Brueggemann 1991, 133). It has a shared commitment to a central story and a social justice passion. It borrows from the culture and community

around it and transforms what it borrows with covenant and a passion for liberation. Lily remarks, "It's like, Jesus is here in this wine, you know, Jesus is not just there in Church, just because I have brought him here with my magic words, you know, I don't do that anymore. We have mass in our living room, and we have Jesus in our living room, we have bread and wine, we have the words of consecration and we all say them together" (2009). Sade states, "One thing I love within the Catholic Church is I love the saints because they are ordinary people who did extraordinary things. Very ordinary people" (2009). This gives hope.

J. Y. Lee theology of marginality suggests the concept of church begins on the margins. "The fellowship of God's marginal people is known as the Church or the body of Christ" (1995, 4). As my dialogue partners claim their name as Catholic, they imagine themselves as Church as the people of God. They realize that reconciliation is impossible without justice. They understand themselves as all made in the image of God and all invited into discipleship. As koinonia, they relate to God and understand their relationship with God demanding relationship with others. Thus, they call for women's leadership, for the respect for their GLBT brothers and sisters. Jane suggests that the Church needs "to include the gift of more people you're just going to have a greater sense of who's your leaders, a greater sense of role models for other people in the Church, and it empowers your people when you can see a woman priest, or a married priest, or somebody that connects with you, I mean, at least I felt I could talk to people from the pulpit and they got it" (2009). Luke notes, "The church is there to open us, to help us understand how God works through things" (2009). Thus, as dialogue partners talk about the Church, they also image God. They call for Church to be a "living faith model,"

understanding God present in everyday life. They call for community and relationship, understanding God present "where two or more are gathered" (Matthew 18:20). As Mai suggests, "So justice is important and honoring the essence of who you are, people working together, supporting one another and asking the hard questions, studying them, probing them" (2009).

Implications of the Dynamics of Marginality

It is here, at the conclusion of the discussion of the emerging Church on the margins that-this study begins to express concrete implications of this dialogue for others on the margins, for those who are talking about God in their everyday experiences, and for those in ministry in the Church. People on the margins as well as those who are seeking God in their everyday experiences and those who are in ministry would benefit from this practical theology research. Dialogue in small groups, both on the margins and in the center of Church, could engage this work of practical theology and further allowing not only these voices to be heard but also generating new implications in the shared dialogue.

Additional suggestions arising from this dialogue on the margins of the Catholic Church are listed and addressed below:

1. Social justice action is imperative.

2. Liturgies that nourish and foster this action create bonds but also give witness to Jesus Christ in the fellowship of the Spirit.

3. My dialogue partners on the margins call for ongoing formation as 'on the margin discipleship' and continued education. Adult religious education is important in the areas of history of the Church, Scripture and theology. This education needs to be

dialogic in its foundation, full of divergent voices and unafraid to act collaboratively in order to foster adult spiritual development. It is through this dialogue with another that spiritual formation happens and each person helps to author another. Education in history, Scripture and theology allows for a critical understanding of the foundations and roots of the Catholic tradition. This exploration fosters connections of the individual and communal story with the larger Jesus story in tradition.

4. A theological education is a necessity for those in ministry in this age of an educated laity. Education allows those in ministry to act as leaders. It collaboratively enables the minister to lead the church community in considering their context, the resources on which they can count, and the work necessary in a church rife with systemic and structural problems yet full of abundant hope.

5. Making opportunities to dialogue is essential. Dialogue supports those who engage it. It is through dialogue that the each person epistemologically understands. It is in and through dialogue that each person is formed and assists in forming the other. We cannot see ourselves fully; it is only with another that we are fully seen so that this can be reflected back for growth and understanding. We do the same for others. This is a deeply spiritual action. Dialogue for those in ministry sustains not only the minister, but also the community of faith and struggle working to anticipate God's new creation in the world today.

6. Dialogue is imperative as a part of community practice in small Christian communities, in intentional eucharistic communities, and in Church parishes. Dialogue without seeking consensus is an art and an art that can be learned. A skill necessary in community, dialogue is particularly helpful for those dealing with the stresses of systemic

and structural problems. Dialogue helps communities talk about issues, process them, and move to a new place. The ability to remember the history of the community, to dialogue about the community's rootedness and connectedness provides healing and hope.[143]

At the end, the purpose of this chapter has been to listen to the voices of those on the margins of the Catholic Church, exploring the dynamics of marginality, allowing them to name themselves, and listening as they describe the meaning and relationships they find emerging in the margins. The implications of these dynamics proposed for others on the margins for those today who are talking about God and seeking to understand God's relationship alive in our everyday experiences and for those in ministerial roles in the Catholic Church call for dialogue, education, and relationship. This dialogue rises from a practical theology model that is relational, engaging other disciplines, listening to diverse voices, seeking non-consensus dialogue. The next chapter will propose suggestions for what is next as I look to the future with hope.

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[143] These are the tasks of the textual community on of Brueggemann's models of church. *See* Chapter 4.

8

Faith That Good Does Not Die, Somehow Now God Works Through Us

Envisioning What's Next

Two objectives set in motion this practical theology research. The first is to understand the reasons why Catholics over the age of 21, who were once active and involved in the Catholic Church but presently no longer attend Mass, find themselves on the margins of the Church and how they understand their own marginality. By bringing forth the voices of my dialogue partners, this study explores the dynamics of marginality and integrates these dynamics into the lived experience of Church. Names for this space on the margins indicate a movement into the *both-and* where people are *both* on the margins *and* in the Church. Systemic, structural, and personal problems cause disillusionment, anger, embarrassment, and pain leading to marginality. People on the margins continue to seek ways of expressing their spirituality through small Christian communities, Intentional Eucharistic Communities, prayer, and social justice activities.

The second objective, rooted in the experience of those on the margins, delves into the implications of the experiences of my dialogue partners for others on the margins of the Church, for all those talking about God and seeking to understand God's relationship in everyday experiences, and for those who minister within the Catholic Church. There are new ways of being Church emerging on the margins, marked by inclusive relationship in community as koinonia, non-consensus seeking dialogue, a critical and thoughtful recalling of memories and narratives of the Catholic faith tradition, and appropriation of these in new and creative ways.

This practical theology research observed the consequences of a process of dialogue that does not seek agreement and consensus. This dialogue privileges the other and welcomes multiple voices. These contribute to practical theology method for the twenty-first century. Non-consensus seeking dialogue allows centrifugal forces pushing towards unity and order and centripetal forces pushing towards multiplicity and diversity to stand together as practical theology. Thus it finds new ways of transformative action.

Practical theology that takes seriously its work as discipleship uses dialogue that does not seek agreement or consensus as one primary means of encouraging relationship. The implications for the broader practical theological task begin in the transformative nature of dialogue. Dialogue forms all who appropriate the action. The goal of practical theology is transformation. Dialogue in itself is transformative. The welcoming of the unheard voices of my dialogue partners on the margins of the Roman Catholic Church to the conversation is the transformational aspect of this practical theology research. When the voices of people who have previously not been included in the conversation are heard the conversation changes. Dialogue that does not seek agreement provides opportunities to esteem God through relationship with a multitude of God's people. To be in relationship with God is to be in relationship with others. This creates a space for the creative potential of the margins to affect both the margins and the center for the good of all.

Yet, just to say practical theology seeks non-consensus seeking dialogue does not assure it. A concerted effort to develop models that have a basis in dialogue that does not seek agreement requires attention to methodological presupposition, and the use of interdisciplinary modes of conversation. Ultimately it requires an awareness of

relationship, a perception of the plentitude and plurality of God, and attention to the practical theologian's own ability to sit with paradox. Practical theology as discipleship makes it an inherently relational discipline. A move to dialogue that does not seek consensus, a welcoming of multiple voices, and a privileging of the other are relational tasks. They are ones that should not and cannot be done alone.

This suggests two areas for further research. The first involves practical theology research for the Church. The second further possibility to utilize dialogue that does not seek agreement or consensus in a variety of practical theology research opportunities.

Further practical theology research in the Church that utilizes a dialogic practical theology that does not seek consensus will allow more in-depth conversations and support dialogue with both those on the margins and those in the center. Margins are fluid places becoming new centers as new margins are formed. As voices that have previously gone unheard join the conversation, there may be chance for face to face dialogue with all in the Church. Non-consensus seeking dialogue, a welcoming of multiple voices, and a privileging of the voices of the other can facilitate this fruitful conversation. More opportunities for those on the margins to state research topics in regards to the margins of the Church, and to continue the conversation about their experiences through practical theology research are needed.

Intentional eucharistic communities such as the one with which I was associated through my dialogue partners are developing as models of emerging Church. Their process, challenges, and journey as they seek authentic ways to live their relationship with God may provide insight into the ways we are Church in the twenty-first century.

Participatory action research and more in-depth reciprocal ethnography could provide avenues to plumb the depths of these experiences.

The second area of research inquires into the use of a non-consensus seeking dialogue in practical theology method. Action research provides a method that intentionally probes the dynamics of experiences and could be helpful in exploring the benefits of a practical theology method that uses this non-consensus seeking dialogue, welcoming of multiple voices and privileging the other.

Finally, this dialogic account of the margins of the Catholic Church has redefined margins as fluid spaces where one can exist *both* in the margins *and* in the Church. With my dialogue partners, I have defined this space as a creative place where the reality of God can be seen and new ways of being Church for the twenty-first century are emerging. My dialogue partners honestly and graciously shared their journeys and this emerging vision. Realizing that God is more plural and multi-faceted than can be imagined, there may be those who do see with the same lenses that either I or my dialogue partners use. They too are a part of the on-going dialogue that exists today, in the past, and into the future. It is through this non-consensus seeking dialogue that the People of God grow and change in relationship with God and each other. It is with faith that God's grace is beyond measure and the Holy Spirit is leading us that I close with Sarah's words.

> How do we help people find their own authority, their own authority to live in a relationship with their own self and other folks and in universe with their God? How do we help them to do that; because life is all about relationships! (2009).

Appendix A: May I Introduce You to My Dialogue Partners?

Andrew is 69 years old with a Master's Degree in Education.

Anne is 32 years old with a M.A. in Costume Design.

Bea is 80 years old and holds a B.A. She is a librarian.

Bill is 55-60 years old, is a priest, formally laicized to marry, and holds an M.A. in

Process Theology. He is active in marriage ministry.

Caroline is 31 years old. She has a Master's Degree in Profession Sports Administration

Chloe is 31 years old and holds a Master's Degree. She is a CPA.

Cindy is 61 years old and is an executive secretary.

Colleen is in her 70s. She is a religious sister active in peace and justice work.

Dan is 80 years old and a priest formally laicized to marry. He holds a Ph.D. in

Counseling and Psychology.

Deb is 24 years old working on Master's in Non-profit Management.

Dee is 49 years old, and a lead business analyst.

Enzo is 54 years old.

Gail is in her 60s. She holds a B.A. and is an artist. She was a religious sister.

Hannah is 24 years old with a B.A. in English.

Harry is 52 years old. He is a computer consultant with a B.A. in Architecture.

Jackie is in her 60s. She holds a Ph.D. in Counseling and a Master's of Divinity.

James is 67 years old and an electrical engineer.

Jane is 55-60 years old. She has a Master's of Divinity.

Janet is in her 50s. She is a finance manager.

Jillian is 35 years old. She holds a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology, and works at a University.

Joe is 80 years old and a retired priest. He holds a Ph.D. in Theology.

Judy is 72 years old with one year of college.

Julia is 28 years old and has a B.A. She is a journalist.

Kate is 66 years old with a Masters Degree in Public Health.

Kellie is 29 years old and is working on M.A. sociology research. She has a B.A. in Theology.

Ken is 66 years old, and was a Christian Brother. He holds a Master's Degree.

Kim is 35 years old, and holds a two year Associates degree.

Lance is 29 years old with a B.A. He is a social researcher.

Lily is 73 years old. She holds a J. D.

Luke is 84 years old. He is a priest formally laicized to marry.

Maggy is 65-75 years old. She holds a Ph.D.

Mai is in her 70s. She is a counselor with an M.A. in Counseling.

Maria is in her 70s and is a retired teacher. She has a M.A. in Spanish.

Matt is 41 years old and is an M.D. specializing in pain management.

Mattie is 71 years old. She is a former religious sister with a Masters degree in Religion.

Max is 88 years old. He holds a B.A. in English.

Meredith is 67 and holds a J. D. She is in risk management.

Miriam is 61. She has a B.A. in communications and is a hospital chaplain.

Pat is 69 years old, and has a Masters Degree in Social Work

Ray is 25 years old. He is in college getting a B.A.

Rita is 70 years old and is a Spiritual Director.

Sade is 62 years old. She has a B.A. in Art History.

Sam is 26 years old, and holds a J.D.

Samantha is 52 years old. She has a Ph.D. in Public Health.

Sarah is 75-80 years old. She is a religious sister and holds a M.A. in Theology.

Shannon is 61 years old with a B.A. in Education.

Steve is 70 years old and is a broker.

Susie is in her 50s. She has a college degree.

Ted is 46, with a B.A. in Human Services and is a leadership group facilitator and life mapping coach.

Terry is 26 years old. He holds a J. D. and is active in pro bono work.

Appendix B: Are There Generational Differences?

Table 4: Generational Differences

Generation and Ages	Age Distribution Catholic Population in United States[144]	Total Age Distribution Catholic in United State[145]	Percentage of Catholics Attending Mass by Generation [146]
Pre-Vatican II (70+)	16%	11.040,000	36%
Vatican II (50-69)	24%	16,560,000	39%
Post-Vatican II (30-49)	41%	28,290,000	17%
Post-Vatican II Millennial Generation (18- 29)	18%	12,420,000	15%
Total :	100%	69,000,000	

Catholics comprise approximately 24 percent of the population of the United

States (USCCB 2006). The Conference of Catholic Bishops estimates that there are sixty-

nine million Catholics in the United States (USCCB 2006). This chart illustrates

generational differences in Mass attendance and identification with the Catholic faith

tradition. Younger Catholics attend Mass less frequently than Pre-Vatican II and Vatican

II Catholics. While research indicates young Catholics may become inactive after

confirmation for a variety of reasons (Hoge et al. 2001, 36-69), what is remarkable is that

the percentage of Pre-Vatican II Catholics and Vatican II Catholics attending Mass is

under 50 percent. Mass attendance has decreased from the 72 percent attendance rate

reported in 1965 (CARA 2010). CARA correlates Mass attendance with importance of

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[144] Data from Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life U.S. Religious Landscape Survey 2008, 39
[145] Data from USCCB 2010.
[146] Data from CARA 2010, 20-21

religious faith, and commitment to that faith tradition (CARA 2008, 2). Yet, many

Catholics on the margins find their faith tradition very important and express love for the

Catholic faith. Jane provides an example. "Anyway, I have been active, and have loved

my church, have been made at it" (Jane 2009). Dialogue on the margins of the Church

indicates that there are reasons, systemic, structural and personal problems with the

Catholic Church, that keep Catholics from attending Mass. These are discussed in

Chapter 7.

Appendix C: Dialogue Protocol

Personal Information

- Age

- Marital Status

- Education

Faith Journey

- Parent's religion and Church participation

- Number of siblings and their Church participation

- Personal participation during childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and feelings about Church during those periods

- Changes in belief and spirituality of any significance

- Partners' Church history

Process of Ceasing Attendance

- When and how did the process begin? What are the factors that influenced the decision?

- Was discontinuation gradual or abrupt? Was there a moment of decision or realization?

- Spouse/Partner's attitude and whether it was a joint process.

- Did other involvements in the Church persist?

Naming this Space:

- What names or terms do you think of in relation to the religious or spiritual place you are currently in?

Current Attitudes towards Church

- Current assessment of factors that led to a change in attendance.

- Feelings and attitudes to parish and wider Church?

- Does self-identification as a Catholic continue? What is the level of importance of that self-identification?

- Does the faith journey continue? What ways is it fostered and expressed?

- Is there any on-going participation in Church organizations or activities?

- Any factors that would lead to a return to regular Mass attendance?

- Involvement in community service, social advocacy, charity support, etc. and the relationship to faith?

> This is a guide and checklist for the interviewer serving as a guide for the semi-structured interviews.

Appendix D: Technical Appendix

A brief outline of the research design and conduct is given in Chapter 1. This appendix provides further details of the research methods used in this study. My practical theology methodology is detailed in Chapter 6 beginning on page 164. A copy of the open-ended conversation guide used during the in-depth interviews can be found in Appendix C on page 234.

My practical theology research design is feminist reciprocal ethnography (Lawless 1993).[147] The knowledge shared and built in this method is based on dialogue in a collaborative, multi-voiced model. Reciprocal ethnography deepens the hermeneutical epistemology[148] and furthers knowledge construction rather than affirming what I think I know. Both interviews and focus group experiences provide phenomenological research data.

Advertisements helped me engage volunteers for dialogue.[149] A snowball sampling strategy generated volunteers for dialogue.[150] Over 50 percent of my dialogue partners volunteered through this method.

Venues included:
- Craigslist advertisements placed in the local area listings under the headings of community volunteers, community activities, and community events.

- Progressive Catholic organizations including Call To Action,

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[147] Elaine Lawless first used the term reciprocal ethnography to describe her research that involved the participants she was observing (Lawless 1993).

[148] Epistemology studies the nature of knowledge, how knowledge is formed, its foundations, its range and limits, and its justification.

[149] See Appendix E for advertisement copy.

[150] A snowball sampling strategy, a form of non-probability sampling identifies a few people or organizations with relevant characteristics and then asks them for referrals (Berg 2007, 44).

CORPUS, [151]Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church were contacted and they graciously posted e-mails to their members concerning my research and the search for dialogue partners.

- ▪ Small advertisements were placed in local newspapers for a minimal charge.
- ▪ One advertisement was placed in National Catholic Reporter.

A Distinction between the Catholic Church and the People of God

In the Northeast, advertisements placed in Craigslist and local newspapers initially produced only a couple of people volunteering to be dialogue partners. I then changed the advertisement. Respondents noted that two changes motivated people to call. I added the statement "I want your voice to be heard." I also specified understanding the space on the margins as on the margins from the mainstream, *institutionalized* Catholic Church. A snowball sampling strategy then generated sixteen inquiry e-mails from this particular area of the United States, and eleven dialogue partners.

Dialogic Listening

My dialogue with dialogue partners consisted of semi-structured dialogues, audio-recorded, lasting approximately one hour.[152] I both exercise my own judgment and sought the participant's judgment about what is significant in both the interviews and the transcripts. Many dialogue partners came to the conversation having reflected on the question themes that I sent them, with points that they wanted to emphasize to me. I received e-mails after the interviews with additional thoughts about the questions from several dialogue partners.

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[151] CORPUS is a faith community affirming an inclusive priesthood, married and single men and women.
[152] Appendix C contains the open-ended conversation topics used in the dialogues.

Participation Level

The majority of dialogue partners who contacted me and set an appointment came to the appointment. Once consent was obtained, the dropout rate (8 percent) was low (N=5). There was a dropout rate of 7 percent (N=4) after obtaining consent prior to the appointment. Two people notified me of a change of vacation plans and two missed their scheduled appointments. Once the interviews were conducted, one person chose to ask for her conversation to be deleted from the study, expressing confidentiality concerns around divorce issues. This interview was deleted in accordance with my IRB (Institutional Review Board) agreement in working with human subjects.

Working with the Dialogue Data

The interviews were tape recorded using a digital tape recorder. A choice was made not to use a typing service because of confidentiality issues. They were transcribed verbatim by two individually-contracted transcribers who agreed to commit to confidentiality. The software Express Scribe, a free professional audio player software for designed to assist in the transcription of audio recordings, was used. This program provides control of the audio playback using a transcription foot pedal or keyboard (with 'hot' keys). This computer transcriber application also offers valuable features for typists including variable speed playback, and file management. Pedals were provided for both secretaries. Mediafire, a free data storage system that is password protected, was used to store and access the audio files.

Transcripts were uploaded to ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software. The choice to use a computer data software program is still debated in the social science field, particularly when the research uses only a small sample. Such a program can speed the

coding process, and also provide interactive and flexible data coding and code management. The program facilitates grouping and filtering code management, allowing for visualization of the code schema. ATLAS.ti is a code and retrieve software designed to assist in theory building, creating higher-order more abstract classification schemes, semantically oriented typologies, and other ways of representing data. I chose ATLAS.ti because its schema is more intuitive rather hierarchical in the way it represents data and expresses relationships.

A computer assisted system takes time to understand and use. The programs themselves do not do practical theology analysis. Rather, the practical theologian decides which tools to use, what and how to code and classify the data, and then does the analysis. There is a learning curve necessary with the software. While a CAQDA (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis System) may lead phenomenological researchers to overly objectify quantitative data, rendering it as less phenomenological quantitative data, this is less an issue with ATLAS.ti since it does not proceed in a hierarchical manner.

Using ATLAS.ti, I developed a list of key themes as they emerged from the data. I added to these key themes until dialogic analysis indicated no new themes were emerging. In this dialogic analysis I listened for the chronotopes, the places where time and space come together in the narrative, helpful in identifying themes.[153] Each key theme in turn has sub-themes. For example, systemic problems with the Church appear in all dialogues in a variety of ways among them: silencing of divergent views, a culture of arrogance, and exclusivism in ritual, beliefs and attitudes.

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[153] This is discussed at length in Chapter 3.

Making Knowledge Together

As a final dialogue opportunity allowing dialogue partners to suggest their meanings and relationships in the themes, I facilitated two in-depth communal dialogues in focus groups, once in the South and once in the Midwest. [154] Once interview dialogue was coded for main themes and sub-themes, focus groups theologically reflected on these themes suggesting meaning and relationships.

Ethical Concerns

I recorded reflections after each dialogue, and kept a journal to identify biases and assumptions, thus practicing 'holistic reflexivity' (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli in Hesse-Biber 2007). I also explored how my own theoretical position and biography has affected my choice of dialogue partners and topics through journaling. I was attentive to my own structural, political, and cultural context and that of my participants throughout the dialogue process with my dialogue partners. My environment and context affects the research process and product. For that reason, I worked to be fully transparent regarding my environment and context, and to treat that as part of the data (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli in Hesse-Biber 2007, 496).

Reflexivity provides for awareness of researcher bias (Hesse-Biber 2007). I took notes to record changes during the study and during the coding in an effort to be transparent. I utilized focus groups for feedback to assure credibility.

A pilot of the interview protocol in 2007 assisted in the development of a consistent use of dialogic interview techniques. Communicability was insured by member checks.

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[154] This process is explained in Chapter 1.

Every effort was made to address ethical issues in research related to this study. Application was made to St. Thomas University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for permission to conduct this research. A participant permission form was utilized.

Dialogue partners are identified by pseudonyms. Places are identified generally by geographical location without specific names. See Appendix A.

All dialogue partners participated voluntarily and could quit at any time. Both the purpose of the study and the procedures was explained on the permission letter.

Appendix E: Advertisement Copy Used in Recruiting Dialogue Partners

Craigslist Advertisement/ Local Newspaper Advertisement

Are you on the Margins of the Catholic Church? Were you once active and involved and

now find yourself attending Mass less frequently, or not at all? PhD candidate dialoguing

about the margins on the Catholic Church. I want to talk with You! We meet at a local

coffee shop of your choice. The conversation lasts about an hour. I will be in _____ on

_____. Contact Joan Reisinger at jreisingerphd@gmail.com

Northeast Craigslist Advertisement

Were you once active and involved in the mainstream institutionalized Catholic Church

and now find yourself attending other alternative worship services, attending Mass

irregularly or not at all? I am a PhD candidate in Practical Theology at St. Thomas

University in Miami, Florida. I am talking with people who feel like you around the

United States for my dissertation. I will be in _____ area August 13-15 and I would like

to have a conversation. I meet at a coffee shop near you and our conversation lasts about

an hour. E-mail jreisingerphd@gmail.com. Let your voice be heard!

Appendix F: E-mail to Prospective Dialogue Partners

Dear

Thank you for expressing interest in this practical theology dissertation research project by contacting me.

This practical theology project arose out of my own experiences and interest in the lived-experiences of those who were once active and engaged in the Catholic Church and who for some reason are now on the margins of the Church attending Mass irregularly or not at all. There has been little qualitative research in the United States to understand the context of the lived experiences of those on the margins of the Church to allow those on the margins to name their experience, to consider how people who have stopped attending the Catholic Church envision Church with the purpose of listening for those factors that might encourage us to envision the Church of the twenty-first century.

I am delighted you are interested in taking part in this study.

Please answer these 4 questions and e-mail it back to me. I will then get back in touch with you and explain my practical theology research and our interview process in more detail.

1. I attended Mass weekly in the Catholic Church as an adult over the age of 21.

_____yes _____no

2. How many years ago did you stop attending Mass? _____

3. Currently I consider myself a Catholic. _____yes _____no

4. I am _____25-30 _____ 35-40 _____40-45 _____45-50 _____50-55

_____55-60 _____60-65 _____65-70 _____ 70-75 _____75-80

_____80+

Thank you. I look forward to talking with you.

Joan Reisinger

Appendix G: Letter – Confirmation of Dialogue Partnership

Dear ___,

Thank you for volunteering to take part in my dissertation study of the margins of the Catholic Church. Because of the overwhelming response, support, and suggestions from those who responded, I have added another facet to the study – an e-mail response to questions about your lived-experiences.

It is important to me that you understand that the aim of this research is to listen to you and to your point of view. I will make no judgments about your decisions, beliefs, or practices, nor is it my role to invite you to consider a return to regular Mass attendance.

Participation in this research is, of course, entirely voluntary. You may refuse to take part without having to justify your decision. Furthermore, if you decide to take part, you may change your mind and discontinue participation at any time without giving a reason.

E-mail question topics will cover the following:

- Your history of participation in Church life while growing up and as an adult

- Your feelings of belonging to and satisfaction with parish life

- Factors that led you to stop attending Mass regularly

- If you are married, what role your spouse played in your decision to stop attending Mass

- Your current feelings towards Church life

- Your current religious beliefs and spiritual life.

Results of the research will be reported in my doctoral dissertation and perhaps to Catholic and academic communities through articles in magazines, academic journals, and on-line publications. They may be incorporated into a book for wider publication. They may not appear in the dissertation, but rather may provide much needed background information. It will not be possible to identify any individual by name in any report, or publication. Where direct quotations are used from interviews or e-mails, care will be taken to ensure that no identifying material is included.

If you would like to hear about the results of the research, I would be happy to send you a summary of the results at the conclusion of the practical theology dissertation project.

I have attached a permission form to this e-mail. You may sign and send it back to me at Joan Reisinger, 5816 SW 89 Way, Cooper City, Florida 33328. You may also scan and send it via e-mail. I can also send you the permission form with a self addressed stamped envelope for its return. I am happy to do this, if you send me your postal information.

Once I receive your permission form I will send a template for you to talk about your experiences on the margins of the Catholic Church concerning the above topics.

If you have any questions, please call me at 954-434-7676, or e-mail me at JReisingerPhD@gmail.com.

 Peace,

Joan Reisinger

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