TOWARDS A PEDAGOGY FOR INCULTURATION:

ADULT THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND

THE INTERACTION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND CULTURE

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis begins in the author's exposure to the inculturation issue as an adult theological educator in Africa and then in UK. The contemporary UK church faces a dilemma of 'gospel' and culture as sharp as in Africa. The research question is posed for the UK context as; is it possible to develop an educational course that will deliver inculturation, and if so what would be good practice within it?

A cyclical 'Kolbian' methodology is chosen for the field research. It consists of three case studies of adult theological education courses which deal obliquely with the interaction of faith and culture in UK; a) the *Alpha* course in three different cultural contexts; b) A Lent Course linking a UK and African Diocese; c) the *Education for Ministry* course, in particular its imaginative methods of theological reflection. The case studies occur in series, rather than in parallel, as 'research journey cycles.'

All the case studies make important conclusions leading to an affirmative response to the research question. Significant learning regarding good practice in pedagogy for inculturation is developed; imagination is presented as of primary importance. The thesis raises fundamental questions about hermeneutics which bridge inculturation and adult education. The individual nature of educational courses provides a limit to the conclusions.

DEDICATION

For the people and clergy of
The Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro
who inspired this project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Alpha International	AI
The *Education for Ministry* Course	*EFM*
Higher Education	HE
International Bulletin of Missionary Research	IBMR
Member of Parliament	MP
Mission and Public Affairs Council of the Church of England	MPAC
New Testament	NT
Non-Governmental Organisation	NGO
Old Testament	OT
Theological Reflection	TR
United Kingdom	UK
United States of America	USA
University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee	USST
World Council of Churches	WCC

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The research question that this thesis addresses arose, in the first instance, from the author's experience of working for several years during the 1990s in adult theological education and training in the Anglican Church of Tanzania.

I wrote a short course of studies addressing the issue of inculturation in an open learning text (Theological Education by Extension or TEE) in Swahili written for lay Christians at the 'grass roots.' In that context the inculturation question was somewhat crudely; how can I and the community be authentically African and authentically Christian? (Especially when the Christianity we have inherited is not African in origin and we may have already lost some of our African culture because of its influence to date.) The end result did not seem entirely satisfactory when field tested and in engaging with the literature on inculturation it became clear that there had been few, if any attempts at transferring the theory of inculturation into an adult educational programme whose outcome would be inculturation.

I was also privileged occasionally to have the experience of seeing Tanzanian Christians worshipping with a deep sense of joy and belonging, and possibly resistance[1] when they used musical idioms from their own traditional culture. This was in contrast to the normal rather stiff approach when singing translated Western hymns to European tunes.

There remained a gulf between theological education institutions in Africa and the grass roots of the churches – a gulf which is perhaps based on educational methods imported from the West over many years. My experience was that issues of inculturation were discussed and reflected on at the college level, but the grass roots of the church remained unchanged. The importance and seemingly not-yet-birthed possibilities of authentic inculturation were presented starkly to me in such experiences.

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[1] This could be what Gerald West (1999: 48) describes as "the often fugitive political conduct of subordinate groups" through rumours, gossip and songs etc.

I returned to work in England, continuing in adult theological education and training in the church and started the doctoral programme in 2002. I knew that however much I would like to research in Africa, practically this would not be possible.

I soon discovered though that the situation as regards questions of faith and culture in the 'post-modern' West and in particular the United Kingdom is not entirely unrelated to the African one. The church as an institution often remains in a backward looking mode to a time when it was much more "of" the culture[2] in 'Christendom' mode. Western culture is rapidly changing through globalisation, fragmentation and 'liquidisation,'[3] leaving the institutional church far behind. Retreat into fundamentalism is one option for some Christians or at the other extreme a *"laissez faire"* attitude, while David Leslie (2001) writes of the influence on many Christians of 'backward looking, dreaming elements of English consciousness,' and the captivity of people in global consumerism.

Questions of faith and culture abound for UK Christians as they ask 'how then shall we live?' in the culture that they find themselves in.[4] My interest in the research therefore is to ask; are there possible pedagogical interventions, essentially educational courses, that could deal with the integration of faith and culture – the inculturation question for 'ordinary' lay Christians as individuals and in community?

This last point is important as there are sophisticated approaches to adult education and inculturation as we shall see, but my concern, as in my work in Tanzania, is for the 'grass roots' of the church. Thus the field research concentrates on this level of working.

The research will be presented as an unfinished 'journey' towards developing pedagogy for inculturation for several reasons which will become clear. Because of this some readers may prefer to have an overall picture of the 'journey' from its

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[2] To use a term from Niebuhr's typology in "Christ and Culture" (1951).

[3] Zigmunt Baumann speaks of the liquidity or fluidity of the current age where people, information and money 'flow' – see e.g. his (2000) *Liquid Modernity,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

[4] For instance this is the question that informs the whole life and thrust of the Northumbria Community – see www.northumbriacommunity.org

beginning to the thesis writing (definitely not though 'the end'!) before proceeding. If this is the case it is found in chapter four – 'the methodological narrative of discovery.' It is at this point also that the research question hinted at above is refined and explained in more detail.

However the project (and my own learning from my Tanzanian and UK professional experience) requires a thorough understanding and definition of both inculturation and pedagogy. These fields are expanded in chapters two and three respectively. At the end of chapter three there are some initial conclusions as to whether these two hitherto seemingly distinct subjects may indeed be brought together at all in a fruitful manner.

The field research is based on three case studies of grass-roots UK adult theological educational courses and is presented in chapters five, six and seven. Even at this early stage it is important to note that the case studies are not illustrative of educational projects already delivering education for inculturation (since as far as I am aware there no such courses). Rather they are explorations of faith and culture issues in adult theological education courses which, given the methodology are deemed useful for the research.

As is explained in chapter four the case studies then build up a picture of good practice and 'criteria' for a pedagogy for inculturation. Such conclusions as can be made at the 'end' of the journey about a possible pedagogy, their implications for inculturation and education and possibilities for the future are presented in chapter eight.

CHAPTER TWO: INTRODUCING INCULTURATION[5]

In setting out on the research journey the first task in this chapter is to examine the term "inculturation," in the literature as well as from a lexicographical and theological standpoint. We will attempt a definition that will be useful for the research project. This will require further examination and definition of the meaning of the 'Christian faith' or 'gospel' as well as culture itself. A premise for inculturation will be sought alongside a study of approaches to its process and content. The limits of inculturation and its usefulness to the theological and missiological project will then be opened up critically. Finally connections will be made with the field of practical theology and adult education as the basis for a pedagogical intervention for inculturation.

A Definition of Inculturation

A good starting point for thinking about inculturation is to ask a basic question such as; how has Christianity expanded throughout the centuries?[6] It is a question that Andrew Walls (2002) claims to reconsider following the lead of Kenneth Latourette earlier in the last century. Walls compares the expansion of Christianity and Islam and makes the suggestive claim that Christianity's story is one of advance and regression in comparison to the steady geographical progression of Islam (2002: 13):

> When it comes to sustaining congregations of the faithful, Christianity does not appear to possess the same resilience as Islam. It decays and withers in its very heartlands, in the areas where it appears to have had the profoundest cultural effects. Crossing cultural boundaries, it then takes root anew on the margins of those areas, and beyond. Islamic expansion is progressive; Christian expansion is serial.

Walls claims this is because Christianity has no culturally fixed element, like the Qu'ran, being based as it is on the *person* of Jesus of Christ. So, using the theological idea of incarnation (which we will see is key to understanding

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[5] The material in this Chapter is a revised, updated and expanded version of work I have presented in two earlier essays for the Th.D. (in 2002) and in my article (2005); 'Inculturation Comes Home: Lessons from the Worldwide Church' A*nvil,* Vol. 22 No.4.

[6] In fact it may also be the starting point for missiology itself – Bevans and Schroeder's (2004) "constants" of the missiological project are derived from the same question – see pp. 32-33.

inculturation), where the 'Word' ceases to be made flesh (John 1:14) within a community then (2002: 13); 'that community is likely to lose not just its effectiveness, but its powers of resistance.' It is the 'sustained, unceasing penetration of the host culture' that maintains the faith within that culture.[7] The interaction of (or dialectic between) Christian faith and culture is the raw material for the study of inculturation.

Inculturation is a "*neologism"* (Shorter, 1988: 10; Crollius, 1978: 721ff), that is, it is a word coined by Christian theologians working in the field of faith and culture in the last forty or so years. Etymologically some claim (e.g. Magesa, 2004) that the word brings together the sociological term ac*culturation* (see further below) and the theological term *in*carnation. The analogy of the battery may be helpful; describing how inculturation happens in the interaction between the two "poles" of the faith / culture dialectic – like the positive and negative terminals of a battery. What can look like very different entities (which are often kept apart theologically) come together to produce energy, creativity and newness.

Roman Catholic theologians have generally used the term inculturation from just before, and then during and after the Second Vatican Council (Shorter, 1988: 10).[8] Protestants, on the other hand tend not to use inculturation, preferring the word "contextualisation," which is employed to widen the meaning of the second pole to anything that has to do with the context in which Christian faith is set (e.g. political and economic contexts).

The Protestant missiologist David Bosch offers broad definitions of the whole area of contextualisation and inculturation in his magisterial work *Transforming Mission* (1991: 420-421). Bosch uses the term "Contextual Theology" to cover, in his opinion, two 'proper' contextual theologies, namely inculturation and liberation theologies. This uncovers a fundamental issue which is how widely the "culture" in inculturation or the "context" in contextualisation is understood. Inculturation is often taken as

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[7] There are some suggestive studies of the original interaction of faith and culture in the West – see particularly Wessels (1994) and Section One (Precedents – the missionaries) in Barrow and Smith (2001).
[8] See also the earlier article by Crollius (1978: 722) which offers a lot more background and discussion of the history of the term, tracing its more general acceptance to the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus in 1974-5.

dealing with culture alone, leaving liberation theologies to emerge from socio-economic issues (poverty, sexism, racism etc.). Normally Roman Catholic authors such as Shorter (1988: 59ff) take this approach of differentiation, but others prefer to include socio-economic issues under the banner of inculturation in calling for a more holistic approach e.g. Ukpong[9] (1999: 100) and Pieris (1994: Chapters 11 & 12). Protestant authors, as has been noted, usually want to distance themselves from using inculturation, preferring the term contextualisation to deal with all issues of culture and context.[10]

Whatever the nomenclature it is clear that there is a legitimate theological 'space' requiring study between the Christian faith and the context that it finds itself in. If this context is broadened to include everything that concerns the life of a people it may not be possible to deal, in a discrete study, with the breadth of issues raised.[11] Therefore, for our purposes, to differentiate between inculturation and contextualisation, in the sense that inculturation is related to the cultural context and contextualisation deals with the socio-economic context, would seem to be sensible as long as the wider contextual concerns of either approach are borne in mind. This tension or question around the breadth of the cultural context will return from time to time through the research.

How then can inculturation be defined? One helpful approach is to start from a sociological perspective and understand the term as a theological neologism that inserts itself between the sociological terms enculturation and acculturation (c.f. Shorter, 1988: 5-7).[12]

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[9] See especially his starting definition of inculturation.

[10] See Arbuckle (1990: 24) for a discussion and also the evangelical, D.L. Whiteman (1997). Note also, though the term inculturation has been used acceptably with the caveats given here by the Church of England (see MPAC, 2004), Gorringe (2004) (also an Anglican) takes a position similar to Ukpong and Pieris cited above.

[11] Although Gittins (2000: 26) calls for inculturation to be, "nothing less than the transformation of everything." Bevans, another Roman Catholic (2002: 26-27) unusually follows the Theological Education Fund definition of 1972 (and therefore Bosch as described above) and subsumes all approaches or 'models' in this field under "Contextual Theology" and "contextualisation."

[12] Also Crollius (1978: 723-724).

Enculturation is socialisation – a process that can be observed in children who are brought up within a culture to observe and obey its cultural and social norms. The subject finds himself or herself as *of* the culture when the process is complete. Acculturation is the process of two cultures meeting, by which both cultures are changed. However the process is often governed by power relations in that the more powerful culture determines the path of cultural change. Cultural change though will always be the outcome of acculturation.

It is possible to transpose these sociological terms of enculturation and acculturation into the discourse of theology using the words incarnation and conversion as analogies. Incarnation refers to the taking up of human life by the eternal Word as described in John's Gospel (1: 14) with regard to Jesus of Nazareth. Incarnation, in this analogical sense, is then the enculturation of the Word, the gospel or the Christian faith within a culture such that it becomes *of* it and identified with it. The process of enculturation is not, however the end of the Christian story. Christ was crucified as a result of his very incarnation and raised from death to "convert" or transform both humanity and human culture. Thus there is an acculturation implied by the prior enculturation whereby the host culture is not only indwelt by Christian faith but converted and transformed by it. Gorringe (2004: 201) uses Shorter's 'Paschal Mystery' approach using the analogy of the cross and resurrection:

> Cultures are to be evangelized and challenged to metanoia, to die to all that is not worthy of humanity in their traditions, but then to rise in greater splendour.

The importance of the incarnation for a theology of culture cannot be underestimated (Gorringe, 2004; Magesa, 2004). However a critique of inculturation can be made if it is collapsed, or almost collapsed to enculturation. We shall return to this theme below.

It is interesting, as an aside at this point, to note that, in addition to sociology, anthropology deals with the same kind of dialectic between the "insider" and the "outsider." Inculturation could then also be understood as holding together emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives (Whiteman, 1997: 44).

Many authors agree on this double-movement of incarnation and conversion within inculturation as a theological term.[13] Perhaps the most helpful and oft quoted is that of Walls (1999: 17-28) in which he proposes the 'indigenising' principle of incarnation and the 'pilgrim' principle of transformation and change.

Thus inculturation is a process that can be discovered in the creative tension between culture and faith, enculturation and acculturation, emic and etic perspectives, incarnation and conversion. Since culture, like the church, is always in *process* (Gorringe, 2004) inculturation is dynamic, not static which means that it is always on-going and necessarily incomplete – part of what it means to live in the light of an eschatological future between the "now" and "not yet."

Having arrived at a working definition of inculturation and before moving on to examine its premise, process and content it will be helpful to further define the two 'poles' of the inculturation battery.

The Pole of Christian Faith – or 'gospel'
The issues at stake here are very important; the Christian faith has been and still is practised as a missionary faith with a universal claim, but can its universality be isolated? Is there a core gospel? If there is no universal faith can there be authentic inculturation?

Kirk (1999: 82-83) thinks that the practice of the Christian church has assumed a core gospel and that discussion of difficulties such as syncretism[14] would be meaningless without having a core element. This is a reasonable and common presupposition, but an explication of the content of this gospel is needed. Some authors simply assume rather loosely that a gospel exists without defining it[15] –

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[13] E.g. see Arbuckle (1990: 18-20), Gorringe (2004: 201), Kirk (1999: 93), Magesa (2004: 144-153), Schreiter (1999: 74) and Shorter (1998: 82).

[14] Syncretism could be described as when enculturation and acculturation occur discretely without the creative interaction of inculturation – the issue will be dealt with again later.

[15] For example Whiteman (pp. 42ff in Scherer and Bevans, 1999) and Shorter (pp. 54ff in Scherer and Bevans, 1999) both use the term 'gospel' with only a very loose definition. Admittedly these are short articles and perhaps space limited further explication.

others, while qualifying it in great detail still seem to fall back into the assumption in a rather contradictory way,[16] which would support Kirk's position mentioned above.

In the literature there is also a great range of descriptions and explanations as to the content of this pole of the inculturation process. J. M. de Mesa (1999: 120) uses 'Judaeo-Christian tradition,'[17] Arbuckle (1990: 2-4) conflates gospel, Kingdom of heaven and the word of God under the metaphor of a seed being sown in the soil of culture, but then adds to it the tradition or the 'doctrine, teaching and practice of the Church' of which the Scriptures are only a part. He notes however (1990: 4) that for many Protestants the gospel means the Scriptures.[18]

What can be said of these differences of opinion? Clearly they are searching for a universal factor that will enable the global integrity (or catholicity as the Roman Catholic writers have it[19]) of the Christian faith to be maintained. Almost all are agreed that the relevant image is not of a 'gospel' kernel that can be isolated from a cultural husk, to use a metaphor from early evangelical literature. The gospel does not exist apart from a cultural domain (Magesa, 2004) – perhaps as a heart cannot beat without a body or a fish cannot breathe without water. However, is the best metaphor that of the onion, an idea that can be attributed to those working with a more "anthropological" model of inculturation (Bevans, 1992: 47ff) who emphasise the pole of culture? In an onion each layer may be peeled off, but there is no kernel that is different from the rest i.e. there is no isolatable gospel – there is no universal element.

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[16] Schreiter (1985: 115) uses a linguistic analogy to understand the relationship of faith, theology and loci of orthodoxy (Bible, creeds etc.) under the overall aegis of tradition. It is this tradition, he claims that is in dialogue with culture. However at the end of the book when discussing syncretism he uses the idea of the semiotic "message of the gospel" once again.

[17] "Tradition" is also use by Schreiter - see note 12 immediately above.

[18] Also cited could be Gittins who uses the "inspired message of God's revelation" (2000: 28). Pieris (1996: 130) believes there is a "universal Word that the Spirit utters" both in the authentic church and in the poor. Other authors use Christianity or Christian faith (as opposed to Christendom) e.g. Ukpong (1999). Ramachandra (1999: 135) offers the Judaeo-Christian scriptures and Jesus of Nazareth worshipped as God. Sedmak (2002) focuses on reappropriating 'Jesus' and the Bible.

[19] cf. the title and sub-title of Schreiter's book (1997).

In a postmodern world it is tempting to decry universals. However most anthropologists, who study culture at its most basic level, recognise what they call 'cross-cultural universals' even if they cannot agree entirely on what they might be (Fox, 2004).[20] Gorringe (2004: 220-221) argues for a shared universal humanity from philosophy and sociology. In addition he states (2004: 100) that the Christian claim to universal salvation is rooted in the incarnation where the particular taking up of a life in a place and time becomes of universal significance – it is not therefore, what he has termed, a 'false universal;'[21]

> ... the task [of the Christian movement] ... is to live out and witness to the breaking down of all barriers. ... it is a vision of a *process.* The true universal ... is an endless struggle and true universalists are not those who preach global tolerance but those who engage in a passionate fight for the Truth which enthuses them.

It is this process which has been suggestively defined by the missiologists, Andrew Walls (1999), Lamin Sanneh (1989) and Kwame Bediako (1999).

Walls begins (1999: 17-21) by asking a slightly different question to that quoted above – whether people who called themselves Christians in different epochs of the Christian church have any essential continuity. He concludes (1999: 21) that despite the vast differences in outward forms there is a discernible essential continuity:

> ... continuity of thought about the final significance of Jesus, continuity of a certain consciousness about history, continuity in the use of the Scriptures, of bread and wine, of water.

Bediako (1999: 146-147) claims that Walls' position here can teach us that the Christian religion is 'culturally infinitely translatable.' Translatability can then be read for universality such that the Christian faith has a 'fundamental relevance and accessibility to persons in any culture.' This is a helpful approach as it has used empirical historical data based on the global missiological project of Christianity to

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[20] Kate Fox (2004) offers two lists of universals as examples on pages 11-12.
[21] Gorringe offers plenty of examples from history of these 'false universals' such as colonising empires alongside, in our current time the issue of globalization (2004: 81-97).

discern the universal.[22] As we have seen other authors attempt to define the 'gospel' pole only with reference to the Western theological project.[23]

Bediako in the same chapter then interacts with writers such as Mbiti and Sanneh whose thought can be understood within this translatability framework. It is worth noting here Sanneh's work (1989) on the actual translation of the Scriptures and the missiological meaning of such an enterprise that cuts away the accusation that Christianity is simply a 'subplot to the history of Western imperialism' (another 'false universal').

This approach turns upside-down the usual movement in inculturation from faith to culture and an inculturated newness or 'indigeneity' emerges, to use Bediako's term. 'Translatability is the only true basis and starting point for seeking indigeneity' (: 156). Translatability is assumed to be an integral part of the gospel and the Christian faith and its universal characteristic. Bediako concludes:

> Thus universality, translatability, incarnation and indigeneity belong in a continuum and are integral to the warp and woof of the Christian religion.

Gorringe concurs on the wider human scale (2004: 222-223, his emphasis):

> Cultural *difference* is not the same as cultural *untranslatability* and it is not clear that, if it was, notions of the human *species* could have arisen.

This position on the "gospel pole" is helpful because it holds together both the universal and the particular, the global and the local, steps away from the idea in some authors of the (colonising) insertion of faith into a culture (e.g. the image of the seed and earth) and is emerging from the missiological success of Christianity in the non-Western world of Africa. It seems to me it also offers a way of doing mission that is "non-imperialistic" or non-colonising. The missioner or evangelist can be

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[22] It is also confirmed by Bevans and Schroeder (2004) as they develop Walls' two constants of christology and ecclesiology with four more which then become that which is translatable in mission to any context – thus their book title: "*Constants in Context*."

[23] It is worth noting here the massive growth in the last 100 years of the Pentecostal/charismatic movement which it is claimed has a "spontaneously indigenous character"- that is, it has discovered a natural inculturation that is in no way programmed - see Cox (1996: 16, 102, 128, 209), Hollenweger (1997: 69, 71).

simultaneously "missioned" or evangelised. Whether it is possible to hold such position where Christianity has not had such great success (e.g. in Islamic or Asian contexts) would need to be the subject of a further study.[24]

To conclude this section it is worth quoting Sanneh (1989: 53):

> Thus if we ask the question about the essence of Christianity, whatever the final answer, we would be forced to reckon with what the fresh medium reveals to us in feedback. … This locates the message in the specific and particular encounter with cultural self-understanding.

Thus while the "gospel," the essence or message of the faith may not have an existence separate from culture, nevertheless there is a recognisable continuity or 'rootedness.' The alternative would be to encourage an inappropriate relativism. The implication of this 'feedback' is that whenever authentic mission takes place with the aim of inculturation there will be what Sedmak (2002) calls a 'reappropriation' of the tradition or "gospel." Such re-appropriation is the practical outcome of Donovan's work amongst the East African Masai as described in his classic work (1979) and Magesa concurs (2004: 138-139).

The Pole of Culture

There are as many definitions of culture as authors who pursue it, just as we have noted above for the gospel pole. In fact culture is an academic field in itself and there is a progression of approaches to it, using a mixture of philosophy, political theory, sociology and anthropology since the mid-nineteenth century. The cultural studies academic, John Storey outlines these successive approaches as (1997); the 'culture and civilization' tradition, culturalism, structuralism, post-structuralism and political (e.g. Marxist) and feminist approaches. A definition of culture must go beyond the 'civilization' argument originally championed by Matthew Arnold (1822 – 1888) to include 'the texts and practices of everyday life' (Storey, 1996: 2).

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[24] Gorringe (2004: 206ff) discusses Pieris' work in the Asian context and notes the difficulty of displacing metacosmic religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism as opposed to cosmic (traditional) religions.

Gorringe (2004), a theologian is clear that culture is of 'fundamental theological concern' (2004: 3). We have already seen how he stresses the importance of process in culture and therefore social change. Thus for him culture is (2004: 4):

> ... the name of that whole process in the course of which God does what it takes, in Paul Lehman's phrase, to make and to keep human beings human. Culture in this sense is, under God, 'the human task.'

Picking up on social change, any approach to culture that takes a static view of it will not be helpful. This is one of Gorringe's several objections, following J.H. Yoder to Richard Niebuhr's classic work *Christ and Culture* (1955). Gorringe is clear that any person or community could at one and the same time take any or all of Niebuhr's positions (or typologies) to the culture they find themselves in because of its fluid nature.

From a missiological perspective Robert Schreiter offers another approach to culture in his major work *Constructing Local Theologies* (1985: 39-74). Other missiologists deal with it, but not in such a comprehensive and in-depth fashion.[25] Schreiter (1985: 43-45) asserts that a relevant theory of culture will need to address itself to holism (that is all aspects of a local culture not just the 'high' or interesting ones), identity and social change. So far he confirms much of what we have understood.

Having reviewed functionalist, materialist and structuralist approaches to culture and found these wanting on the above criteria Schreiter opts for a semiotic (anthropological) approach based on the work of Clifford Geertz. This approach is described and critiqued before being applied to the process of developing a local theology.[26] In a later book (1997: 28-61) he develops the analysis of culture further by introducing the concepts of intercultural hermeneutics and interacts with integrated and globalised (or post-colonial and post-modern) concepts of culture

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[25] See also for example Shorter (1988: 31-58) and Suess (1999: 160-166).
[26] Schreiter (1985) maps this process on p25.

(1997: 53-61).[27] Nevertheless he remains with an underlying anthropological approach.

Space does not allow a lengthy analysis of Schreiter's work, but it can be said that his deployment of semiotics is one widely taken up by actual practitioners.[28] This is an issue for this research project because it privileges the semiotic, anthropological approach for the practitioner. We are looking at developing adult theological education interventions for inculturation at the 'grass-roots.' However if culture is defined in this way one of the immediate problems will be the level at which the inculturation work will be taking place. From a review of Gittins' work and others in Africa (2000) it would seem that at least a Masters level qualification in missiology/anthropology is required, although Sedmak (2002) has perhaps the most accessible semiotic approach through language, 'cultural games' and 'cultural stories.'

More helpful then for our purposes is to return to Gorringe (2004) who proposes three theological themes or elements which help to understand and define culture. Interestingly these overlap with what we have already learnt about inculturation – that it occurs between the 'indigenising' and the 'pilgrim' and is a process.

So he begins with the incarnation and the Word becoming 'flesh' and this is a first definition (2004: 18):

> 'Flesh', as John spells out in some detail in the course of his meditations, means culture – food, the world of symbols, the way in which we cherish bodies.

For Gorringe, then culture is a wider field than just semiotics, including the very basic needs of humans such as food right through to encompassing politics and economics.

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[27] Clearly these "deconstructions" of culture will affect the outcome of any inculturation. Schreiter develops his call for "reconciliation" to be a "nondominative" form of universalism in the postmodern world (1997:60) from these globalised concepts of culture.

[28] E.g. see Arbuckle (1990: 26-43) for a chapter on the use of semiotics in listening to a culture, also Gittins (1999: 80ff).

Secondly following Barth (2004: 19), and as we have seen, the gospel meets every culture with 'sharp scepticism.' No culture entirely embodies the kingdom and there exists, so often at its heart 'antagonism and alienation.' The imperial history of the Church, the colonial period, the Holocaust – 'the dark side of cultural history' - have to be faced. Scepticism is never the last word, however because of the fact of the incarnation (2004: 20). Culture at its best can be revelatory,[29] which gives it a 'sacramental or signifying role.' Here there is agreement with Storey's work in cultural studies where he describes culture as 'a terrain of incorporation and resistance' (1996: 4). In addition the work of the French Jesuit and cultural philosopher Michel de Certeau would concur – he understands that culture is the arena in which dominant 'strategies' are proposed by the wealthy and powerful but these are both incorporated and resisted by the 'tactics' of the people.[30] This leaves us with something fundamental about culture which is that it refers to meaning and value (Gorringe, 2004; Magesa, 2004). The meaning a person places on the world, the values they hold and the actions that ensue all constitute their culture. This is a simpler and more helpful basis on which to proceed when we begin to bring gospel and culture together in a pedagogical enterprise.

Finally Gorringe returns to the theme mentioned above of process and change in culture. This is the eschatological dimension – the process 'of becoming' (2004: 21). Therefore culture is always an unfinished process which implies that any partial end or 'state' of inculturation is not necessarily recognizable from the beginning point – inculturation cannot be prescriptive (Gittins 1993: 92). This is key for the research project – and points to the idea of the journey that it entails which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The Premise, Process and Content of Inculturation
Clearly inculturation, as we have begun to define it, has been around at least since Peter encountered Cornelius (Acts 10) and became an evangelist being evangelised

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[29] It is surprising that this is originally Barth's assertion quoted by Gorringe from his book (1962), *Theology and Church,* London: SCM, p. 344.
[30] De Certeau's work is quoted with several useful contemporary examples in Steve Taylor's book (2005) on creating church in the postmodern West.

and probably even since Abraham left Haran (Gen. 12).[31] However as Bevans and Schroeder (2004: 386) point out it is only in recent history 'as the last vestiges of the great modern missionary era were dismantled' that the 'necessity for a truly inculturated presentation of the gospel became clearer than ever before.' In addition human experience and context has assumed a certain importance in theology and the contextual nature of all theology is now understood (Sedmak, 2002). This has led, according to Bevans and Schroeder to the realization (2004: 386):

> … in both First and Third Worlds that what had pretended to be a *universal* theology was in fact one that *universalized* theological expression according to what amounted to a local theology developed in Europe.

We have noted in the previous section how culture is forever in process which offers a further reason for the necessity of inculturation. The current state of the Church in the West is a good example and it is worth exploring briefly here the UK context in which the research will be set. We live now 'post-Christendom.'[32] David Smith (2003) utilises an idea of Wilbert Shenk's (1999) that there are in any age definable 'frontiers' of mission which have changed in our current era.[33] Smith defines these current rapidly changing frontiers as secularisation, pluralisation and globalisation, illustrates them with various paintings and offers a creative theological response to each of them.

So secularisation, pluralisation and globalisation all contribute to the culture which we inhabit in Britain at the beginning of a new century much of it with little or no interest in the institutional church. The supposed 'safety' of various fundamentalisms is the choice of some, while many Christians of all types are deeply influenced and uncritically shaped by the values of the context they find themselves in. [34] John Drane paints a very depressing picture (2000: 95):

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[31] For the biblical foundations of inculturation see Magesa (2004) Chapters 5 and 6.
[32] See Part 2 of Bosch (1991) and David Smith (2003).
[33] Shenk justifies the use of the word 'frontier' with its rather militaristic overtones on p. 125.
[34] The case of the global growth of the Pentecostals and as a phenomenon in "post-Christian" Britain should be noted as exceptional here, but may be related to globalising movements from 'south' to 'north' (Davie, 2002: 110).

> Could it be that, by its uncritical embracing of the culture of modernity, not only did the church accept some notions that were actually Christian heresies, but it also embraced the methods of modernity to such an extent that, at least in the West, Christians are actually incapable of imagining how to contextualise the gospel in a different cultural frame of reference?

However there are some signs of hope; for example Steve Taylor's book (2005) is the best example I have come across of inculturation work in the postmodern West; with regard to secularisation the jury is still out on the full secularisation thesis which is espoused by some;[35] Peter Berger has apparently changed his mind;[36] Grace Davie offers a nuanced version of it in her recent writings (Davie, 1994; 2002); David Hay and Kate Hunt (2000) have noted change in the number of those people who can claim to have had a spiritual experience which must be a factor in understanding today's culture in the light of so-called 'secularisation.'

Inculturation then is a 'life and death matter', to quote the title of Gittins' book (2000) and a key element of any missiological enterprise, not just in Africa but on mission's new Western frontiers. For Bevans and Schroeder inculturation is one of six vital components of their proposal for understanding mission as 'prophetic dialogue' (2004: 351). It offers a theological 'space' for holding to a position over the relationship of gospel and culture (and the universal and particular) which neither totally relativises the gospel nor denigrates culture. Its importance has been discovered in 'feedback' from the missionary enterprise in recent history in the 'Majority' world of the global South.

Methodologies for inculturation or contextualisation abound. One of the most helpful books here is Bevans' (2002) *Models of Contextual Theology*[37] because it engages at some distance with the pluralism of myriad contextual theologies.

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[35] See Calum Brown's (2001), *The Death of Christian Britain*, London: Routledge.

[36] See 'Epistemological Modesty: An Interview with Peter Berger' in *The Christian Century,* Oct 29 1997 pp. 972-978.

[37] It has already been noted that Bevans prefers the term contextual theology over inculturation alone because of its wider implications, but he returns to inculturation in its narrower meaning of dealing with culture in *Constants in Context* because another of the components of mission is 'justice, peace and the integrity of creation.'

Bevans (2002: 28-30) justifies the use of models in theology and notes its popularity in several branches of the field. He offers a continuum (2002: 32) between the two 'poles' of culture and social change at one end and gospel message / tradition at the other. Thus it is possible to place his different models of contextual theology at their appropriate place along the continuum depending on whether they privilege culture or gospel or neither.

Six models are identified altogether; four main ones (countercultural, translation, anthropological and praxis); a fifth (synthetic) that synthesises these four models; there is also a sixth model that stands outside or above the others that he calls 'transcendental.' Translation models[38] are often used by theological conservatives, whether of evangelical Protestant or Roman Catholic persuasion. Praxis models are mainly of the liberation theology type dealing with issues of poverty, sexism and racism. Anthropological models take much more seriously the pole of culture and understand humanity and culture as basically good, capable of revelation. The countercultural model was added to the second edition of the book in response to the work of Lesslie Newbigin who dedicated the second half of his missionary career to the problem of the West and called for a proper *metanoia* in response to the gospel in that context (2002: 117). It must be said, and Bevans himself notes this, that there is considerable overlap between the models and while he attempts to give examples of theologians who demonstrate each model sometimes this appears to be a little forced.[39]

What is perhaps more important to note here, rather than the actual models themselves is that each is offered a comprehensive critique regarding its strengths and weaknesses. The model-based approach also provides a framework into which any inculturation intervention or practioner may be placed and critiqued. So, for example, even a cursory reading of Aloysius Pieris,[40] writing out of the Asian context, will place him in the anthropological model, while drawing much inspiration

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[38] Not to be confused, in my opinion with Walls' and Bediako's concept of translatability.
[39] For instance Vincent Donovan (: 57-62) is placed in the anthropological category when clearly he uses many of the methods of the translation model.
[40] E.g. 1996, esp. Ch. 11 & Ch.12; also 1993.

from the praxis model. Gittins offers a different kind of synthetic approach, but his overall thrust is much nearer to the gospel pole and the translation model (1993: 14; 2000: 28ff). Many writers naturally prefer synthesis and thus would fit neatly into the synthetic model – here we could speak of Ukpong (1999: 106-110) and Schreiter (1985). Thus we have a way of understanding the approaches to faith and culture that we will encounter in the educational programmes being researched.

But what is the content and, more importantly the outcome of inculturation? What does it actually look like?

I believe, from what we have discovered so far that the outcome of inculturation can be described as a 'rooted novelty' which offers "newness" while at the same time having identifiable continuity and discontinuity with the old realities. Inculturation effects a change which is a new reality, but which is rooted *both* in the culture and in the 'gospel.'

Authentic inculturation will then create an exciting 'newness' which is contiguous with the Christian story (whether recognisably 'Christian' from a certain standpoint or not) while using and transforming elements of the foundational culture in a creative manner. The most oft-quoted example is of course Donovan's work amongst the Masai (1978). This, despite being nearly forty years old now and superseded to a great extent by current practice in East Africa, is still used as the example *sine qua non* of inculturation work by Western writers. It is used in this exact fashion in *Mission-Shaped Church* (MPAC, 2004: 92), but African writers (e.g. Magesa, 2004) are not so interested and it does not seem to feature in their work. Other more suggestive examples do exist in the literature such as an indigenous church attempting to deal with wizardry in Zimbabwe (Daneel, 1990) and Juan Sepúlveda (1999) who discusses Pentecostal inculturation in Chile.

On an individual level there is another important outcome to be noted. Magesa (2004) calls for the outcome of inculturation to be, in concrete terms 'an integrated

spirituality,' he further spells out the meaning of this for Africa where inculturation means that (2004: 143):

> ... no aspect of life at the physical, psychological, spiritual, institutional or moral level alienates the person. ... The Process should lead to a point where African Christians can ... live their faith as "truly African and truly Christian," without split personality from divided loyalty.

As we have understood this goal of inculturation is based on a definition of inculturation that goes beyond finding correspondences between faith and culture or adapting faith to culture, as Magesa concludes (2004: 144):

> True inculturation is a deep experience in the life of an individual and the community that occurs when there is a constant search for identification between gospel and culture, and when there is mutual correction and adjustment between them.

'True inculturation' then regards the future of the faith; the battery produces power; the heart of the 'gospel' beats giving life.

Both Magesa and Sedmak (2002) make the distinction between official, planned or explicit inculturation and a popular or implicit version of it. There is a sense in which inculturation is always naturally occurring – existing as 'silent realities' amongst the people, as Magesa (2004: 189) describes it. Sedmak (2002: 77) notes how implicit inculturation could potentially be 'inconsistent, unjustifiable, or even dangerous' while Magesa adds that this is a possibility even in an explicit inculturation project (2004: 189). Any pedagogical intervention for inculturation will not only find its *raison d'être* in the space between the implicit and explicit versions, but also a warning sign that we are on difficult, if nevertheless holy ground.

While traditionally explicit inculturation, particularly in Roman Catholic thinking, has been applied to ritual and liturgical practice (Gorski, 2004), [41] Magesa (2004) shows how it can be applied as well to behaviour, spirituality and the [seven] sacraments.

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[41] See also chapters 6-9 of *Inculturation in the South African Context* (Ryan et al., 2000) or Chapters 4, 7 & 10 in Gittins ed. (2000).

Sedmak (2002) calls for local and regional theologies at a macro level and 'little theologies' at the individual or church community level. These theologies may arise from any social or cultural situation or event, so there is a connection here, as we shall see, between inculturation work and theological reflection. A wide definition of culture, noted above, does not allow for much that may be outside of the content of inculturation. However for our purposes in a U.K. context we will be focusing on meaning, values and action or behaviour. Whether inculturation can be "measured" then on these terms will be a question we take into the research.

The discussion of intervention requires us now to examine that and other issues at the limits of the inculturation project. We have touched on the question of imperialism and colonisation and there are also issues of syncretism which we need to return to.

The Limits of Inculturation

As we have already noted Aloysius Pieris (1988; 1993; 1996) offers some of the sharpest critiques of inculturation from the Asian perspective, while his position is most likely a mixture of the anthropological and praxis models of contextual theology. Gorringe (2004: 205-9) recognises the importance of Pieris' critique and in turn is critically appreciative of him. If inculturation is simply a raiding of the symbols of another culture or religion then the charge of imperialism albeit in a disguised form is rightly raised again. However Pieris' solution, which is to privilege the Asian poor (which has biblical precedent) and to call the church to be 'baptised in the Jordan of Asian religiousness' is not without its problems. To reduce the gospel to *only* the covenant[42] is to be excessively optimistic anthropologically and this also leads him, as Gorringe remarks, to reduce the difference between the 'Christian vision of reality and that of the Asian religions' (2004: 208) and gloss over some of the more dehumanizing effects of all religions. The charge of imperialism in explicit inculturation is unfounded if we take a translation approach from the incarnation and which affirms 'both universal and particular in a non-alienating way (2004: 101).

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[42] Or God's 'defence pact with the poor against the agents of Mammon,' as Gorringe puts it (2004: 209).

Nevertheless Pieris' emphasis on the re-conversion of the Church by the Asian context is important, underlining the comment on feedback from Sanneh.

Space does not allow us to discuss the Asian context further; however it is worth stating here a limit of this research raised by it. While we have been rightly discussing inculturation in a worldwide perspective it is clear that the context of this research project is early twenty-first century England.[43] The answer to the question we have posed may look very different in Africa (the original starting point) or Asia or indeed South America. We are on *a* journey of discovery which has contextual limits, but which may have implications beyond its context.

There is one other issue which the universal/particular dialectic and imperialism charge raises and that is the question of revelation. Once again we insist that because of the incarnation (the particular), revelation in Christianity is understood as constantly mediated by culture, thus unlike in Islam (to be reminded of this chapter's starting quotation from Andrew Walls) there is no culturally fixed element. Revelation is *both* from above *and* from below. Philip Clayton (1999: 82) sums up this argument:

> The missiological question offers a continual reminder of this double truth; we believe in God, and hence we are trying to obtain true beliefs about God and God's action, yet every belief we (and others) formulate is always already a cultural project. Because we take culture seriously we are reticent to claim that our particular formulation corresponds to the ultimate fact of divine revelation. Yet because we believe that God has revealed something important about God's nature and purpose in the life and activity of Jesus Christ we cannot give culture (or cultural relativism) the last word.

God does not bypass humanity in revealing himself, if he did we would not have any protection against divine imperatives and consequently the most hard-line of fundamentalisms.[44] Rather the combination of the gospel as revealed in Jesus and the Scriptures mediated by the church (Magesa, 2004) and human culture raised to

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[43] And in reality a fairly small region within England.
[44] An idea developed in a research supervision session, November 2006.

its heights offers further revelation. Since this further revelation does not yet exist, we might expect that imagination is required (2004: 176, following Gittins, 2000):

> It [inculturation] must, however, be to some degree a "revelation" of a hitherto unknown or unimagined part of Christ, an unveiling of an astonishing new facet of God's multi-faceted splendour, a gift to the whole church and the whole world, a work of the spirit in our time.

A final question at the margin of inculturation is; where does inculturation stop and syncretism begin? Syncretism could be defined as an inauthentic inculturation that has destroyed the basic structure and identity of the Christian faith and/or of the receptor culture.[45] However there is no clear cut delineation between what is inculturation and what is syncretism since the question of who defines syncretism remains. Intercultural hermeneutics has shown the difficulty of communication between speaker and hearer. Schreiter discusses this at length (1997: 68-73) and concludes that syncretism can only be determined from the side of the hearer, in contrast to the traditional practice of the syncretism being defined by the speaker, sometimes also having the greater 'power.' For instance it is significant that the African Initiated Kimbanguist Church from the former Zaire fought against accusations of syncretism in order eventually to be admitted to the WCC (Hollenweger: 1997: 69; also Martin, 1975; WCC, 1999a: 193). In fact as Hastings points out (1994: 529) the hermeneutical gap between the message of the Bible and its African hearers was much narrower than that for the rationalistic missionaries who brought it. Thus it is the African Initiated Churches such as the Kimbanguists that have the greater claim on authenticity.

Hollenweger too (1997: 137-140) has a great deal to say about syncretism while coming to similar conclusions from a different starting point. He believes that Christianity in all its forms is always syncretistic and calls for a 'theologically responsible syncretism.'[46]

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[45] See Schreiter (1985: 144-158) for a basic description of the phenomena and discussion of the issues.
[46] It could be claimed that his definition of syncretism is different from that of Schreiter's quoted above and there is a sense in which he uses it to mean contextualisation or inculturation. See also Magesa (2004: 154) for a similar position at least for 'popular inculturation.'

Nevertheless boundaries to inculturation are clearly needed (MPAC, 2004: 91). These could function like the boundaries of a football pitch - drawn to give enough space for proper play, but not so much that the game is not focussed and therefore unplayable. It is difficult to offer specific criteria for any attempt at inculturation, but there are general guidelines that can be offered (Schreiter, 1985: 118; WCC, 1999b: 229).

Inculturation, Education and Practical Theology

The *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (2003, Vol. 27, No. 3) offers 925 doctoral dissertations completed between 1992 and 2001 – only one is indexed under "Education and Culture."[47] This research project would appear to be fairly unique in raising the possibility of developing pedagogy for inculturation – but what exactly are the connections between the two fields?

Without pre-empting the material on theological education that we shall be dealing with in the next chapter, I believe there are significant connections to be made.

The first connection is via what is known in the field of Practical Theology[48] as theological reflection. In general the starting point for theological reflection (TR) is the same as in contextual theology – i.e. individual or corporate experience in a particular place and time. Thus Graham, Walton and Ward (2005: 10-11) define the 'tasks of theological reflection' in three ways – firstly asking meaning and identity questions of individual Christians, then of the community which implies an existential question: 'how are we to live faithfully and authentically?' - with the question clearly assuming a context and culture for that faithful living. The final task is to ask: how is the faith communicated to a wider culture?

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[47] A search of the larger web-based *IBMR* database (http://resources.library.yale.edu/dissertations), accessed 08/01/07, reveals eight doctoral dissertations out of 5,193 written between 1900 and 2003 with the words education and culture in the title. Of these at least three refer to Higher or general school education. There are many more referring to theological education (70+) and culture (170+) alone.

[48] Several UK Universities have academics employed in the field and offer the subject – a professional doctorate in practical theology has also recently been developed – see (http://www.biapt.org.uk/new_page_6.htm) accessed 09/01/07.

Here then are significant connections between the outcomes of TR and the outcomes of inculturation as we have described them in this chapter. Graham, Walton and Ward offer seven 'methods' of theological reflection in a similar fashion to Bevans' 'models' of contextual theology. There are also some connections between them; the hermeneutical circle or pastoral cycle (Green, 1990) originated in Liberation theology (Bevans' Praxis model) and is utilised in the 'Theology-in-action' method of Graham, Walton and Ward; their seventh method 'Theology in the Vernacular' follows Schreiter in calling for local, contextual theologies.

It does not require a huge leap of the imagination to turn a theological reflection method into a pedagogical process; in fact several of Graham, Walton and Ward's methods arise from or result in learning programmes. We might even say that theology, understood in this way is pedagogical in itself.

Educational interventions then offer the possibility of bridging the gap identified by both Sedmak and Magesa between implicit and explicit inculturation. Yet the question remains as to how to avoid the charge of ideological bias in such interventions.

Gorringe (2004: 70) is convinced that education must not be confined to school or university, but is actually 'co-extensive' with culture. He offers a definition of education from Raymond Williams in which we can discern again the inculturation process (2004: 71):

> [education is] the process of giving to the ordinary members of society its full common meanings, and the skills to amend these meanings, in the light of their personal and common experience.

Following Barth he continues by showing that education is not 'natural' to humanity and will always be an intervention in the best sense of that word (2004: 73). Education is about improvement – 'what is *better'* rather than any absolutes and this (2004: 74), 'is a rubric that marks off education from ideology or propaganda.' The learner remains in control while open to the Spirit of God behind the teacher.

Education can then be further defined along with its importance to the Church (2004: 74):

> If culture is about value, then education ... is the place where those values are clarified and debated. The reason that the Church has always been involved in education is precisely because it has an account of the values it believes human beings are called to live by.

Education for inculturation then, as we have seen will be an unfinished process of improvement, and as such, if it remains a process and not an end and takes the non-ideological stance of the incarnation (2004: 126-127) it will be authentic.

This section leads us to one other conclusion and that is the articulation of a 'qualitative hypothesis'[49] of the research project as a whole; that there is some connection or relationship between the theory, process and content of inculturation and the theory, process and content of adult theological education. It is to a detailed study of education that we will turn in the next chapter to examine further the validity of this hypothesis and therefore the project.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have defined, described and shaped the idea of inculturation around its premise, process, content and some of its limits. We can therefore propose a further qualitative hypothesis for the project around the definition of inculturation; that it is a double movement of both the 'pilgrim' and 'indigenising' principles between the "poles" of Christian faith and culture. These principles are related to the theological categories of incarnation and conversion (which in turn relate to the historical events of the birth and death of Christ). Christianity is therefore 'translatable' between any culture or cultures in a *process* of inculturation which is on-going – it is about the future of the faith. The research will therefore be a continuing journey rather than arrival at a distinct end-point. The contextual limits of the research are also noted.

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[49] I will explain the meaning of this term in chapter 4 when discussing the research methodology for the project.

The outcome of explicit inculturation is a 'rooted novelty' which may be discerned by examining the meaning, values and action or behaviour of the people or peoples involved. It should also lead to an 'integrated spirituality,' to use Magesa's term, in the individual. Such possibilities need to be tested in the research. Any ensuing newness from inculturation requires a fluid understanding of revelation and the possible use of the imagination in order to discover it.

A qualitative hypothesis of the research is that inculturation and education can be brought to together in creative synthesis and that we may find correlation between the theory, process and content of inculturation and the theory, process and content of adult theological education.

CHAPTER THREE: INTRODUCING PEDAGOGY[50,51]

In introducing the field of pedagogy we shall first of all look behind the subject at some of its philosophical and hermeneutical foundations. Our overall purpose will be to define the terms associated with the field and to discern its connections with the examination of inculturation in the previous chapter. This will lay the groundwork for further defining the limits of the project and enable a methodology for the research programme to be developed. Along the way we will critically examine various educational methodologies that may contribute to the project as well as a range of other issues raised by the subject.

The question of developing pedagogical interventions for inculturation clearly requires a theoretical study of education and learning and definitions of these terms will be required. As a starting point it is helpful to use Astley's definitions (1994). He offers a broad psychological (as opposed to philosophical) definition of learning as 'lasting change in a person brought about by experience' (1994: 34). Its content (or 'what people learn') is 'knowledge, skills and attitudes.' These are sometimes referred to as the cognitive, behavioural and affective domains of learning. Education is more problematical since all learning does not arise from education (Jarvis, 2004: 42) – there are criteria that can be offered but they are not always applicable. In the end Astley states that (1994: 38); 'it does not really matter what we mean by "education", as long as we say what we mean – and do not mean – by it.' We shall therefore be able to build up our definition as we work through this chapter.

There are two prior issues which lie behind any educational process for inculturation. We have seen how inculturation is the making of meaning, values and behaviour out of the interaction of faith and culture. Furthermore we cannot deliberately educate without an understanding of how knowledge is both gained and transformed. We must turn at the beginning of this chapter to hermeneutics and epistemology.

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[50] A small amount of the material in this Chapter is a revised and updated version of that presented in my research methodology essay which is supplied with the thesis as Appendix I.

[51] I make no essential distinction between pedagogy and education here – although some educators would distinguish between pedagogy during childhood and "andragogy" during adulthood.

Classical and other Epistemologies

Aristotle's classical epistemology divided knowledge into three types – theoretical, practical and productive or to use the original Greek terms, *theoria, praxis* and *poiesis.* These three ways of knowing and Aristotle's understanding of them are discussed helpfully by Groome (1980: 153-156) and Smith (1999).

The *theoria* way of knowing for Aristotle is about stepping back and thinking; it is; 'the quest for truth by a contemplative / reflective / non-engaged process' (Groome, 1980: 153); it is an end in itself – pursuing truth for its own sake. It proceeds via *episteme,* knowing the good, true and beautiful, it is the 'highest form of human activity' (Smith, 1999) and leads to *sophia* or wisdom and pure human fulfilment.

Praxis knowing is a means to the ordering of society, it is about ethical behaviour and politics. It begins with a question or a situation and proceeds via *phronesis* or practical wisdom. The end or goal is to further human well-being and it is therefore an unfinished process. It is important to understand *praxis* not simply as 'practice' (Thiselton, 2001: 413) i.e. the putting of 'theory' into practice – we will return to this issue in a moment

Poiesis knowing is the means by which artefacts can be manufactured, but it also utilises creativity and so extends to the creative arts and includes architecture, poetry, drama, dance and music. Its starting point is an idea or pattern and it proceeds via the *techne* or skill of the artisan or artist.

Clearly then the understanding of knowledge which we hold will have a profound effect on our approach to education (Smith, 1999). Groome, as an educationalist traces the process by which these three ways of knowing were combined in Aristotle and amongst later philosophers and theologians in the Western tradition such that they were understood in a hierarchy. *Theoria* became the ultimate way to gain wisdom and was elevated above the other ways of knowing, such that they almost disappeared from the Western mind. It is worth quoting Groome (1980: 160) here:

From the Neoplatonists onward Western education was generally understood as the imparting of theoretical knowledge (i.e. from outside lived experience) which would be applied to practice. *Praxis* as a reliable way of knowing had been lost to western philosophy.

Cheryl Johns and her husband,[52] following Groome and others have described an alternative 'biblical' or Hebrew epistemology based on the Hebrew word, *yada*. This is knowing and being known in relationship, even sexual relationship, it is dynamic, experiential and covenantal knowing, it is not so much about information, but about obedient behaviour in response to God's grace. It is much closer to the Greek idea of *praxis/phronesis* but it does not privilege *theoria/episteme* in the hierarchical manner that has been described.

Groome (1980: 162) and Leslie (2001) claim that it was the philosopher Hegel that recovered the idea of *praxis,* for the Western world relating it to the dialectic of historical consciousness and lived experience. Hegel's theory was dependent on an objective absolute (*Geist* / Mind). However Marx rejected this to develop the idea of *praxis* as a way of humans themselves understanding and shaping their own history without any transcendental reference point (Groome, 1980: 165). Thus *praxis* takes on a slightly different meaning following its treatment by Marx[53]; Thiselton quotes Bernstein and Avis (1992: 380):

> *Praxis* becomes not only "activity, production, labor ... revolutionary practice" but also "relentless criticism." ... "In its Marxist sense ... *praxis* is more closely related to *theoria* than in Aristotle ... It embodies *theoria*" even if it is also "dependent on *poiesis*."

Twentieth Century Epistemology and Hermeneutics

Anthony Thiselton, in a key text (1992) surveys all the recent major philosophical[54] thinkers in the field of hermeneutics and develops a helpful systematic approach to theological hermeneutics. Theological hermeneutics, even at this stage of the study is envisaged to be foundational to it.

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[52] See both her *Pentecostal Formation* (Johns, 1993: 35-36) and his 'Yielding to the Spirit' (Johns, 1999).
[53] Thiselton even calls it a 'slippery' term (1992: 380).
[54] Or perhaps 'multidisciplinary' might be a better word, since some of them are theologians.

Thiselton claims that in the twentieth century the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1989) stands as a paradigm shift in epistemology and hermeneutics (1992: 314), coming as it does after Heidegger who influenced both the existentialist approach of Bultmann and Gadamer himself. Existentialist models of hermeneutics, like that of Bultmann are found wanting on their individualistic nature and the false polarity they contain between fact and value (Thiselton, 1992: 272).[55] Gadamer therefore rejects the reductionism of working solely with the scientific *method* of enlightenment rationalism (1992: 6). He is therefore uninterested in separating different categories of knowledge (e.g. philosophy, theology, classics etc) (Jasper, 2004), but holds to together the universal and the particular (Thiselton, 1992: 6):

> Gadamer urges the importance of the particular case within human life. We approach questions of knowledge ... from within horizons already bounded by our finite situatedness within the flow of history. But it is possible for these finite and historically conditioned horizons to be enlarged, and to expand.

In addition Thiselton further defines the scope of the universal and particular in Gadamer (1992: 24-25) which in turn affects how he has later been interpreted, as we shall see:

> He [Gadamer] is more concerned with broader fundamental questions about the relation between the two major hermeneutical axes: the contingent, particular, historical axis of variable finite actualizations and textual performance, and the general linguistic axis of the universal ontological ground which these finite categories presuppose. ... A deep ambiguity in Gadamer allows the interpreter of his system to stress either of two aspects. He or she may stress, on one side, the universality of language and of effective-histories which transmit community-judgments of practical wisdom as tradition. Alternatively the emphasis may be seen to lie on the variable and unpredictable nature of historically finite actualizations of texts and traditions in context-relative events.

The 'reader's' (or interpreter's) horizons, which are inescapable are required to come into contact with 'text' which is other for the creative enlargement or *fusion* of

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[55] For an example of individualism see Bultmann (1969: 188) and the fact/value dichotomy (1969:103).

horizons, as it is known technically, to occur. So Thiselton continues with a warning which will be useful for us (1992: 8, his emphasis):

> The distance between the reader and the text performs a positive hermeneutical function. *Premature assimilation* into the perspectives projected by the horizons of readers leaves the reader trapped within his or her own prior horizons.

Thiselton immediately applies Gadamer's insights to theology and the Christian faith and we too can connect it with the concept of translatability outlined in the previous chapter, based as it is on the particular and the universal, the incarnation and the cross. There are no 'privileged perspectives' (Jasper, 2004: 108) in Gadamer's thought and yet the universal (not *universalizing*) element is that interpretation is possible in each concrete context or particular case.[56] Gadamer in this way stands at the boundary of modern and post-modern thought (Thiselton, 1992: 314) emphasising both traditional universality and radical contextuality – '*all reality is hermeneutical.*'[57]

Gadamer's thought is complex, but he uses a simple illustration as to how humans may apprehend truth and expand its horizons (1989: 101ff). He introduces the concept of 'play.' The game has to be entered into fully by the player such that it becomes a 'world' of its own. This world has to be taken absolutely seriously and its rules adhered to faithfully. If these elements are in place the participant in the game can discover it as a 'sphere of disclosure' (Jasper, 2004). Entering into another 'world' in this way is important for this research and we shall return to this idea in later chapters.

Finally we note in hermeneutics as whole, especially since Schleiermacher, a certain circularity to the interpretive process. In the interaction of text and understanding, particular and universal there is no fixed character to either element and so interpretation is not a linear process 'along a trajectory from ignorance to

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[56] A good living example of this approach in practice is Brueggemann's chapter (2005) on post-liberal use of the Bible which decries the universalizing hegemony of the historical-critical method.

[57] Hermeneutics begins, according to Thiselton by 'asking what it is to stand in the shoes of the other and to listen in openness' (Thiselton, 1992: 28).

understanding via the medium of the text' (Jasper, 2004: 21). Thus there emerges the concept of the hermeneutical circle[58] or spiral where the issue is not how we get out of it or make it cease its endless process, if that were indeed possible – but 'how we get in' in the first place (2004: 21, following Heidegger).

Post-Gadamerian Hermeneutics

As Thiselton describes (1992: 11), Gadamer's work has not stood still and was developed in at least four directions by others, depending on which aspect of his universality or particularity is emphasised. Two of these directions are interesting for our purposes.[59]

First is what Thiselton calls *metacritical* developments of Gadamer's work. Gadamer emphasises *phronesis* in contrast to *theoria* as it was developed in enlightenment rationalism. Such an emphasis turns Gadamer's hermeneutics, according to Ricoeur, into a 'critique of critique, or *meta-critique'* (1981: 76, my emphasis)*.* This, as Thiselton goes onto explain is a critical evaluation of the critic herself (1992: 316) and as such it stands above any particular critical process, another universal element. The question is; what are the metacritical criteria for 'hermeneutical success'? This question is pursued by 'Pannenberg, Habermas, Apel and arguably Ricoeur' (1992: 11).

Secondly there is the development of *socio-critical hermeneutics* which (1992: 6):

> ... seeks to unmask uses of texts which serve self-interests or the interests of dominating power structures.

This approach is particularly associated with Jürgen Habermas (1978) and the neo-Marxist Frankfurt School[60] and is the source of liberation theologies, whether Latin

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[58] Juan Luis Segundo (1976) is usually accredited with using this term for the first time in relation to liberation theology, but he employs the slightly different (and somewhat awkward) term, the 'hermeneutic' circle, as does Jasper (2004).

[59] We will not be dealing with Rorty and others' 'socio-pragmatic hermeneutics' which emphasise contextuality to the absence of universality and so become 'explicitly ethnocentric' (Thiselton, 1992: 10, 27). Neither will we look at those who attempt to turn back from Gadamer to more traditional approaches to hermeneutics.

[60] See Bottomore (1984) for a full introduction to the Frankfurt School.

American, Black, feminist etc. Their thought is an 'emancipatory critique' which 'reaches beyond horizons of particular persons or communities.' (1992: 7) and is also therefore to some extent metacritical.

Two Possible Educational Methodologies

In these two epistemological and hermeneutical frameworks from Ricoeur (1970, 1981) and Habermas (1978) we are left with at least two possible concomitant educational methodologies that are important for the inculturation project.

As we have seen Ricoeur develops Gadamer in the metacritical direction which (1992: 345):

> ... embodies both the unmasking function of explanation and the creative function of understanding.

In a direct connection with the double movement in inculturation Ricoeur's early hermeneutical axiom is worth quoting (1970: 27):

> Hermeneutics seems to me to be animated by this double motivation: willingness to suspect, willingness to listen; vow of rigor, vow of obedience.

In practice this means that the interpreter must be aware of the temptation to project their own constructs onto texts so that they are no longer "other" while at the same time listening in openness to symbol, narrative and metaphor which will allow for creative newness to occur 'in front of the text' (Ricoeur, 1981: 143; Bartholomew, 2005). It is a hermeneutics of both suspicion and retrieval (Thiselton, 1992: 344).

Craig Bartholomew (2005) explicitly connects Ricoeur's hermeneutics with culture because hermeneutics is essentially about how we understand 'world' (2005: 139), by which he means, I think a kind of comprehensive, even cosmological (following David Tracy) world-view.[61] In turn this gives a lead in to practical theology. This line

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[61] See also Terry Veling (2005) who understands interpretation to be about asking the question "can I move from the world I currently inhabit to a new world that I *could* inhabit?" (2005: 47, his italics).

of thought will be key in the third case study and the conclusions, but for the moment we simply remark on the possibilities it poses for the project.

Picking up the second thread from Gadamer's work, Habermas' socio-critical hermeneutics are clearly important as they are able to form a basis for further educational methodologies. We have already noted how the concept of *praxis* was developed by Marx to become much more central, combining aspects of *theoria* and *poiesis*. Habermas developed these ideas (1978; Thiselton, 1992: 379-385), however it was the Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire (1972) who championed the notion of *praxis* as a way of knowing *and* an educational methodology.

Education following Freire

Here was a fundamental shift or 'epistemological break,' to use the words of the Liberation theologians, in the process of education, which took the concrete situation of the poor seriously. Given the privilege provided to *theoria* since Aristotle, the major educational methodology that prevailed over many centuries was a linear 'from theory to practice' process (Groome, 1980).[62] At its best it has produced, for example, the scientific revolution late in the second millennium. However, as we have seen this essentially rationalist "from theory to practice" approach has been criticised from many perspectives, not least in that it produces a 'thin, one-dimensional' meaning that can be accused of leading to (and being productive of) Western hegemonic colonialism (Brueggemann, 2005; Clark, 2006). Freire described it educationally as 'banking' education where the teacher holds all the information and therefore power. The teacher transfers selected information from the bank to the students.

Freire thus introduced the question of power relations into the educational process and its outcome which for him is political action to transform society emerging from reflection on experience. Praxis education, for Freire is dialectic between action and reflection which enables *conscientization* to occur in the student. It changes the nature of the teacher-student relationship as well as the content of education. Freire

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[62] Its starting point can be disengaged thought or data produced by observation and experiment or thirdly experience itself. A theory is generated and the theory is applied in practice.

proved praxis to be a very powerful educational methodology in action as he was able to teach illiterate peasants to read and write within six weeks and in the process politicize them.

Since then however *praxis* has been critiqued,[63] especially when it is magnified or even set against a *theoria* way of knowing, because Freire's praxis is contextually dependent. So Thiselton states that the key question for all liberation theologies is (1992: 410):

> Do they merely reflect back the horizons of the community of protest in self-affirmation, or do they offer a social critique under which all (or many) communities may experience correction, transformation, and enlargement of horizons?

Freire is also possibly overly idealist in that his goal is ultimately utopian (also Johns, 1993) and so without guarantees. He is critiqued, despite his overt Christian faith (at least in later life) for being humanistic to the point of unhelpful optimism about the nature of people, and working with little or no reference to the transcendent. So Jackie Johns, a Pentecostal criticises Freire because he does not allow sufficient room for God or human 'fallenness.' Johns claims (1999: 76ff) that praxis as a human activity cannot transcend the barrier between subject and object, that is humans are unable to initiate knowledge of God. In addition:

> ... without the integration of orthodoxy and orthopraxis all praxis will degenerate into sinful praxis.

This raises a further criticism of Cheryl Bridges Johns which needs to be dealt with. She states that there remains in *praxis* (1993: 38):

> ... a fundamental dualism between matter and reason ... [and] ... because of this *praxis* assumes an unbridgeable distance between the knower and the known.

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[63] What follows is based around a critique of Freire by Bowen (1992) with other commentator's critiques interspersed.

Thus the Freireian methodology 'elevates theory … above all other forms of knowledge.' This was clearly not the intention of Freire and others and while there are transparent links[64] between his project and that of so-called liberal education[65] surely there is *both* immanence *and* transcendence between the knower and the known. Polanyi's description of 'inarticulate, acritical tacit knowledge' (Astley, 1994: 80) combines the knower and the known but that does not mean that critical theorising is therefore ruled out. If it was there would be no need for books to be written about educational methodology!

Finally Freire is criticised by Berger and others (Johns, 1993) for introducing hierarchies of consciousness and being overly dependent on the cognitive domain of learning to the detriment of the affective. For instance he does not take seriously enough the popular religiosity or system of meaning making of the oppressed (1993: 42).[66]

What is important to learn from the *praxis* way of knowing however is that it has a) rediscovered the importance of action (and change) as an outcome of education and, b) introduced issues of power into the educational process.[67] Thus, as education engages the student not just in the search for knowledge for its own sake, but also in changing society and the relations within it, then transformation of the learners can occur.

Johns (1993) deals with her critique of Freire, following Daniel Schipani by proposing a synthesis between praxis and the broader 'biblical' and epistemological grounding of the concept of *yada* as described above (1993: 40):

> ... the nature and goals of biblical knowledge are best seen in the Hebrew word *yada;* to know is to encounter. *Yada* stresses the interrelatedness of the knower and the known. Praxis, on the other hand, offers the modern, western mind a practical approach to the encounter.

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[64] Astley quotes from Kevin Nichols (1994: 89, note 42) that they 'blossom on the same hedgerow.'

[65] Essentially the educational methodology of enlightenment rationalism. For a definition see Craig (1994).

[66] A criticism that John Storey (1997) also makes of the Frankfurt School in general.

[67] As Astley points out (1994) education can be political in that it deals with power relations and action in society without being in some way left leaning or even "party-political."

We will return to Freireian educational methodology and its usefulness for this project later. Meanwhile, Astley (1994) would concur with Johns above, if not necessarily in these terms, because of an important debate for our purposes that her approach raises between 'formative' and 'critical' education.

Formative and Critical Education

Crudely formative education, for Astley following McKenzie (1994: 78) is the 'reception of educational givens' and critical education is the 'examination of educational givens.' Since they clearly overlap and interpenetrate each other they are not really discrete entities but exist on a continuum; perhaps not unlike the two 'poles' of faith and culture which we understood in chapter two form a continuum offering different models of contextual theology. Formation can include both sociological 'enculturation (learning of the culture into which one is born) or acculturation (learning aspects of a "new" culture) (1994: 79). Critical education is rather where 'this cultural "furniture" is taken apart and reassembled in new ways.' There is a strong argument for holding the two types of education together which Astley outlines in the rest of the chapter.

If formative education excludes critical education it easily collapses into indoctrination – the equivalent to colonialism or imperialism in our previous chapter. On the other hand a purely critical education is not possible or desirable for several logical, psychological and moral reasons that Astley outlines (1994: 80-83), not least of which is Polanyi's work rehearsed above and the fact that critical education clearly requires a degree of formation in itself.[68]

Thus a 'qualified critical approach' is required which allows both formative and critical elements to co-exist. In what proportion and for what purpose then creates different types of educational approaches.

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[68] In fact Astley offers a further two logical difficulties; the tendency in purely critical education to individualism and to critique without content. Psychologically it is difficult to sustain the confidence required for a purely critical approach and morally socialization and stability have value in cultural formation.

Critical evaluation is important for 'many …perhaps most adult Christians,' but, and Astley is very strong on this point, not for *all* Christians (1994: 87). Here then is another limit of this research project. We have decided, for good or ill, to ask whether there is an intentional educational programme that could deliver inculturation. This probably then excludes some people of faith who would not join such a programme.[69] Nevertheless critical educational programmes are vital for the future of the church. In an echo and perhaps in answer to John Drane's lament over the Western church quoted in chapter two Astley states (1994: 87):

> If Christianity is to survive and develop as a lifestyle and as a belief system into the twenty-first century it must undergo continual re-formation spurred on by continual critical evaluation from within the household of faith.

One option for such a qualified critical approach which privileges the critical over the formational element is 'political critical Christian religious education' (1994: 89). Here is where we can place Freire and his more overtly Christian follower – Thomas Groome to whom we have already referred (1980). For Groome formation is simply not sufficient to deliver 'creating, liberating, and transforming' goals (1980: 91). We will see, in the next section how this approach also informs a secular version of it which is known as 'transformative education.'

However there is a different approach associated with John Westerhoff and others which emphasises formational education against the critical element – or rather it states that the critical element is *embedded* within the tradition into which the student is being formed. This is very suggestive for our purposes since it is reliant on an understanding of the 'gospel' or tradition which is ultimately transformative in itself. When the students have been formed in an understanding of the faith, that very faith is able to subvert both the church and the world. Astley is clear that (1994: 93):

> ... formative education *itself* can also function as a sort of theological/ethical critical education, by forming people in a particular position (with a particular set of attitudes, beliefs, valuations) which is the base for their critical

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[69] Whether there is a connection between what we have learnt about implicit inculturation and Astley's later work on 'Ordinary Theology' (2002) would be an interesting topic for further research.

thinking not only about other cultures, but also about the received Christian tradition and their own (Christian) position. It is this that gives support to the claim that enculturation can be radical, transformative and liberating.

There is a direct connection here with inculturation which we have described as a theological term inserting itself between the sociological concepts of enculturation and acculturation. What we are claiming is that within the enculturation of formative education there is a *built-in* internal acculturation. These two forces may be able to combine to offer the 'indigenising' and 'pilgrim' elements of the double movement of inculturation. David Heywood sums this up (1988: 71):

> ... the tradition from which the [Christian] community's shared values are derived has a logic of its own, broader than its embodiment in a particular localized community. Given a basis of common understandings the tradition is free both to inform and to reform the community's life.

Interestingly just as our commentators on inculturation have dealt with what the 'gospel' or transforming element is – so does Astley. He claims, following Mary Boys that the 'gospel' is 'the symbol of the kingdom coming in Jesus Christ' (1994: 93).

It may also be that there is a connection between this internally self-critical formative educational methodology and Ricoeur's hermeneutics of both suspicion and retrieval.

Having established an important connection here between the two fields, it is also worth remarking on the similarity of this debate between formative and political critical approaches to education and the definition of inculturation in the previous chapter – whether it includes the socio-economic context as well as the cultural. As there we note it for the moment for future reference.

Cyclical Educational and Research Methodologies

We have discussed above the cyclical process of hermeneutics and the work of the Frankfurt School and Paulo Freire in recovering a praxis way of knowing. Despite its limitations which have been remarked on, it does form the basis for 'transformative education'[70] in the secular adult education and professional development world, 'action research'[71] in the improvement of educational practice, and the so-called 'pastoral cycle'[72] within the Christian church.

As we have discovered a linear model of education and change is not adequate in itself since the process of action and reflection results in change and therefore a new situation which requires further action and then reflection. Kolb (1984)[73] has developed a cyclical model of experiential learning which does seem to reflect the idea that praxis education actually combines the classical perception of *theoria* and *praxis* (see Figure 1 below). In fact his vertical axis between concrete experience and abstract conceptualization which he calls "grasping" (or understanding) via apprehension and comprehension could be understood as the *theoria* axis. The horizontal "transformation" axis between active experimentation (action) and reflective observation is *praxis.*

Given what we have learnt about the need for a qualified critical approach to education combining both formative and critical elements the learning cycle would seem to be at the very least a helpful starting point for a methodology which incorporates both these ideas through Kolb's description of transformation and grasping. This is why it was chosen at the start of the research project as the methodology for it, as will be explained in the next chapter.

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[70] See Mezirow and associates (1990) and Cranton (1994) along with Schön (1991) for professional practice.

[71] Jean McNiff (1998) describes action research as 'a real alternative to the more theory-based approach' (1998: 1) in the 'empiricist tradition' (1998: 10). This tradition has an epistemology in which theory determines practice and results in control, linearity and stasis. John Elliott (1991) claims that action research resolves the theory – practice tension (1991: 45) and that theoretical abstraction definitely plays a subordinate role (1991: 53). Action research rather has a humanistic philosophical base (McNiff 1998: 8), a social basis in involvement and an educational basis in improvement (1998: 3). Action research utilises and aims at action and therefore change.

[72] Laurie Green describes vividly how he first made the connection between Kolb and Freire and then 're-invented' the Liberationists' Pastoral Circle or Cycle for the U.K. context (1990: 24).

[73] Kolb combines the work of Lewin (action research), Dewey and Piaget (psychological/cognitive growth) and Freire in a creative manner as described by Leslie (2001: 39).
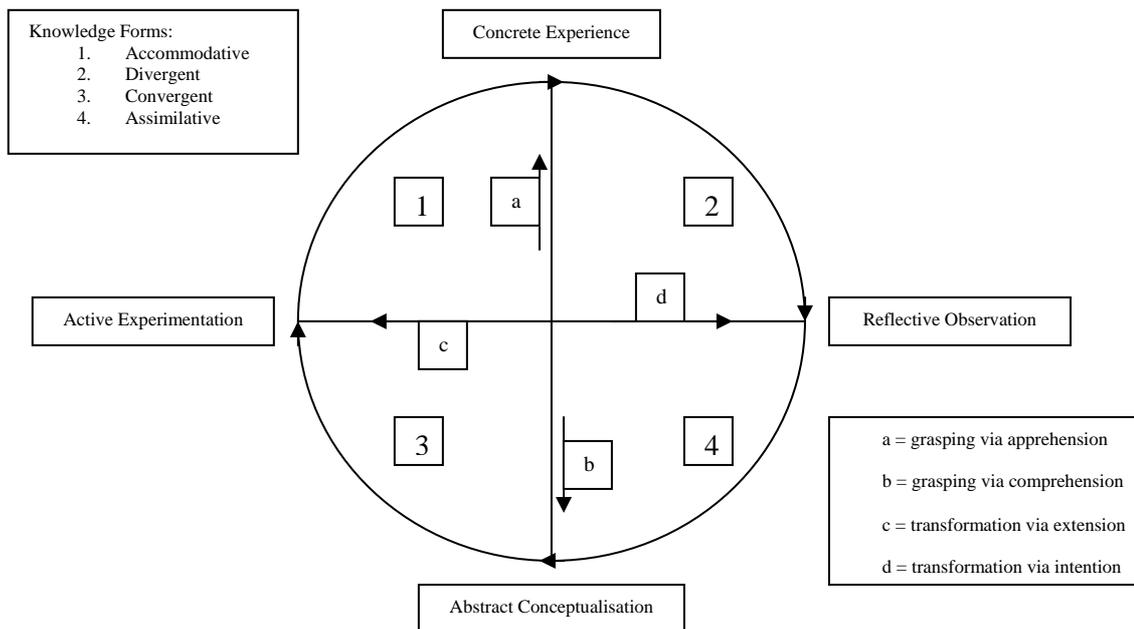
Figure 1. Structural dimensions underlying the process of experiential learning (Kolb 1984: 42)

There is inclusiveness about the Kolbian cycle and there is therefore no reason why *poiesis* may not be recovered in the same way within 'praxis' education as Thiselton noted. In the current post-modern context it is sometimes recalled from its pre-modern past as a tool for the teacher. Examples would be Ah Nee-Benham (2000), Clarke (2006), Day (1992) and Nussbaum (1998).

A significant critique exists of these cyclical educational methodologies and the pastoral cycle as a method of theological reflection. Jennifer Moon (1999), when offering a critique of the Kolbian experiential learning cycle (which is clearly not *exactly* the same as the pastoral cycle or the process of action research) states that the cycle may be a better teaching model, because of its simplicity, than a map of how it happens. She questions in fact whether it is so simplistic as to be misleading (1999: 34). Jarvis (2004) echoes this and claims that he has been revising the Kolbian cycle for more than twenty tears and calls for a model of 'existential learning' which is much more complex[74] while retaining some internal recycling within it.

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[74] See his Figure 3.4 on p. 106

Such criticism, while it may well be valid does not, I believe invalidate the fundamental premise of the cyclical nature of hermeneutics and therefore meaning making. Inevitably, in one sense, the Kolbian cycle is an over-simplification, but unless we claim that it is an end rather than a beginning it can still be put to use for our purposes in a heuristic manner. There is a sense in which we know no model (even Jarvis') will ever fit actuality precisely, but that does not detract from the importance of setting out on a deliberately cyclical journey.

Turning to the pastoral cycle John Reader (1994) believes it is not cyclical at all, but calls for a "poppy seed head" understanding of what goes on in 'local theology' where the issues burst out in many different directions never to come back to the source. This sounds like a postmodern theological version of Rorty's socio-pragmatic hermeneutics and is open therefore to the same ethnocentric criticism.

Pattison, Thompson and Green (2003) note the difference between the teaching of theological reflection via the pastoral cycle and its continued use by those (clergy in this case) that have been taught it and are supposed to use it. My suspicion is that this difference may be because learners are taught the 'theory' of TR in a residential setting where the actual cycle cannot properly be experienced – they then never put it into 'practice' – thus despite being taught to use a cyclical process – the teaching does not 'model' the content in that it uses a 'from theory to practice' methodology. The closer the teaching process can become to engaging the participants in real situations, the more they will be likely to use it in the future.   We cannot make the assumption that teaching and learning are always the same thing (Astley, 1994). This is why we emphasise the idea of "modelling" in this research project as we shall see.

Other Pedagogical Issues for the Project

    a) Domains of learning and culture – the content of pedagogy
Towards the end of this chapter we are now in a position to discuss domains of learning which is actually where we started with Aristotle's *theoria, praxis* and *poiesis.* These proceed by *episteme, phronesis* and *techne* respectively. Habermas

distinguished three related but different *cognitive interests*: the technical, practical and emancipatory (1978: 308). These in turn are the basis for three domains of 'transformative' learning in Cranton (1994) following Mezirow's treatment of Habermas (Leslie, 2001: 40); they are the *instrumental*, *communicative* and *emancipatory*. The instrumental domain is about 'controlling and manipulating the external environment' (Cranton, 1994: 46); the communicative domain is about culture which includes language, values and traditions – *practical knowledge* or *phronesis*; the emancipatory domain in the individual leads to freedom, relational autonomy and self-knowledge in relation to history and social context which in turn has an effect of societal change.

David Leslie (2001: 41) further claims that these domains can be transposed into Christian education using the following categories: content/information, people/formation and society/transformation. These educational domains then correspond to the psychological domains of learning already alluded to – the cognitive, affective and behavioural.

For the purposes of this project we have stated that culture is about meaning, values and behaviour and such a definition resonates with this understanding of domains of learning. Jarvis (2004: 24) defines culture in similar way as 'the sum totality of knowledge, values, beliefs, etc. of a social group.' He understands the individual to be socialized into an 'objectified local culture' but then to be in constant negotiation with that culture through a process of internalization and externalization. Thus the objectified local cultures (or cultures - as they are manifold in the Western world) change over time. Education then, particularly in its content or curriculum 'selects from culture' in order to formalise an already existing dynamic process.

Thus we have at least a starting point in answer to the question of the "measurement" of inculturation. Any educational programme for inculturation will have an effect on people's knowledge, meaning, values and behaviour either in affirmation or questioning of it.

b) Individual or communitarian learning – the premise of pedagogy

There is an assumption, especially in societies where the rate of social change is slow that education is only for the elite few (and we can trace the root of this assumption to Aristotle's hierarchy again) (Jarvis, 2004). Everyone else may be able to learn sufficient about the 'objectified local culture' in only part of their lifetime. This is not the case in the current context of rapid social change which leads to Jarvis' understanding of the need for lifelong learning (whether this is in formal learning or not). Alongside this assumption which is to be resisted is both the individualization and commodification of education in a globalizing world in 'late modernity.'

We have noted Astley's case that critical formational programmes of education are not for everyone, but we will need to be aware as we proceed, of these tendencies. Pedagogy is not just for individual self-improvement, but for the sake of the community (and church) and society. Neither is it just another 'consumer product' to be ticked off on a list of 'must haves' or 'must have done before 80.'

Definitions

Having reviewed educational methodologies (process), and, briefly pedagogy's content and premise, we are ready now to offer a definition of education – 'what it is and what is not' for this project. A definition of learning has been offered as 'lasting change in a person brought about by experience' so that all learning is not necessarily education.

Education can be defined as 'intentional' if it involves 'teacher-facilitated learning' and if teaching is defined as intentional as Astley does (1994: 37-39); 'teaching is the intentional facilitation of learning.' This will be the case in this research. We shall be researching intentional educational programmes that involve teaching in this definition.

Education will deal with all the domains of learning we have outlined and since we expect education to deliver learning we will be looking for 'lasting change' brought about by the educational experiences.

Such programmes are not for everyone, but as such are expected to be transformational of their participants and have an effect in the wider communities, churches and society of the participants.

Defining education in this way means that we expect that there are criteria for (1994: 87) '"good" and "bad", "proper" and "improper" educational processes.' Pedagogy is not indoctrination or purely critical – at its best it will combine formative and critical elements.

Conclusion - the 'Intertextuality' of Inculturation and Pedagogy
The research project brings together the fields of inculturation and pedagogy. A qualitative hypothesis of the project, as we noted in the previous chapter is that there is a relationship between these fields; that their integration is actually possible. To borrow a term from hermeneutics, we have already begun in the current chapter to discern a certain "intertextuality" between the two fields. By this we mean a relatedness and even interpenetration of them as follows:

i)   since culture is always in process (whether at a rapid or slow rate of change) there is always both a receptivity and a contestation about it. Education can selectively aid this process of cultural change. Inculturation is, to simplify the case, a version of this natural and human process using the Christian tradition or 'gospel' as the transforming factor. It should be possible then to develop pedagogy for inculturation.

ii)   following on from i) the concept of translatability which is key for inculturation in holding together the universal and particular relates to the idea that embedded within formative Christian education there is a kind of "DNA" which is a reforming or critical element which is passed on, albeit changed by the educational process.

iii)   further, Christian educationalists such as Astley identify this DNA or gospel, as we have noted, with a particular content.

iv)   so reformation of the tradition is possible through education just as inculturation is predicated on the 're-appropriation' of the tradition, according to Sedmak.

v)   inculturation and education have both been understood as vital for the future life of the Christian faith and the church in a rapidly changing world.

vi)   both our studies of inculturation and pedagogy have resulted in discussion of practical theology and we have identified this now via *praxis* and *phronesis.* There is a sense in which theology is, or can be *identified* or *correlated* with pedagogy.

CHAPTER FOUR: A METHODOLOGICAL NARRATIVE OF DISCOVERY

Research is about stepping into the unknown in order to know; it could be likened to a journey of discovery. The outcome or destination is not seen at the beginning, but this does not mean that the journey cannot be embarked upon with a proper sense of direction and movement towards discovery.[75] This chapter relates the narrative of the research project in order that the reader understands the twists and turns that the journey took, as well as that there is not necessarily a final 'arrival' point. Along the way I will reflect on the chosen methodology for the project.[76] The chapter also deals with two other methodological considerations around research ethics and the standpoint of the researcher.

Proposal and Reality

I began the research project in 2002 and early 2003, when developing the proposal and methodology, knowing that I could plan, but that the reality may be very different.

The research question was originally proposed to be (Rooms, 2002: 161); 'what is "best practice" in education for inculturation?'[77] "Best practice" was described as; 'not just a set of materials, "content", rather it is the development of criteria for a pedagogy for inculturation that will include theoretical, process and content issues.'

Research questions in any field usually entail the development of hypotheses that support them. In scientific or quantitative sociological studies it is easy to define a hypothesis as a 'testable proposition about the relationship between two or more events or concepts' (Robson, 1993: 65). The project then proceeds by defining how the testing will take place via the measurement of the different variables in

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[75] See also Terry Veling (2005: 215) where he describes the 'homelessness' of practical theology on its journey.

[76] I have included the full research methodology essay for the project from 2002 as an appendix (actually appendix I) in order that the project's exact starting point may be clear. I refer to it as (Rooms, 2002) with page numbers referenced to pages in the appendix of this thesis.

[77] There were supplementary questions that were also identified, some of which have been now addressed in chapters two and three at the end of the project and others which will be examined in the conclusions. They were: 'Can the practice of adult education bear the weight of what is being expected of it here? What is the connection or relatedness between formation and enculturation and critical reflection and acculturation? How is the change and growth (the transformation) delivered by education to be measured? What is the process of this kind of learning?'

experimental situations which can then be related back to the theory of the original research question.

In qualitative studies such as this one the definition of the hypothesis/es employed cannot be quite as strict: 'qualitative research does not test a clear hypothesis' (Richards, 2005: 126). Nevertheless the word is still applicable since hypotheses can be considered to be a necessary part of all enquiry. Robson calls the hypothesis employed in a qualitative study 'a tentative guess or intuitive hunch' as to what is happening in a situation (1993: 65).[78] I have therefore decided to call such intuitive hunches (and that is exactly what they felt like) in this study 'qualitative hypotheses.' As such they are perhaps more like working definitions or assumptions of the research than hypotheses as strictly defined in quantitative research. They do however still connect the research question with the design of the project.

There were originally two 'qualitative hypotheses' underlying the research question:

a) that inculturation is a double movement of both the "indigenising" principle of incarnation and the "pilgrim" principle of transformation and change.

b) that there is a connection or relationship between the theory, process and content of inculturation and the theory, process and content of adult theological education.

Interestingly, in practice over time a combination of the second qualitative hypothesis, further reading and, finally reflection on the original research question modified the project in the mind of the researcher. The first qualitative hypothesis now combines the double movement in the definition of inculturation along with its outcome as 'rooted novelty' and integration as described in chapter two. Thus by the end the research question was now two-fold and slightly less dramatic or all encompassing:[79]

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[78] In this sense then such a hypothesis is a starting point for the research which, although informed by theory, is not grounded in it.

[79] It was however originally envisaged that a 'dynamic process of improvement' in the practice of education for inculturation rather than a static "model" of it would result.

> Is it possible to develop an educational course that will deliver inculturation as defined in qualitative hypothesis a)? If so what is good (or better) practice in such a course and what 'criteria'[80] could be applied to its practice?

It soon became clear to me that the methodology for the research should in some way *model* the subject area – I quoted Colin Robson that with regard to a research design (2002: 80);

> The research strategy or strategies, and the methods or techniques employed, must be appropriate for the questions you want to answer.

And so the Kolbian learning circle was employed as the methodology. As such its cyclical nature reinforced the sense of journey - so that in moving around the circle in the research new learning would be opened up.[81]

The original research proposal in terms of tactics (Rooms, 2002: 170-171) therefore makes interesting reading from the perspective of the end of the project since, while the methodology did its work, the original plan changed significantly over time.

Initially there were two tracks envisaged for the field research element, one action research track on my own professional practice[82] in delivering a module on theological reflection using the pastoral cycle and secondly a set of three case studies 'in series' looking at different types of adult theological education courses which dealt in some way with faith and culture questions.

The case studies were to use the learning circle idea and move around; theory – planning – experience – reflection. They would work in 'series' with each study providing the stepping off point for the next. This is important; they were not treated in parallel, which would have been possible. Taking the studies in series means that

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[80] Or, as we shall see perhaps more accurately in chapter eight, 'norms and limits' to the pedagogical practice.
[81] I discovered along the way that since my preferred learning style is that of the 'theorist-reflector' it required significant energy to move into the planning and experience stages of the learning circle during the field research, but that nevertheless the whole movement of the cyclical methodology felt fulfilling and rounded.
[82] I am employed as the 'Director of Training' in a U.K. Church of England Diocese to deliver clergy professional development and adult lay training. The research project was conducted part-time over four years around my other work.

although comparisons can be made between them, methodologically they offer data for the research which develops discretely with each one. I had thought too that the courses should come from different theological standpoints, but this became less important as time went on.

The action research was a useful track at the beginning of the study and provided helpful theory and reflection on the nature and use of the pastoral cycle as a teaching tool. However over time it became increasingly clear that the case studies were throwing up much more important material and, given the scope of the project overall it would not be possible to include the action research material. In 2005 in a supervision session it was agreed that it would become more like a 'formative' assignment in the background of other work, but not become part of the thesis. It did however, form a significant input to understanding the use of the pastoral cycle in the second case study (see Chapter 6).

The original proposal for the case studies stated that the first would be on the *Alpha* course and this proved to be so. Three proposals for the second case study were offered and two for the final one (Rooms, 2002: 171).

Overall one of the proposals for the second case study was explored but proved ultimately fruitless (see below) and neither of the final case study ideas were taken up as by this stage the research project had journeyed some distance from its starting point.

Key turns on the Journey – the Case Studies
Staying with the metaphor of journey it is worth describing the key turns or important moments through the case studies.
    a) 2003-4 Case Study 1 – The *Alpha* Course
Each case study was prepared by developing a case study proposal which described the particular aim and methodology for it, including research strategy and tactics.[83] In the case of the *Alpha* Course the key turn came in the design of the case study when

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[83] The next three chapters will describe each of the case studies in turn.

I decided to look at the course being delivered in three different cultural contexts. I was then able to research the claim of the course to 'work' in any context. This proved to be a helpful starting point on the journey of researching adult theological education and culture. The field research was carried out between October 2003 and April 2004.

The case study revealed an interesting dynamic between process and content on the *Alpha* course and the surprise was that the best cultural 'fit' of the three contexts for the course was within a Category 'B' prison. More importantly, as the starting point for the next case study was the conclusion that in *Alpha* there was no feedback from the cultural context to the content of the course (whereas the process was affected significantly by context).

The findings were written up and published in the *Journal of Adult Theological Education* in October 2005 which was an affirmation of the public verifiability of research journey so far. [84]

   b) 2004-5 Case Study 2 – The *Ubuntu* Lent Course
After completing the first case study it seemed clear that the next one would study an e-learning course built around Vincent Donovan's book *Christianity Rediscovered*. This was because Donovan's work amongst the Masai of Tanzania was that of a particular model of inculturation and he was prepared both to engage with an esoteric culture and allow the content of his 'gospel' to be changed by the context through feedback from it. The book has become a kind of Western cultural text for examining the inculturation question.

What was also suggestive here was the idea, which I have personally experienced from many years of working in cross-cultural situations, that culture is formed at its boundary. Therefore if one leaves the boundary one can reflect critically from the outside on one's own culture. In addition cognitive dissonance theory states that if the boundary is far away and esoteric enough to be non-threatening then greater

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[84] As noted in chapter two I also had an article on inculturation published in the Anglican journal *Anvil* in 2005.

openness to learning and change may occur. This is at least one of the reasons why the Masai are so popular and iconic in the Western mind and that Donovan's work is so attractive here.

A case study plan was prepared to research the delivery of this course on the internet, but unfortunately take up was so small as to make a research group unviable. The plan had to be dropped.

A key supervision meeting towards the end of 2004 asked the question what next and whether a church-based Lent course might be coming up that could be studied instead. At this point I realised there was, as I had been working for sometime on a joint Lent course between our UK diocese and partner diocese in Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa. While not being exactly like the previous plan the course was essentially about interaction with the 'other.' A case study could be designed to look at the effects of entering into the other world and culture which was the Kwa-Zulu-Natal Diocese on the course participants.

In addition the course used the pastoral cycle methodology which theoretically allows feedback from context to content because of its cyclical nature. Background reading and experience from the action research track was invaluable here in understanding the process of the course.

A case study proposal was developed and field research took place during Lent 2005 via a course internet discussion forum, observation of some Lents groups and reconvening the groups as focus groups later on through to May 2005.

While not being entirely conclusive this case study offered clues to the third cycle or stage of the research in that engagement with one's own culture seemed to be enabled by engaging with another culture or world – and thus confirming my initial idea and experience. An item of data from the case study showed how one U.K. group had engaged with the issue of young people taking drugs behind their church hall via interaction with "Sipiwe" – a street child in Durban.

In July 2004 I had attended a national Anglican adult educator's conference where I was present at a demonstration seminar of the methodology of the *Education for Ministry* course. I had come across the course before and was aware of its presence in our diocese – it had been championed by a previous incumbent of my post. I had even obtained some of the materials and read up on its methods of theological reflection. However it was in experiencing its method first hand that I came to realise its potential in the research project. I approached the course director straightaway and mentioned that I may be interested in researching the course. I followed this up a year later in 2005 when I had done further reading and research and was planning the third and final case study.

      c) 2005-6 Case Study 3 – The *Education for Ministry* Course

Education for Ministry employs a metaphorical method of theological reflection using the imagination. It asks participants to enter another metaphorical world with their imaginations, compare this to a world developed from the bible or tradition and discover "new insights and meaning for living." In addition it uses four possible sources or starting points for theological reflection one of which is culture itself.

In preparing the case study proposal I read some very helpful works which seemed to confirm qualitative hypothesis b) above that there was a correlation between the theory and process of adult education and that of inculturation. Piaget's ideas of assimilation and accommodation (1980) when applied to education seem in some way to compare to the indigenisation and pilgrim principles in inculturation.[85] Having discovered these ideas at this point I realised they needed to be applied to both the second and third case studies for the conclusions of the whole project, but decided to leave any application until the writing-up phase and the conclusions.

I researched the course and learned some of its methods of TR in early 2006 by observing a current *EFM* group in action. After interviewing participants who had

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[85] I confirmed this by re-reading material from Leslie (2001), Astley (1994) and Johns (1993) while writing chapter three at the end of the project. In a sense I had 'forgotten' Astley's key work on formative and critical education which I needed to be reminded of again.

completed the course, I was able to trial two TR sessions using the starting point of culture in May – June 2006. For this I used an English cultural idiom or saying which anthropologically speaking represents something fundamental about English culture. Fascinating insights emerged from these two groups of *EFM* graduates which demonstrated evidence of both assimilation and accommodation with regard to the idiom and thus to an extent the beginnings of a pedagogy for inculturation.

In addition I used the method when I was asked to facilitate a day for clergy and laity from our Diocese and the Diocese of Natal in South Africa which examined the question of 'discerning God in the other' – a task which is ultimately cross-cultural. Again helpful results were discovered.

Here was both an ending and a new beginning on the research journey and one which I could not have predicted at the start of the project.

Research Ethics

An ethical policy was applied to each case study and drawn from Robson (2002) and, later Birch et. al. (2002). The ethical principles applied to the research were openness and transparency, voluntary participation and strict confidentiality in reporting.

Transparency required a description of the research project, my place in it and the programme I was following for everyone participating. This is contained in the introductory document – I have given an example of the kind of document given to each participant by reproducing those used for the *Alpha* case study in Appendix V.

Since I was always collecting sociological data about the participants as well as recruiting voluntary interviewees or focus group participants it was important to keep re-negotiating consent at the different stages (Miller and Bell, 2002: 53). This is why there are two documents in Appendix V – one the introduction to the researcher and what might happen and then the consent to the actual interview or focus group.

In addition all interviews and focus groups were preceded by a preamble from myself where I explained the purpose of the interview, clarified my role (see also next section), made assurances about anonymity, left open the possibility for the interviewee of clarifying or not answering any questions and sought permission for any tape recording where appropriate.

Access to course groups was always negotiated with the appropriate person again on a voluntary basis. Generally course participants were very open to the research but occasionally there was withdrawal at the interviewing/focus group stage – as in the student group in the first case study as we shall see.

An opportunity was offered to see the final case study report and several participants / group leaders took this up in each case study.

Confidentiality is clearly key to participants being as frank as possible in interview and this was always explained fully and adhered to in the reporting.

Reflexivity – the place and effect of the researcher in the research
Lyn Richards (2005: 190) is clear that in any reporting of qualitative research there should be some discussion of the issue of reflexivity. Reflexivity is best illustrated by its use in grammar where a reflexive verb is one that has an identical subject and object (2005: 42). An initial definition by Richards is that it is the part the researcher plays in the creation of data and requires the need to (2005: 42):

> ... reflect on the baggage you take in [to the research], the biases and interests and areas of ignorance.

However Taylor and White state that actually the definition is not at all clear (2000: 197) and in fact reflexivity is to be distinguished from simple reflection. Rather reflexivity problematizes issues that reflection takes for granted. It is about questioning assumptions and needs to take into account the whole context of the research.

Denzin (1997: 217-224) comprehensively outlines six 'styles' of reflexivity more or less on a continuum (subjectivist, methodological, intertextual, feminist or standpoint, queer and feminist materialist). We are concerned here with primarily the methodological and standpoint styles and the issues they raise.

Schwandt (2001a) outlines the methodological reflexivity required in a research project. Reflexivity deals with 'one's biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences and so forth' as well the place of the researcher in the 'setting, context [and] social phenomenon' being researched (2001a: 224).

Standpoint reflexivity or standpoint epistemology acknowledges that there is no 'pure' and objective place from which to research. More commonly employed in research among the excluded or minorities it allows the deconstruction of dominant ways of knowing (Schwandt, 2001b) with the aim of a liberatory or emancipatory result. More importantly for our purposes standpoint epistemology stresses the partial nature or incompleteness of any knowing (2001b: 239): 'knowing is always an act of living within limits and contradictions.'

Richards offers practical suggestions directly to the researcher on how to report on methodological reflexivity (2005: 190):

> Describe yourself as the researcher, your situation and your cultural and social location and ability to understand the different locations studied, the difficulties and how you dealt with them. Your involvement with the situation and participants studied, and reflection on the influence of this involvement, on them and on your study.

This would seem to be a helpful approach and one that I can now embark upon. There are personal and professional considerations here. I began the research project as an adjunct to my professional life as someone interested in cross-cultural mission and adult education and training in the church. I suspected that the research and my professional work would significantly overlap and this proved to be the case. Personally I am a white, middle-class, English male working 'inside' the church.

The question raised then by these personal and professional considerations is that of the insider/outsider and my ability to negotiate successfully the proper subjectivity and objectivity required for the case studies.

It is worth noting that this was the first qualitative field research I had conducted and the serial case study approach certainly helped since I was able to improve my awareness of the issues with each cycle.

Being an 'insider' was useful in gaining access to research participants in all of the case studies, but it was important from the outset to maintain my 'distance' from both those arranging the practical details of the research for me (*Alpha*, Lent Course and *EFM* group leaders) and the participants themselves. An underlying question I took to the first case study was whether this separation might, indeed be possible.

In the *Alpha* Course study it was therefore initially a surprise that I and the research participants were able to make a clear distinction between my professional role and that of the researcher. Having made my approach in the correct ethical manner I was treated very much as a researcher. The responses I received, particularly in the interviews were not ones I could have reasonably expected if I had been understood by the participants to be still in my ordained role.

There was just one occasion when there was a 'social dislocation' in one of the prison interviews where the language of the questioning had to be modified for a clear understanding. It was also the only context in the case studies in which there were significant numbers of minority ethnic participants.

In a sense the *Ubuntu* Lent Course was more problematical since I had been involved in its creation, writing and editing. It was important to be aware of this during the field research and when data was affected by participants' reactions to the course as a 'diocesan' programme driven by myself in professional role. I reacted to this situation by remaining a silent observer when present at the course sessions and noted the points where comments were made which were related to my presence

there. On reflection this attempt at 'neutrality' by not participating may not have been as successful as I had envisaged. In the focus groups it was easier to explain my role as researcher now examining the course more objectively.

In the third case study the main issue was with my knowledge of four of the interviewees from my professional and ordained role in previous contexts. Others knew of me but this was not so significant. However this only affected significantly one of the interviews and I took this into account when assessing the data (see chapter 7).

I did however feel much freer to engage as a 'participant observer' when present at course sessions for data collection by observation, when previously I had kept silent. This was partly about my own confidence with my role as well as the group's trust in me to share with them. Interestingly in the final *EFM* session that I led myself it felt as if the professional and researcher roles were somehow being synthesised – which was partly the point of the project.

With regard to standpoint epistemology it is important to understand the contextual limits of the research and that is why this chapter is titled <u>A</u> Methodological Narrative of Discovery. The research takes place in early twenty-first century Britain and, although it's starting point is in Tanzania, the journey takes its own course in the chosen context. There is no doubt that a different journey with different conclusions could be reached in other places.

In addition a specific choice was made to limit the research to 'grass-roots' theological education programmes such that academic sophistication at degree level and above was ruled out. Once again then this standpoint limits the reach of the research conclusions.

Writing up the Research
I think it is important to note for the reader the process of writing. Given the part-time nature of the research I found it helpful to write up each case study as it happened.

At the end of all three case studies I was able to secure some study leave for the final collation and writing up phase of the whole project. This consisted of: catching up with some reading of relevant material published since the project had begun; writing the initial literature review chapters two and three of the thesis; presenting the case studies logically in the order they were researched; and developing the introduction and conclusions to the project as a whole.

Thus in the next three chapters the case studies are presented essentially as they were completed, with the level and state of learning that I finished them with in 2004, 2005 and 2006 respectively. This is important as it places key emphasis in the project as a whole on the final chapter which draws together the learning into conclusions and implications for the future.

Reflections on the Methodological Journey

We remarked in chapter three how a cyclical research or educational methodology has been critiqued as an over-simplification of the actual process. On the other hand it offered a useful starting point and formed the basis for the research methodology.

In the field research I attempted three 'cycles' of the learning circle in the case studies. They were each enormously fruitful and the first two did provide stepping-off points for the next as planned. Nevertheless it was not that simple; a full stop was faced in the second cycle before starting again; reading for the third cycle in a sense returned me to the start of the project before a realisation that this affected the outcomes of both the second and third cycles; the inspiration for the third cycle came via an 'accidental' engagement on a conference.

It is also clear that the cyclical method has an in-built forward looking drive and although theory can be recovered from the starting point it is not so clear that action can be. There is an element of choice at various points which precludes other possibilities.

Reading at the end of the project in a 'full-time' phase supplemented helpfully the slow learning that had gone on in the part-time field research phase which incorporated a certain amount of beneficial 'forgetfulness' over the starting point – thus the research question is slightly modified over time. The particularity of the case studies complements helpfully the 'big-picture' thinking that I have done in the reading and writing full-time work – echoing a theme of the study so far.

CHAPTER FIVE: CASE STUDY ONE – THE *ALPHA* COURSE[86]

Overview and Research Question

The *Alpha* course[87] is probably the most popular piece of 'evangelistic adult education' in use in the churches of England, if not worldwide. Originating in charismatic evangelical Anglicanism, it is used across a wide spectrum of churches including the Roman Catholic Church. It does not address directly the issues of inculturation, but does claim to move people from unbelief to an owned Christian faith. As such it incorporates elements of both conscious and unconscious enculturation, formation and acculturation. It is therefore a good place to begin the case studies as a type of 'negative case analysis' (Robson, 2002: 175, 491).

The course explains itself, in its own words as (AI, 2003: 2):

> ... an introduction to the Christian faith which has seen extraordinary success at stimulating faith among those who are not churchgoers and also given a new dynamism to many existing Christians.

It is claimed (2003: 2) that over 25,000 courses have been run worldwide since 1992 with over five million participants.

The course consists of 15 sessions which normally take 12 weeks to complete with a weekend which covers three sessions on the Holy Spirit.[88] The format is a meal for the group, a talk based on specific material,[89] and then an 'open' discussion of the material.

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[86] As noted above a shortened, adapted version of this case study appeared as (2005) 'Nice Process, Shame about the Content': The *Alpha* Course in Three Different Cultural Contexts. *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 2.2 pp. 129-144.

[87] There is an enormous amount of information regarding the course, its content and process available at www.alphacourse.org

[88] The course process and concomitant literature is described and analysed fully by Stephen Brian in his Ph.D. thesis (2003).

[89] The 'Alpha Copyright statement' states that: 'Alpha International accepts that minor adaptations to Alpha International courses may occasionally be desirable. These should only concern the length of the talks or the number of sessions. In each case the essential character of the course must be retained. Alpha is a series of about 15 talks, given over a period of time, including a weekend or day away, with teaching based on all the material in Questions of Life.'

Because the content material is fixed the course fits into a linear model of educational practice which begins in theory and ends in action. This is in contrast to the action/reflection model or the pastoral cycle which are cyclical processes. In terms of inculturation the course, as an 'introduction to the Christian faith', is aiming at formation (enculturation) while expecting that formation to 'convert' from the learner's culture (acculturation). The 'critical' part of the process is embedded within the formational aspect of the course. This is all very traditional and it might be asked; where is the attraction and success of such a course to be found? The answer is in the overt strategy of the course's founder[90] to enculturate the process of the course.

The course is packaged and branded with a corporate image, logo and 'strapline.' Brian (2003: 8) describes the process by which this branding came about through key marketing people in the source church, Holy Trinity, Brompton and quotes Lord Brian Griffiths on *Alpha* as: 'a major international brand in the Christian faith.' It uses group dynamics and the meal to attract and hold participants. To quote Hunt (2001: 38);

> … there is a great deal of implicit sociology and social psychology involved e.g. group dynamics to teach basic Christianity.... in ... a 'safe' environment which bridges church and secular culture.

In addition there is the explicit assumption that the material (a given as described above) appropriately packaged will be able to do its work in any context.[91] In a website article in 2002[92] it was claimed that *Alpha* runs equally well in prisons, amongst students and in urban and rural contexts, for example the following quotes from the article:

> In content, the *Alpha* for students course is no different to *Alpha*, yet it is presented in a way that suits students' lifestyle and culture.

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[90] The Rev'd. Nicky Gumbel.

[91] Unfortunately Brian (2003), in only the second major piece of research undertaken on the *Alpha* course also makes the same assumption (in his abstract): 'the fieldwork for this research took place within just two Anglican Deaneries …. there is no reason to suggest that the results would not be repeated elsewhere.'

[92] www.alphacourse.org/runningacourse/tours/where/default.htm accessed 23/09/02.

In our experience there is absolutely no question that the structure of the course and the content is entirely suited to our neighbourhood which would entirely correctly be described as urban-industrial – Rev Chris Woods – St. Helen's.

My doubts as to whether a course that works in a large urban church would transfer to a small rural situation with a high average age, were completely unfounded – Roy Eames, Herefordshire.

Here we have then a direct connection with the main thrust of the research and thus the *Alpha* course offers the opportunity to explore education for faith in different contexts. *Alpha* is a pedagogical enterprise that claims to be able to 'work' in any cultural milieu. It's educational and missiological methods are bound intimately together in moving from theory to practice and in utilising an unchangeable "content."

The question is then is the *Alpha* course able to deliver on this self-proclaimed objective? There are, it seems two parts to the question as to whether *Alpha* 'works' in different contexts as in the quotes above. The 'working' here is related mostly I suspect, in the minds of the interviewees, to success in terms of conversion – this is the premise on which the course is being offered. Clearly, as noted above *Alpha* has discovered a useful process or methodology which can be applied in different contexts and it would be interesting to investigate any major differences in process when the course is delivered in different places. There also remains the claim that 'the content is entirely suited to our neighbourhood'; but what actually happens to the content (given the linear theoretical basis alongside the enculturated process) when *Alpha* is delivered in different cultural contexts? If the *Alpha* rhetoric is to be believed one would expect similar educational outcomes in terms of understanding, attitude and behaviour wherever the course was set.

Existing Research

There is some existing research on the *Alpha* course which ranges from being peripheral to the case study to quite relevant.

There are critiques of the course from what could be described as the conservative evangelical or anti-charismatic tradition, but these add nothing to the argument developing here.[93]

Ireland (2000) claimed that 21% of people taking *Alpha* courses in Lichfield Diocese became Christian. Unfortunately his methodology is highly questionable as he was only able to question clergy leading the courses at a distance in order to generate these statistics. No follow-up was made of actual course members.[94]

More reliable is Hunt (2001) who, as an academic sociologist, began with sampling at least 20 churches in Berkshire, administered 400 questionnaires and did 40 semi-structured interviews based on the earlier research (2001: 55-57).

The vast majority of the participants on these courses were already Christian and he only found 3-4 % of those enrolled on the course actually converting (2001: 117).

Stephen Brian (2003) has completed the first major educational Ph.D. thesis on the *Alpha* course at the University of Surrey. Brian has a comprehensive and wide-ranging description and analysis of the course and its content and method as well as a full interaction with all the literature mentioned here. His fieldwork is less interesting, in my opinion, as he is testing the marketing 'strapline' of the course which was not necessarily designed to bear the weight of a full Ph.D. research.

There are also significant critiques of the *Alpha* course mainly under the McDonaldisation thesis of George Ritzer (Ward, 1998; Hunt, 2001: 34-35; Percy, 1997).[95] Ireland (2000: 32) in an interview with Gumbel actually elicits a comment specifically endorsing the "McDonalds" approach.

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[93] E.g. see www.banner.org.uk/misc/alpha.html - accessed 25/09/02; *The Alpha Course: Is the Popular Alpha Course Leading People Astray?* By Chris Hand – also other publications referred to on that site.
[94] Brian (2003: 121) agrees with this analysis as a serious lack in Ireland's work.
[95] In the case of Ward, later nuanced by him in response to critiques of the thesis – however the original claim remains relevant here.

This 'one size fits all' approach is justified by Gumbel because of the introductory nature of the course – any lack in its content can be explained away because, through research on the participant's needs (Hunt 2001: 36), it is claimed the course is adjusted to deal with the questions they are asking. This is one of Brian's interests and he finds a somewhat different set of 'questions of life' when asking a "control" group in a community adult education centre (2003: 145).

It is also possible to treat the *Alpha* Course as a popular 'cultural text' (5 million participants) and critique it (and the various critiques of it) using hegemony theory from cultural studies. To quote John Storey (1997: 127):

> Popular culture is no longer a history stopping, imposed culture of political manipulation (the Frankfurt School); nor is it the sign of social decline and decay (the 'culture and civilization' tradition); nor is it something emerging spontaneously from below (some versions of culturalism); nor is it a meaning machine imposing subjectivities on passive subjects (some versions of structuralism). Instead of these and other approaches, hegemony theory allows us to think popular culture [*sic*] as a 'negotiated' mix of intentions and counter intentions; both from 'above' and from 'below' .... a shifting balance of forces between resistance and incorporation.

There is therefore a problem with Brian's research (2003), in that he fails to understand the *Alpha* course as a 'text' of popular culture. While offering a stimulating and penetrating critique of the course and all the associated paraphernalia he falls into a combination of the culture and civilization tradition with aspects of structuralism, in Storey's terms. He fails to look for resistance and 'counter intentions'. For example, he elucidates, quite properly the phenomenon of 'de-Christianization' where attendees discover on the course that whatever their previous faith was it is not now 'real' compared to the *Alpha* version. However he does not search for resistance and 'counter intentions' in these participants and others. On the other hand he calls for further research to be done especially in prisons (2003: 226).

It should be possible then to look for conflict between the 'forces of incorporation and the forces of resistance' (Storey, 1997: 208) and the 'production in use' of the cultural text which is the *Alpha* course.

Methodology

In this case study the Alpha course was researched in three different cultural contexts; the first group was based in a course run at a local Churches Together *Alpha* course in a small suburban/rural town located near a large city; a group of students was investigated in a course based at an evangelical/charismatic church that attracts large numbers of under 35's in the same city and near to its University; the final course was located in a Category B male prison again located just outside of the same city. It is worth remarking that these two latter contexts are researched and described as 'hard places' by Hunt in his later study (2004: 197-219).

The case study focused on the 'production in use' of two particular aspects of the content. Firstly the death of Christ as presented in Sessions 2 and 3. A substitutionary atonement model is used to overcome the 'problem' of sin. This is appropriated by the 'believing and receiving' of the individual convert. No other model is presented although four different Biblical 'images' are offered to illustrate the nature of what has happened at the cross.

Secondly the teaching on the Holy Spirit was examined. This often occurs on the "weekend away" and is interesting because it allows for "experience" to happen (e.g. the experience of speaking in tongues and having other charismatic experiences) which, as such cannot be controlled in the same way as input on the atonement.[96]

The case study consists of
   a) the course material – which of course is a given
   b) existing writing and research about the course
   c) observation of at least three of the group sessions in the 3 different contexts
   d) a questionnaire to elicit sociological data about the participants

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[96] Brian (2003: 63) quotes the *Alpha* material which claims that it 'unites the "mystical" (Holy Spirit) and the "logical" (teaching) modes' … thus 'appealing to enlightenment and New Age' participants.

e) interviews with 15 participants (in total) in these contexts

The detailed research questions in the case study then are:

i) What is the premise for taking the course of the different participants?

ii) Does the process vary or is it adapted in the three contexts?

iii) How does the content [i.e. its two discrete aspects] operate in the different cultural contexts of the participants? Is the content varied to suit the context? What are the outcomes of this teaching in terms of the three domains of learning - knowledge, attitudes/values and action?

iv) Particularly what meaning have the participants recovered from the material as presented?

v) Do the participants contest the learning at any point and/or are they allowed to? (i.e. what 'resistance' in cultural studies terms is taking place)

vi) Are there common points of contact between participants of differing cultural backgrounds?

The Process of Data Collection

a) The Churches Together Group

This group was based around four different denominations in the small town where it was located. For this study it serves as a kind of baseline example or starting point in being as similar as possible to an "average" Alpha group in the terms set by Hunt's study.[97] The participants were connected in some way with three of the local churches and the talks were given by two of the church's ministers. Group leaders were also drawn, as far as I could tell from the same three local churches. The group sampled by questionnaire consisted of fourteen people – 10 females and four males.

The group met in a church café in the evening. A meal was served which was followed, in the standard Alpha format by the talk. I observed session 1 (Who is Jesus?) and session 2 (Why did Jesus die?). I attended the Holy Spirit day which

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[97] See the comparison of sociological data about the participants in appendix II, section 1.

took place at a small rural Methodist church some miles from the town. This was not a residential weekend but an "away-day" with a 'bring-and-share' lunch. There was a further day some time later as many of the group could not attend the first one which I did not observe.

I then interviewed five participants from the group of 14. I made the selection of interviewees based on their answer to the question of their attitude to Christianity before the course began. It was important to have a range of interviewees across the spectrum from "antagonistic" to "insider". Only one of the interviewees had failed to finish the course or complete the Holy Spirit day.

b) The Student group

The group studied here was more problematic, not least because it consisted of young people with many other constraints on their time. The course as a whole was the first to be run by the particular denomination in its new 'warehouse' church and facility in the city. This is a purpose-built church, largely attracting the under 35s. The course started with over 60 participants, the vast majority of whom were under 35. One or two of the leaders were older than this, but not many. The group leaders were mainly in their 20s. The church had a bar which was open as people gathered, a meal was served, the talk delivered and the discussion ensued.

I observed one particular group of the youngest students who were mainly under 21. I attended Session 1 as above and Session 3 (How can I be sure of my faith?). There were nine people in the group who filled in the initial questionnaire. None of this group completed the course or attended the Holy Spirit day.[98] Many gave the reason as pressure of time, although the questionnaires and discussion showed that a number were already committed Christians accompanying their friends to the course. I was able to interview two people (one male, one female) from the group who had not completed the course. *Alpha* has not conducted any research, as far as I am aware on those who have dropped out of the course, but this would be an interesting exercise to follow-up what was discovered with just a few people in this case study.

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[98] *Alpha's* own statistics show a 20-30% drop-out rate overall (Brian, 2003: 105) so this was unusual, but can be explained by the student context, I believe.

I did attend for observation the Holy Spirit day for the course as a whole and administered the questionnaire to another four people from another group. Only one of these (male) was willing to be interviewed. Again this was a day event with lunch which took place at a local theological college.

c) The Prison Group

The Alpha course at the Category B prison consisted initially of 13 men, most of whom were aged between 31 and 40 and all of whom filled in my initial questionnaire. The prison is run by a private company which has targets to meet with regard to adult education courses of which Alpha counts as one of many. In order to be eligible for these courses the prisoners have to be of 'enhanced' status in the prison as opposed to standard or basic status – the criteria for which are behaviourally based. This naturally biases the participants to those who are compliant with the 'good' behaviour expected by the prison authorities – as opposed to having the course open to anyone from any category.

I observed sessions 1 and 2 again as well as the Holy Spirit day which took place on a Sunday with the first talk as part of the weekly service of worship. There was no meal in this case, but prison coffee was served between the talk and the group discussion. The prison chaplain delivered all the talks. Group leaders were drawn from local churches and seemed quite experienced in dealing with the context.

There was a significant group of black and afro-Caribbean participants, which constituted another culture within the group and so I determined to interview three of them as well as five of the white participants. In the end one white participant was sick and so seven interviews in total were conducted.

All the interviews in all three contexts used the same basic set of questions.[99]

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[99] See appendix II, section 2

The Three Cultural Contexts

Before examining each of the contexts in detail it is worth noting the common cultural characteristics of the three groups all of which are located in Britain in the first decade of the twenty-first Century. Consumerism characterises British society at the present[100] such that people find their identity in the things they consume. Concomitant with consumerism is choice as a key value of the culture as well as the importance of the individual as opposed to the community. The consumer is looking for a 'fit' with their individual needs. A result of this is that society is also now 'networked' in a way that is historically novel. Social networks have an importance over and above community and the locality.

Britain is also a multi-cultural society and although this was only evident overtly in the prison context (see below) it nevertheless provides the background for any discussion of religion. A key question articulated by some of the participants was "which religion to choose?"

All of this is very relevant for the *Alpha* course – since it positions itself deliberately, as we have seen, as a consumerist brand in the religious marketplace. Even in the prison it was interesting to note how Christianity and *Alpha* were placed alongside other options in the multi-faith worship centre which had recently taken over from what had been a purely Christian chapel. With 30 different nationalities represented in the prison it becomes a microcosm of the globalised world of today.

There are clear generational cultural differences identifiable between different age groups in British society. Identifiers such as "baby boomers", generation X and Y are used to characterise people born between certain dates.[101] This is important when working with the three contexts chosen. The Churches Together group was much

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[100] For a summary of the background to consumerism see *Mission-Shaped Church* (MPAC, 2004: 9-10). Brian also discusses the consumerist context (2003: 46).

[101] These generational identifiers are usually associated with Neil Howe and William Strauss who have written several books based on experience in the USA on the subject. There is discussion over the exact dates for the different generations and a wide ranging use of the identifiers in the literature, but generally baby boomers were born between 1946 and about 1960 (falling into two cohorts), Generation X from the early 1960s to 1981 and Y from 1981 onwards. See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baby_boomers (accessed 21/08/07).

older, naturally than the student group and this clearly affected some of the process and content as we shall see.

Another important marker in the generations is the assumptions that can be made about knowledge of Christian faith – certainly large numbers of younger people in generation X may have little background knowledge to bring to the course. On the other hand they are more likely to be open to 'spirituality' in its broadest sense but with an eclectic approach to finding, again in a consumerist way, what 'fits for me.'

On the other hand perhaps the largest difference culturally in the three groups was 'class' based. In terms of profession and education (whether of participants or their parents) both the Churches Together group and the students were predominantly middle or lower middle class. The prisoners, on the other hand were almost all working class, and one or two had literacy challenges. These major cultural divides may be significant for the research conclusions.

Brian (2003) in his research describes negatively the 'middle-class' appeal of the *Alpha* course and material and some of the clergy he interviews also put down the course because of this supposed bias. However this case study shows that the course is thoroughly 'adaptable' to working class contexts which demonstrates the truth of a conclusion that Brian himself makes (2003: 46):

> Perhaps Featherstone has underestimated the extent to which organised religion (such as *Alpha*) has been able to adapt itself to the prevailing culture while still being critical of it, thus enabling adherents to have the best of both worlds.

This of course, in rather crude terms, is a description of the inculturation process.

Evaluation of research data[102]
    a) The premise of the course

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[102] The evaluation of the data collected follows largely the tactics of Miles and Hubermann quoted in Robson (2002: 480-481).

It has already been noted that in terms of the leadership of the course – the course is presented as an introduction to and an exploration of the Christian faith with a view to making new converts. However in the three contexts studied this aim was clearly nuanced in different ways. At the Churches Together group there was an understanding that some, indeed many of the participants were already churchgoers and this was confirmed by the questionnaires.[103] The student group was perhaps the most overtly 'evangelistic' course in that it was clear from the observation that Christians were deliberately inviting their non-Christian friends and acquaintances to the course and accompanying them to it. The prison group seemed, after a few weeks to become more of a "discipleship" group for prisoners who had become Christian through the efforts of the chaplain both on and outside of the course.[104]

But what of the participants? The two most common responses when asked why they joined the course were that a) they were invited or asked to attend and b) that they wanted to find out more about Christianity, sometimes through the *Alpha* 'brand' which had attracted them. At this point the participants demonstrate little variation across the different cultural contexts in their reasons for attending the course. The participants therefore show themselves to be very much a part of the prevailing culture, they are enculturated. It is firstly their networks which are used to invite them – this was markedly the case with the Student group. Dean,[105] a teacher just out of college, who was interviewed, had been invited by a colleague from work using her 'network'. Secondly the *Alpha* brand offers a way of choosing to explore Christianity which is at ease with the prevailing culture. We note then the 'premise enculturation' of the course and the *Alpha* brand.

b) The process of the course

As already noted above, Hunt (2001) pointed out the usefulness of the group discussion in allowing participants to process the talk and ask any questions they have. This was tested by questions in the interview and met with universal approval

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[103] In Brian's (2003) research in two Anglican deaneries only 5 of 41 interviewees had not been churchgoers immediately prior to taking the course.

[104] Although the chaplain did note this was unusual in his experience of running several *Alpha* courses.

[105] All names of interviewees have been changed to preserve anonymity.

as a methodology. Some said it was difficult to participate at first because of fear of not asking the 'right' questions, but generally participants felt able to ask anything. In my own observations it was clear that there was a great variety of skill level in the group facilitators, some of whom were keen to close down discussions when they became difficult or strayed from 'true' understandings or dealt with unexplainable mysteries such as the incarnation and/or the Trinity.[106] It was also clear that some of those who were able to interact with Christians outside of the course such as Dean with his teacher colleague or the prisoners with the chaplain gained much more from the course – this is to be expected as it amounts to 1:1 mentoring – a common 'good' practice in adult education.

The usefulness of this approach is confirmed by an observation and an interview which highlighted the one time I noticed this 'openness' being actively undermined. In the Student group the second talk was given by Gary, who introduced himself as a 63 year old grandfather.[107] While noting in his talk that there may be people present who were committed, uncommitted or in between he then contradicted himself by saying that there were only two positions to take and that "there is no position on the fence" – in fact his hope was that everyone would be committed to Christ by the end of the course.

Several weeks later this episode was related back to me in interview by Susan (who had dropped out of the course) who clearly had been upset by it – since it went against everything which she had understood about the course, set up as an

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[106] There is an issue of training here which is beyond the scope of this case study. However Brian (2003) discusses this in some depth in relation the *Alpha* training materials (in particular the book *Telling Others* published by *Alpha)* and even a training session which he attended. It seems to be somewhat unclear regarding the open-endedness of the groups. Brian states that (2003: 105) 'the purpose of the groups is to give some people a chance to air their feelings, but there is little help available for people with genuine questions.' My own conversation with experienced *Alpha* leaders and Brian's own discussion with Nicky Gumbel (reported in Chapter 8) would suggest the discussion should be allowed to range as widely as possible - however 'heretical' it may become. The point is though that in the end 'nothing raised in the groups has any influence on the content of the course which moves relentlessly in a particular direction and to a particular conclusion' (2003: 111). However Brian (2003: 78-82) also notes that the book *Telling Others* accepts open-endedness in discussions while bringing the conversation around to 'the right conclusion' and that group leaders have a right to persuade, but not to pressurise so that there should be no "don't knows."

[107] He was by far the oldest person actively involved in this group.

exploration of the Christian faith – actually was there then a hidden agenda to get everyone converted?

Several students both in the group work and discussion objected to circular arguments using the Bible, essentially, to back up itself up. These objections were not very well dealt with and often appeal would then be made to experience in order to 'prove' the point. In contrast, but pointing out the same issue, several prisoners in interview used the phrase 'I've been told that …' when asked to explain some point in the course. We have noted the 'theory to practice' linear nature of the course and this evidence confirms it – it is essentially didactic 'teaching.'

Another interesting comparison was between the three processes used on the Holy Spirit day to introduce the key element of 'ministry' time where individuals are prayed over to receive the Holy Spirit and manifest this in some way. The Churches Together group did this by what could be called 'negotiated invitation.' People could leave the room for tea, stay and pray on their own or come forward one by one to be prayed with by one of two leaders.

The Student group process could be described as 'tacit agreement and empathy.' Everyone stood up to sing a song, those who desired prayer remained standing and yet the option of leaving the room was not given. No-one objected to this hence the tacit agreement. Eventually even those sitting down were visited by the leaders and asked if they wanted prayer – in addition participants prayed with each other in an atmosphere of empathy and support.

The prisoners were simply told what to do and obeyed. They were asked to come forward and kneel in a row and were then prayed with and anointed in turn. No permission was asked for any of this.

This process neatly illustrates the cultural differences in the three groups. In the first group permission to leave is essential since the idea of spiritual experience may be deeply threatening to some. This is not the case with students who are at ease with

the spiritual. The prisoners are used to being ordered around in an authoritarian regime and the 'ministry time' is definitely done to them. Interestingly in interview only one of the prisoners had experienced any of the expected manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

Here then alongside the premise enculturation noted above is also a 'process enculturation' which is used consciously and unconsciously by the leaders of the course.

   c) The content of the course.

The course content is a given while being adaptable to different circumstances as noted above. The three different contexts dealt with this issue in different ways. All of them referred to the *Alpha* manual at various points which contains summaries of the material. At Churches Together different speakers were used to vary the tone and summaries were made on a Powerpoint presentation, but overall this group remained the most faithful to the original talks.

In the Student group the various speakers tended to shorten the talks as much as possible which left them rather 'breathless' and somewhat confusing – 17 minutes was the shortest I noted from a standard 40-45 on the original videos.

The prison talks were always delivered by the chaplain and I felt he did an excellent job of adapting the material to the context. Many of the illustrations were taken from the context e.g. in describing how Jesus becomes an advocate he was likened to having a "bloody good lawyer." Of course this remained an adaptation – the essential message of substitutionary atonement and filling with the Holy Spirit remained the same.

What was more disturbing was the number of assumptions that the course and the speakers delivering it made about prior knowledge of Christianity and the "sub-culture" associated with it. Bible stories would be introduced with the words "You will have / might have heard of the story of ……"; Bible passages would be introduced by

chapter and verse without any relation to their context; Christian authors such as C.S. Lewis were referred to and it was assumed that the participants would know who they were – in one case in discussion in the Student group Lewis was confused with Lewis Carroll – a user of hallucinatory drugs!

In addition the research showed that the vast majority of people joining the course were in some sense either in the church or de-churched[108] - this was even surprisingly the case in prison where a number of the prisoners had been attending church 'inside' for a number of years.[109] Having observed the sessions as I did, I have concluded that it would be very difficult to access the course with no background understanding of Christianity. A discussion prior to one of the Student group sessions with Lee (who was one of the few interviewees who had joined with almost no contact with Church throughout his life) highlighted this issue. He had struggled with the session on the atonement to the point where it made him angry, having not been able to understand the theological concept and this was confirmed in the interview:

> ... I just came actually away from that particular session feeling really angry because I didn't like the fact that they were saying that in heaven all sins are equal. I just could not bring myself to even believe that for a second. I couldn't understand how they were saying that someone who goes and murders 7 or 8 people is on the same level as someone who steals a loaf of bread. That was the feeling I was getting. In my mind, I just couldn't take it in really at all. That one was really, really awful for me, I didn't like it. It's really weird but ... but I couldn't take that in in the slightest.

This leads to the next and major issue over content and it is that of the approach of the course to sin. The *Alpha* course presents substitutionary atonement as the reason that Christ was crucified which requires that human beings be described as sinners in order that Christ may overcome the problem of sin. The two questions on sin elicited some of the most interesting responses amongst the 'middle class' groups

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[108] To use phraseology of George Lings – a church growth researcher for the Church Army. The de-churched have had some previous contact in their lives with church. The un-churched have never had any contact with Christianity. This typology is used in the book *Mission-Shaped Church* (MPAC, 2004).

[109] This conclusion aligns the research with the other major research works conducted on the Alpha course by Hunt and Brian quoted above.

of Churches Together and Students. At least half of the interviewees had some problem with the way sin was presented either for humanity as a whole or for themselves as individuals. This was not restricted either to those who dropped out of the course – two were regular church-goers. Only Dean, the teacher was unequivocal about his own sin while understanding sin on a scale:

> Well I know for a fact that I was doing things that I shouldn't have been doing for a long time. And not really bad things but not ...things that weren't helping me or anyone else really, so in that sense yes. I know that sin is in our eyes, it's on a different scale to what other people do, but I think, in general, yes, heathens are sinners, yes.

One married woman in her late thirties from the Churches Together group, Sylvia, while clear about her own 'sinfulness' was left confused when thinking about humanity as a whole:

> It's difficult to get a handle on the fact that there was all these different levels, well as far as God was concerned, what I gathered from the course was that you sin or you didn't sin. If you sinned, you were a sinner so and as we got to discuss with *n.* [group leader] and people, is shouting at your kids as bad as murdering your next door neighbour?, you know all are classified as sins and its working round that one to sort of, yes we're are all sinners and yes I do feel we all need to repent, it was a bit of a confusing one really and the more I talk about it I wrap myself in knots a bit but I, so, yes I suppose basically we are cause I don't think anybody is perfect.

One of the most suggestive interviewees was Mary who had attended the course at the Churches Together group after four years of churchgoing. She is somewhat convinced about her personal sin as shown in the following exchange:

> Erm, I think yeah I think I do because ... I don't know, I sin myself and I think everybody does particularly when you kind of define what sin is ... erm ... and that you don't have to be a murderer to be a sinner and I think that came across quite strongly that you know that even quite minor things can be a sin ... and that ... that all sins are equal. That was one thing that struck me.

So do you think your view just changed about yourself ......Would you say that was something you had thought about yourself before the course?

I think I'd thought it before ... apart from ... but this sounds awful doesn't it? It sounds like you've got no self-esteem, but no it's not something that struck me as "oh my goodness I'm a sinner."

But the 'theory' as presented in the course clearly does not fit with Mary's own experience as she intimated there. At the end of the interview when asked what, if any, changes the course had brought about for her she replied:

Erm [silence] No I don't think so. I think one of things that I discussed with *n.* [her Vicar] three or four years ago when he came to talk about baptism was the difference between a humanist and a Christian then and I was saying that I don't, not that I don't see the point, but what is the difference between somebody that calls themselves a Christian and leads a good life and somebody that just leads a good life anyway erm ... so erm, I see myself as somebody that ... that in all the way through has tried to ... I don't know what you'd really call it ... be kind to other people and all the rest of the sort of Christian values, I feel like I've tried to live like that anyway. So really the difference I think since I've been on the course has been that I feel I haven't particularly done anything different but I do feel closer to God than I did before I started the course.

And our conversation about being a sinner before has that had any relevance to that or not?

Are there any sins that I don't do now that I did before [slightly nervous laughter]. ... erm I don't know, well actually ...

Another lady, Liz, in her 50's had just returned to church after a period away and was adamant amount not being a sinner herself, again the 'theory' just did not seem to fit:

No, I've never have done actually. ... This is why we, I have, I can't, I've always thought that ... and I still do to a certain extent that if you are a good person and I've always thought that, I mean there's lots of good people in the world who don't have a faith of any description, and I suppose they could call themselves humanists, who lead a good life and who are kind and never hurt anyone, I would find it very difficult to call them sinners, now I know they say in the Bible that you have to be born again to not be a sinner, and I've always found that hard to agree with, well I'm sort of getting to understand, because it is not quite as cut and dried as it is presented, is it really, I don't think.

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Right, what about you personally? Would you consider yourself to be a sinner?

No, No I wouldn't.

Right, ok. can you say any reasons why you think that?
Erm … Well ... I think … I've always spoken to God, I've always had a conversation with him. I used to pray all the time, I never, erm ... I used to pray probably three or four times a day and not be aware of it, and this you know from when I was very, very young, and no, I just don't think, I don't think I've ever thought of myself as a sinner.

In complete contrast the prisoners were *unanimous* that all adult human beings were sinners and they themselves were in no way exempted. One example sums up their attitude:

Yeah, Yeah, I'm a prisoner so I couldn't be leading a straight and narrow path.

At this point then there is a major divergence in the way the course content is received in the different contexts. In the prison the presentation of human beings as sinners makes a perfect 'fit' with the context, but outside in a middle class setting, there are major difficulties and resistance in a significant number of people with the theory.

Finally in this discussion of content we can move onto the teaching on the Holy Spirit. There were two things of note here. One was the way that in every case there was an eagerness to finish the teaching sessions and/or cut them short in order to get to the 'ministry' time when it was expected that the Holy Spirit would manifest in and on the participants. Secondly and allied to this was the unconscious attribution of the impersonal pronoun 'it' to the Holy Spirit in both the Churches Together and more markedly in the Student group. The prison chaplain was at pains to refer to 'Holy Spirit' and not 'The Holy Spirit.'[110] No doubt if challenged whether the Holy Spirit was an 'it' or a person the leaders of the Student group would have answered the latter, but it was clear they were unaware of what they were saying. My conclusion was that

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[110] As we would refer, for example, to Tony Blair when wanting to refer to the person and not the role – which would require "The Prime Minister".

it was the *experience* of the Holy Spirit that was driving their speech. Experience is of course is an 'it.' It seemed then spiritual experience was prior for the Student group which would fit with their context as noted above.

The issues described above show the problems of having a 'fixed' content which is applied in all contexts. The content makes huge assumptions in the first place since the starting point is a theoretical given. Adaptation is possible and allowed,[111] but the 'fit' of the content is better in some cultural contexts than others and in this case study the best fit, most surprisingly turned out to be in the prison.[112] When the content does not fit the context there is both resistance to it (as with Lee, Mary and Liz above) and an unconscious modification of it driven by the culture of context – in the use of 'it' to describe the Holy Spirit.

d) The outcomes of the course

i) Knowledge and understanding

Virtually universally among the interviewees was the reporting of increased knowledge and understanding of Christianity. Even for those who did not complete the course, *Alpha* had given them a way to know more about Christianity and therefore to understand believing partners or know the reasons why they weren't Christian. It is important to note however that this knowledge is based on the *Alpha* version of Christianity which is not universally agreed in the Church and it is possible to envisage those, like Lee writing off Christianity as a whole because of their interaction with the *Alpha* version. As noted above, Brian (2003) also discusses the phenomenon of 'de-Christianization' which he notes in some participants who come with unformed and perhaps nominal Christian faith which is then denied by the *Alpha* version. These participants give up whatever practice of the faith they had as, although they cannot accept fully all that *Alpha* asks of them, still they have come to believe the faith they had was inauthentic.

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[111] This is Bevans' (2002) first model of contextual theology and his critique of it can be found on pages 42-44.
[112] On reflection a didactic, theory-to-practice course with a given content will almost inevitably be delivered in an authoritarian manner which means that the prison context is a natural fit.

ii) Conversions[113]

Virtually any of the prisoners and the young teacher, Dean could describe the almost 'classic' *Alpha* conversion story as written up regularly in *Alpha News.*[114] Dean had been worried that to become a Christian he would have to "stop being the person I am" but later realised this was not the case, he said:

> No, I'm the same person, but I'm just better at it.

Several had had major experiences of God through the action of the Holy Spirit, not necessarily on the Holy Spirit day itself. At least one partial healing had occurred to Richard, an older participant who described the experience of being 'filled with Holy Spirit':

> Yes, I think I would. At that particular time I wouldn't say it frightened me but I was a bit dumbstruck, I didn't know what had happened to me, I went in the pub and had a pint of cider and relaxed, thought about it and I felt at ease and relaxed and the next morning, as I say, I seemed to be walking like a young man rather than an old man. I'm seventy now.

Liz had a similar experience on the day itself, and described the same emotional exhaustion afterwards:

> ... we were all praying and I just felt like this tingling, it came from the bottom of my toes right up through my body and heart, I got hot, my heart felt like it was going to pound, explode from my chest and er ... it was incredible, I just felt you know and I cried, I just cried, I mean no one fell over and there was no talking in tongues or anything, but yeah it was lovely, really lovely...
> … you know what I found really amazing was I just felt totally exhausted after it, you know, I had the headache from, oh awful, I mean really wiped me, I just couldn't get rid of it I had to go to bed, such a bad headache...

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[113] Brian (2003: 66) allows that *Alpha* conversions are genuinely transformational, following Mezirow's definition of this in educational terms, but questions whether there is a concomitant 'empowered sense of self.' I believe there was evidence for this in the prison context in this case study – see the section on attitudes and values.

[114] Brian delineates eight distinct stages in the classic *Alpha* conversion story as described in *Alpha News* (2003: 58-59).

iii) Attitudes and values

Here it was the prisoners who, once they understood the question reported the most changes. Five out of the seven reported that money no longer played the driving role in their lives that it once had – especially since for many of them it was the reason they felt they were in prison in the first place. One had taken up education with a new vigour and several were giving forgiveness and relationships a much higher priority in their lives. Junior sums this up thus:

> About my personal life – I used to see living without a purpose, living for the day to day. Now it's different, I am imagining myself now going to church with my family, children, bringing them up together, praying each time before meals, bedtime. I just can't wait to be out there.

Of course Junior's words here and those of other prisoners were in their imagination as to what would happen when they left the bounded nature of prison life, but some had noticed a difference in even the way they queued for dinner.

iv) Action

Several people in each context reported increased use of the Bible and prayer. Dean described stopping drinking alcohol and having promiscuous sexual relationships.

Amongst the prisoners one had come off anti-depressants, one was determined to get married on release and not have sexual relations before then. Several were trying not to swear and/or give up smoking and gambling.

What the above shows is that learning has taken place on the course – and this across the multiple cultures represented. *Alpha* is able to impart knowledge and understanding (of its particular brand) of Christianity – this is to be expected from a course working on a 'theory to practice' methodology. More learning, in my opinion took place in the prison context if the outcomes are compared, but perhaps this is to do with the starting point of the prisoners and the 1:1 and group mentoring they were receiving from the chaplain outside of the course.

e) The meaning and contestability of the course

Clearly as we have noted already participants were able to hold their own views despite the 'theory' presented by the course. We have seen how both Liz and Mary were able to retain views contrary to the *Alpha* 'truth' well after the course had ended. This is not to say that if pushed they could not repeat some of the *Alpha* teaching using the same language. In the prison, when the prisoners were asked what they thought the death of Jesus was about for them, they tended to repeat the jargon of the course.

What was more interesting was the level of the theological discussion in some of the post-talk discussion groups and this did not depend on the educational level of the participants. For instance, in one of the prison groups the conversation turned to what was happening in God when Jesus was crucified, as the Son was supposedly 'cut off' from the Father as result of human sin. One prisoner suggests that 'God was just testing him – it was his duty and his fate,' and a little later someone points out that 'God still knows he wasn't a sinner' which is of course a major issue with this theory of the atonement.

It is clear to me, as a principle of adult theological education, that anyone is able to do theology at the level of 'God-talk'[115] and at their best the *Alpha* discussion groups allowed this God-talk to go on. What is clearly lacking in the course is any feedback loop from the discussion of God and Jesus to the content of the course and/or theology. This is where the enculturation process which is so evident in the premise and process of the course breaks down.[116]

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[115] Jeff Astley (2002) has written of 'Ordinary Theology' which is not taken seriously enough by those with supposed theological power and authority.
[116] An interesting attempt at 'reappropriating' the tradition of the atonement in the 'sinless' context encountered in this case study is Alan Mann (2005), *Atonement for a 'Sinless' Society: Engaging with an Emerging Culture*, Bletchley, Milton Keynes: Paternoster.

Conclusions

The *Alpha* course is 'successful' because it is enculturated at the premise and process levels and in allowing the content to be adapted. Learning occurs in all three domains in some participants and in the knowledge and understanding domain in all participants. For those experiencing conversion there is some acculturation going on such that their values, attitudes and actions exhibit change.

There are therefore lessons to be learnt from the *Alpha* course for best practice in pedagogy for inculturation. These lessons would revolve around premise and process enculturation.

However, the assumption that the course 'works' in any context is questioned by the case study evaluation above. The outcomes are different in different contexts and there is significant resistance to the content of the course in two of the three research contexts. The question that *Alpha* begs is how to engage fully with different cultures and contexts in an educational course. Adaptation of content may be helpful as far as it goes, but the content clearly is not neutral in cultural terms. If adaptation, while helpful, is not sufficient for inculturation perhaps engaging with an esoteric culture educationally would enable participants to question their own assumptions – this will be the subject of the second case study of this research in chapter 6.

Secondly the question of feedback arises where content is contested in different contexts. The weakness of the 'theory to practice' methodology is such that there is little room for reflection and re-conceptualisation of the theoretical content of the course. This is not the case in the Kolbian learning cycle and it seems clear that using a cyclical educational methodology may prove more fruitful for delivering inculturation. Again this will be the subject of the research in case study two which utilises the pastoral cycle.

CHAPTER SIX: CASE STUDY TWO – THE *UBUNTU* LENT COURSE

Introduction

In the previous chapter the first case study described a particular examination of the *Alpha* course. The question that was left at the end of that research cycle was how to engage fully with different cultures and contexts in an educational course. Adaptation (the preferred method in *Alpha* for delivering propositional content in different contexts), while helpful, was not found to be sufficient. Perhaps engaging with an esoteric culture educationally would enable participants to question their own assumptions and, therefore, the content of their faith. This is the subject of this second case study of the overall research.

Secondly the question of feedback arose in *Alpha* where the content was contested in different contexts. The weakness of the 'theory to practice' methodology used in *Alpha* was such that there is little room for reflection and re-conceptualisation of the theoretical content of the course. This is not the case in the Kolbian learning cycle and it seemed that using a cyclical educational methodology may prove more fruitful for delivering inculturation.

Outline and Description of the *Ubuntu* Course

The course which forms the basis of this second case study is called *Ubuntu: We are Better Together*. It has the subtitle; *A Lent Course for Christians in Natal and Southwell Dioceses to Reflect Biblically on Common Local Problems*.

The Anglican Dioceses of Natal and Southwell entered into a formal Companionship Link in 2002[117] and several exchange visits have taken place since then. The Diocese of Southwell[118] in England covers approximately the area of Nottinghamshire and Natal the Province of Kwa Zulu-Natal in South Africa.

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[117] Companion Links are overseen by the "Partnership for World Mission" (PWM) arm of the Anglican Communion – for more information go to http://www.pwm-web.org.uk/guidelines (accessed 22/12/04).
[118] The Diocese has since been renamed the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham.

The Lent Course originated from a conversation between the Bishops of the two Dioceses who saw it as an opportunity to increase awareness and understanding between people in both places which would draw them closer together in the companionship link.

The material for the course was planned in 2003 at a meeting of interested parties from the Southwell Partnership for World Mission (PWM) group, the Southwell Diocesan Director of Training (myself) and the link officer from Natal Diocese (a white clergyman). It was then revised and edited ready to be used in Lent 2005.

Premise – as noted above the course was commissioned as a way of building awareness between the two Dioceses. The course writers developed this in a particular direction as we shall see. There was some evidence from the field research observations that there were different reasons for doing the course amongst the groups. Some repeatedly participated in a Lent Course each year and this one simply was the course 'chosen' for 2005. This is a somewhat consumerist approach and resistance was noted when the material did not necessarily relate to the traditional themes of Lent. Other groups either formed especially for this course or were gathered from other existing groups with the aim of interacting with the link Diocese.

Process - a simplified version of the pastoral cycle was used as the methodology for the course since this was declared by the link officer to be familiar to many in the churches of South Africa who have used liberation theology methodologies for some years.[119]

The four-step process of the course is written in the introduction to the course booklet:

1. **Looking at life**

   Here we listen to stories of people and read about the situation

2. **Asking why are we in this situation**

   We now examine the situation for the underlying reasons causing it

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[119] e.g. see the 'seven step method' of the Lumko Institute - http://www.c-b-f.org (accessed 22/12/04).

3. **Bible study**

   We use the Bible to reflect on the situation and hear God's Word speaking to us about it.

4. **The Way Forward**

   We make plans for things that we can all do that will make a difference.

   We also ask is there anything we want to say to our brothers and sisters in the Link Diocese about what we have heard from them.

Content

Originally six (later reduced to five) common local problems were defined and it was agreed to produce stories and background information from both Dioceses to include in the material for group work. A course booklet was written over eighteen months which contained an introduction and the material for five two-hour group work sessions which are as follows:

Introduction and Fair Trade (including globalisation)
Sickness and Health
Wealth and Poverty
Generational Relationships
Crime, Violence and Justice

Using the process methodology for each week, under 'Looking at Life,' stories were generated in each Diocese reflecting the local situation with the purpose of personalising the issue under discussion with "real" examples. Material was then added to facilitate analysis of the issues so moving to 'Asking why we are this situation.' This varied in length and complexity and clearly is only a somewhat superficial treatment. What is important is that this material is offered for discussion – it is not 'fixed' or the given 'answer' to the issue. The introduction of the biblical material under 'Bible study' is sometimes a given, sometimes generated within the group. Each session was prepared by a different writer and they all chose passages which they understood as providing connectivity and creativity with the issue at stake.

The final stage has the distinct purpose of engaging the participants in planning for action arising from their study.

In order to facilitate inter-diocesan (and intra-diocesan) discussion while the course was running an internet forum was developed to receive the comments, questions and proposed actions from the groups after each session.

An issue in the planning of the Case Study

For the purposes of the research it would have been helpful if both Dioceses participating in the course could have been researched. An attempt was made to find suitable research assistants in Natal without success. However this was not such a significant blow as it might have at first seemed.

Since we are following on from the *Alpha* course case study the main question here is the interaction of the (UK) participants with another culture. What happens to them when they must engage with the 'other' culturally?

In dealing with a relationship between a UK Diocese and a South African Diocese it is worth noting that at points the two cultures may be significantly similar e.g. in the cities of Nottingham and Durban. For instance in the session on wealth and poverty an attempt was made to reverse the stereotypes of rich and poor in the West and Africa. Stories are presented of a poor English male looking for a grant for a cooker in an Advice centre in Nottingham because his family cannot eat and a middle-class South African male losing his job and not finding another because of 'affirmative action' to redress the workplace racial balance.[120] However there are clearly significant differences between the two dioceses and within Natal itself between the urban and rural cultural contexts.

What is suggestive for this research is where the UK participants come up against the cultural 'other' – whether down the road in Nottingham or 'over there' in South Africa.

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[120] See appendix III, section 1 which reproduces the course stories from week 3 of 'Jim' in Nottingham and 'Shane' in Durban.

It can be noted however that when the culture of the 'other' is similar or not that much different from the assumed 'home' culture it is much harder to recognise the differences. This was the case for a missionary teacher, Judith Lingenfelter (2003: 14-15) who only realised why she had not been able to make the transition from a middle-class school in the United States to a more working class context when she went to try and teach in an esoteric culture for her, as an American in the Philippines. Another example of the same phenomenon is Fr. Damian, an Anglo-Catholic priest in the Church of England who was able to do radical mission, such as celebrating Mass in the concourse of his local *Asda* supermarket on a Sunday morning after a cross-cultural theological training placement in Papua New Guinea.[121] A plausible conjecture as to why this phenomenon occurs is that the cultural assumptions of the person are questioned more radically in the esoteric context, thus allowing objectivity about the (normally hidden) cultural differences at home – culture is formed at its boundary. It might be possible therefore to think of the relational distance between one person and their cultural 'other' in terms of 'cultural dissonance.'

This idea of cultural dissonance requires researching in this case study. Festinger (1957) first delineated the psychological theory of cognitive dissonance when studying, amongst other things how people used advertising to reduce the discomfort they felt after making a major purchase such as a motor vehicle (1957: 48-54).

He proposed two main theses (1957: 3):

> 1. The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance.
> 2. When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase dissonance.

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[121] For a full account of his experience see George Lings, *Encounters on the Edge,* No. 16.

John Hull (1985: 91-111) discusses the theory in the context of cognitive psychology and allies it to what he considers the more important field of personal construct theory following George Kelly.[122]

Of course cognitive dissonance can be used to good effect in designing learning situations since the discomfort or dissonance, if focused on in a conscious way, can be used for learning. However Hull notes (1985: 99) that the magnitude of the dissonance should not be too great otherwise the learner may simply not engage:

> If the conflict takes a fairly moderate form, in which it is perceived to be a challenge, the cognitive dissonance may stimulate new discoveries and may inaugurate a realignment of the whole system in a more realistic and coherent way.

This may be the reason paradoxically why interaction with an esoteric culture (high cultural dissonance) is helpful since the expectation of the learner (assuming they are initially open to dealing with something like an esoteric culture) is that it will be entirely different and the resultant threat is therefore of lesser magnitude. This position is confirmed by Hull in his discussion of Kelly's construct theory and in particular when he asks how new religious constructs can be introduced to learners (1985: 110). Again he argues that a person's constructs can be challenged in a learning situation, but only by 'not threatening disassociation [in a person's constructs] by too intimate an association … it would be a mistake to introduce a new construct which was perceived as being related to existing constructs' because 'when the danger of being wrong is great the system will close up.' Hull then suggests (1985: 111):

> It is often better to present an idea which is entirely foreign. It is better to take an idea from a remote belief system, to begin with something which offers no threat because it is not related to the existing system.

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[122] Constructs belong uniquely to an individual and are defined as 'an anticipation, based on our experience and continually modified in the light of more experience, which is intended to offer predictions about the way things will be.' (Hull, 1985: 102)

For the purposes of this case study the research focuses on the occasions when the difference, or potential differences, in cultures either in the material or between the participants is greatest. An important question will be whether the interaction of the UK participants with the 'other' in Natal (or elsewhere in an 'other' UK context) will help them to engage with cultural differences in their own context as noted above in Lingenfelter and Fr. Damien. If this is the focus of the research questions in the case study there is no absolute requirement for the research to take place in the opposite direction.

I discerned that the differences between the two contexts are starkest in weeks 3, 4 & 5 of the course content and I concentrated on these in the data collection by observation.

Another point of note here is that when looking at the pastoral cycle as it is used in the material it is the biblical reflection step which provides the link to 'gospel' or in Kolbian terms, 'abstract conceptualisation.' There is a sense in which this is partly chosen and therefore a 'given' because of the writer's decision – but the use of the passage to discover whatever 'gospel' is available in the midst of the common problem is what the course requires.

The Case Study

The case study data consists of

  f) the course material – which of course is a given
  g) observation of some of selected group sessions in weeks 2, 3 & 4
  h) monitoring and collecting of material generated on the internet forum
  i) focus groups after the course in the selected locations

The research questions in the case study, which fall into three main areas, were:

1. Interaction with the 'other'

How do UK participants deal with the interaction with another culture (whether local or in Natal)

What reactions do they exhibit when asked to engage in this way?

What resistance is there to dealing with the 'other' – what strategies and tactics do participants use?

2. Use of the Bible

How is the Bible used to inform the discussion? What 'gospel' is derived from interaction with the given content of the Bible in relation to each common problem? How is this negotiated? Is it expected to be open or closed?

3. Level of outcome

What level of outcome do the participants exhibit? – i.e. what action do they require of themselves at the end of each session and how challenging are these actions?

These three areas need further definition at this point. What are the possible or expected responses of the participants in the three areas?

1. Interaction with the 'other'

In this area there is perhaps a difference between the 'ontological' understanding of the 'other' in relation to the subject and the attitude that is displayed between subject and the 'other.' I have developed these categories without reference to a particular theory and they will therefore need to be tested against the real data.[123]

Ontologically we could propose four categories:[124]

   a) the same as us
   b) the same but different
   c) different but with some similarities
   d) different – wholly unconnected

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[123] This process of categorisation (or coding) in qualitative research can either be theoretically informed (as in the case of 2 & 3 below) or experientially developed and then tested in practice (Richards, 2005: 29) as in this case. Personal experience of crossing cultures, culture shock and dealing with the 'other' suggests that there are issues of 'being' or identity and thus ontology at stake and that the affective or attitudinal level in a person is also part of this 'being' and related to their subsequent action as the psychological driver of receptivity or otherwise.

[124] Here I am suggesting a coded continuum between an understanding of the 'other' as sharing the same humanity (rather as Shylock pleads in *The Merchant of Venice:* "Hath not a Jew eyes…" etc) and at the other end one which sees the other as wholly different, possibly not even human, as in, for example a strong racist position.

Attitudinally the following may be displayed:[125]

    a) threat – the 'other' therefore needs to be kept at a distance

    b) esoteric and therefore (possibly) interesting

    c) neutral - nothing much to say to us

    d) related – and therefore able to speak to us

    e) friendly – we can learn from them

    2. Use of the Bible

Here we can use the theoretical categories of Roger Walton which he describes in an article (2003) based on his Ed.D. research (2002). He examined three institutions offering theological reflection and found 'seven distinct types or ways in which students used the Bible and the Christian tradition' (2002: 136) as below with an explanation of each. The categories are in a loose hierarchy of increasing sophistication. It is worth noting that he was working with theological students at Higher Education levels somewhat above a Lent Course so we would not expect many of the later categories to be present in the *Ubuntu* course.

    a) links and associations

        Here simple connections are made between a situation or
        experience today and the text e.g. "this is like when Jesus…"

    b) prooftexting

        An action or position is justified by simply quoting a biblical text which is
        then deemed as settling the matter.

    c) resonance and analogy

        Rather than simple connections here there are extended connections
        between experience and the text which are placed alongside each
        other for comparison purposes.

    d) exploring a theological theme

        A biblical or theological theme is employed as a 'lens' to view the
        experience e.g. incarnation.

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[125] The 'ontological' categories translate naturally into attitudinal coding as here. Racist understanding will offer a significant threat level from the 'other' through what we might call a 'fascination' onto what kind of 'voice' the 'other' has for us and what we might do with that voice should it be heard.

e) an extrapolated question to take to the tradition

> In a reversal of d) a major question or issue of practice today is discussed in the light of the text e.g. the meaning of community today - what does the Bible say about it?

f) one-way critique

> The Bible critiques a pastoral or ministerial practice, but only in one direction.

g) mutual critique

> The Bible/tradition and the experience/practice are placed in dialogue. The possibility of questioning the Bible is allowed.

3. Level of Outcome

Again there may be two categories expected within the outcomes exhibited from examining what plans for action are made from stage four of the pastoral cycle as it is described in the material – first the focus or arena of the action and secondly the level of the action in relation to previous experience. These categories are a development from some used by Kennedy (1987: 245-247) in a summary of expected outcomes of eight programmes engaging the non-poor with issues of poverty.

Focus of the action

a) political

> Here there will be some intervention in the political arena e.g. write to an MP.

b) lifestyle

> The individual or community's way of life will be affected e.g. changing personal shopping habits.

c) symbolic action

> Here the action has a higher or deeper meaning than the actual action taken e.g. giving up a luxury for a period.

d) intervention in the community

> Some action is taken outside the church in public life e.g. starting an 'open' youth group.

e) information gathering / awareness or consciousness building

Rather than specific action the emphasis may be on having enough information on which to take action e.g. finding out about Fair Trade.

f) relationship building with the 'other'

Another prerequisite to further action may be to develop a relationship first e.g. letter writing / visiting / dialoguing.

Level of the action

a) entrenched position

Prior attitudes are strengthened which result in a hardening of position i.e. a negative effect.

b) no change

No new actions are undertaken.

c) more of the same action

The proposed action is already carried out but the outcome is that there is an extra energy and emphasis put on it.

d) a new thing

This action has never been done before.

e) a radical new thing

Something startlingly new happens here which possibly implies a change of 'world-view.'

These categories above enable a methodology for evaluating the case study data to be developed. Silverman (2001: 37) states that quantitative methods can be used to evaluate what is essentially qualitative data:

> ...there is no reason why qualitative researchers should not, where appropriate, use quantitative measures. Simple counting techniques theoretically derived and ideally based on participant's own categories, can offer a means to survey the whole corpus of data ordinarily lost in intensive, qualitative research.

Evaluation of the data was then carried out by correlating the various texts which form the raw data with these categories in order to discover significant themes and patterns in relation to the research questions.

The Process of Data collection

The course material in itself was not written in a vacuum and constitutes significant data. It was generated mainly by UK and South African white 'rich' people albeit with an ideological and theological interest in global issues of justice for all. It is possible that the material, while aiming to present the cultural 'other' to each diocese, may not really address the poor and victims of both societies. However because the methodology is that of the pastoral cycle the material is not entirely fixed and it may be negotiated by the groups. Some initial evaluation of the course material should then be possible.

The main data collection methods were by choosing six groups (A – F for anonymity purposes) which were observed once during the course and then reconvened for a focus group discussion with the researcher after the course. Observations were made for each of sessions 2, 3 & 4 in two of the groups each (i.e. Groups A & B – session 2 , Groups E & F session 3 and Groups C & D session 4). The observation of the groups developed a relationship between the researcher and the group in anticipation of the focus group.

The six local groups were not chosen at random. Overall in the Diocese as a whole more than 50 churches ran the course with over 1000 participants. The groups chosen for data collection were to be a) culturally similar and b) culturally distant from the 'city' and deprivation. The reason for this approach was to eliminate, as far as possible the cultural variable from the different groups and to generate some cultural distance both with the 'other' in South Africa and in the 'city.' This proved successful in general with five of the six groups being in areas of the least deprived half of the

national population[126] and the sixth (E) in the 30-40% most deprived band. All the groups were in areas that are described in national census data as either;

Separate town – none with populations of more than 10,000 people
Commuter rural
Other rural

As opposed to;

City Centre
Inner City
Council Estate
Suburban/Urban fringe

Some significant data was collected by encouraging every group throughout the diocese to put the outcomes of each session on an internet discussion forum. There were 41 members of the forum and 64 comments were posted which were significant for the research.

Robson (2002: 284) outlines the advantages of the focus group interview as a method of data collection which revolve around efficiency, quality control arising from group dynamics and flexibility.

Some of the disadvantages (2002: 285) are the expertise required to facilitate the group and the conflicts and confidentiality issues that may arise. I believe these were overcome by facilitating the interviews myself and being aware of the group dynamics. In addition since the group was reconvening after the end of the course group relationships had already developed and potential conflicts etc. were minimised in relation to a group that was simply convening for the interview.

All six groups were given questionnaires at the observation stage which elicited some relevant sociological and attitudinal data in the following areas:

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[126] Presentation by Rev Dr. Lynda Barley to Southwell Diocesan Synod 9/4/05 quoting data from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Indices of Deprivation, 2004.

Age

Gender

Educational background

Normal employment /social class

Social mobility

Access to media – TV/radio/newspaper

Experience of travel / work beyond UK

Attitudes and values around ethnic minorities in UK[127]

Each member of the focus group was asked to complete the same questionnaire if they had not already done so. The focus group membership could then be compared to the whole sample size across all six groups.

The focus groups took place up to five weeks after the end of the course. Only five of the six groups were interviewed as it proved impossible to convene the sixth (F) on a convenient date.

The focus group interviews used semi-structured questions which are found in appendix III, section 2.

Evaluation of the Data

a) The Course Itself

Evans, Evans and Kennedy (1987) present eight case studies of educational programmes in the 1980s which were designed to engage what they call the 'non-poor' in the West with issues of poverty both around them and in the 'Third World.' Kosuke Koyama commenting on one of these (1987: 160) notes the need to bring these two sides into 'participatory dialogue' such that it is not simply the non-poor who are inspecting and studying the other in a subject – object relationship. Both sides need to be subjects *and* objects.

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[127] These questions on attitudes around ethnic minorities were developed from others used in the *European Values Survey*: http://www.europeanvalues.nl/pagefor1024.htm (accessed on 10/03/04).

The Lent course material sets out I believe, to fulfil the aim of 'participatory dialogue' in that first of all it was prepared in conjunction with the other Diocese. Secondly the stories presented for 'looking at life' place real people from both places in some kind of juxtaposition as follows in the weeks studied:[128]

	UK Story / Focus	Natal Story / Focus
Week 2 Sickness and Health	Work stress levels	AIDS & examples
Week 3 Wealth and Poverty	"Jim" at CAB	"Shane" unemployed
Week 4 Generational Relationships	The elderly infirm "Lee" & his grandmother	Street Children "Sipiwe" an 8 year old

Of course, as has been noted above this process could have been greatly enhanced had it been possible to conduct the course using dialogue in real time as it proceeded.

It is worth exploring at this point how the course material uses the Bible in the 'dialogue' stage of the pastoral cycle methodology employed. Using Walton's (2003) typology most of the suggested passages fall into his c) category of resonance and analogy where connections are sought between a particular passage and the issue at stake. For instance Ecclesiasticus 10: 26-31 and Matthew 6: 25, 34 are used in this way in Week 2 in relation to work and the work-life balance. There are also simple forms of a combination of c) and f), one-way critique. This takes the form of 'an assessment of practice using the resources of the Bible' (: 145). For example the story of Nathan confronting David in 2Samuel 12 is used to open up a discussion on the relationship between rich and poor and the parable of the Good Samaritan to deal with attitudes to crime and violence and its victims in Week 5.

In a course offered at this level further sophistication in the use of the Bible would be inappropriate. However prooftexting is not used which means that the biblical material is utilised in such a way as to open up discussion and make connections

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[128] See appendix III, section 1 for full versions of the stories from Weeks 3 & 4.

rather than close down arguments to a particular point. This is a significant difference with the use of the Bible compared to our first case study and may open up new space for discovering how participants actually understand the 'gospel' when free to offer their own views.

b) The Internet Forum[129]

Of the 41 members of the forum only 16 actually posted to it. Of the 64 posts 3 members posted once, 3 twice, 5 three times and the other 5 all posted more than 6. One of the infrequent posters was related to one of the researched groups and two of the more frequent posters were also researched. Most were leaders of groups or those delegated by them to post the material. The reasons for the low ratio of contributors to members are probably to do with familiarity with the internet (one or two even confessed to overcoming 'technophobia' in order to join), time to make the posts themselves, and an increased sense of wanting to share their findings on the part of those who did post. Only one post came from Natal.

Robson (2002: 288) notes the similarity of material generated in this fashion to that from focus groups with the added advantage that dissent may be facilitated by the nature of the individual's input. However since they were posting from the whole group the 'discussion' element was limited – with only one issue actually generating real difference of opinion and on-going discussion. In any case I suspect that the medium of the forum truncated the length of communication because it was completed as an addition to everything else that was required of the leaders to deliver the course.

1. Interaction with the 'other'

12 posts make some reference to the ontological differences between the participants and their counterparts in Natal. Of these about 45% are in the "same but different" category b), 40% in c) and 15% in d). There is an acceptance that others in Natal are human beings like us and we can learn from them (e.g. 21, 47), but with a range of differences some of which are more stark than others. In Week 2 several

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[129] In referring to specific posts on the forum they will be numbered from 1 to 64.

posts (14, 19, 22) make reference to a perceived gulf between the import of stress related health issues in UK and AIDS in South Africa. One post (26) refers to not fully understanding or being able to enter the experience of the 'other.'

Attitudinally there were 9 posts none of which offered any kind of threat level from the 'other'. Several (1, 18, 47) fitted the esoteric category with particular reference to the title of the course which captured the imagination as "the idea of *ubuntu.*" There was some naivety about who exactly the 'other' might be, but in general they were referred to as 'brothers and sisters' (12, 13) or 'our friends' (16) who should not be patronised. This is significant for the research since part of the hypothesis of the case study is that entering the world of the distant other is less threatening than the close 'other.'

The categories here do seem to work with the data as presented though I suspect attitudes d) and e) could be conflated.

Finally it is worth noting the discussion that took place between two posters (posts 48 to 54) on whether starvation and tangible poverty exists in the UK. There was a real level of threat exhibited by the claim from one side and this raised a sharp ideological debate which was eventually closed out when it seemed to become too difficult.

2. Level of outcome

The primary purpose of the internet forum as described in the course material was to feedback the actions and outcomes of each session and it is not surprising that 38 of the 64 referred to possible outcomes.

However on reflection this area is quite problematic. Firstly posters state their intended outcomes not necessarily as things they will actually do but in a range from vague hopes to specific actions. Many are simply ideas of things that could be done. This also means that it is quite difficult to discern the 'level' of the outcome on the categories stated, because it is not entirely clear what has gone before. This is with the exception of the first category which rather than be described as an 'entrenched

position' could be one of 'disempowerment or helplessness.' 7 posts fell into this category summed up by (45):

> … we are at a loss to know what to do for the best.

For these reasons I will not describe further anything about level of outcome but look at the focus of the stated outcomes; i.e. whether they are only ideas or specific actions. 55% of the outcomes were generated from the material on fair trade in Week 1. Many of these fell into the political action and lifestyle categories. They can be explained by initial enthusiasm for the course and the success of the Make Poverty History campaign that was running in the media and through Christian NGOs in 2005 in advance of the July "G8" economic summit, held that year in Scotland. Interestingly Week 1 has the least interaction with the 'other' but generates the most activity as these are clearly concrete actions that participants can become involved in. Only two posts mention raising money for the 'other' while several would like to develop links if this were possible. In fact the one post from Natal cautioned against just fundraising and this may be a reason more was not said about it.

It is difficult too to gauge the relationship between category e) information gathering and awareness raising and the actual actions that may have been carried out. This is one of the crucial concerns of Paulo Freire in *Pedagogies of the Non-Poor* (Evans et. al., 1987: 223) and I believe there was much more happening in this category than was actually recorded. One post which makes a naïve but nevertheless hopeful connection between awareness and action was the very last one (64):

> After study 3 I bought a big issue from a chap in wheeler gate [*sic*], as an act of doing something for the homeless.

One of the ways of connecting awareness and outcome is by 'non- or trans-pedagogical possibilities' (Evans etc al., 1987: 223). Finally then there were 7 posts which mentioned prayer as a preferred outcome. This is clearly one of the weaknesses of the pastoral cycle - that it does not necessarily outcome in ritual, liturgy or symbol.

3. Use of the Bible

The use of the Bible on the internet forum was one of the secondary reasons for studying it, but it did not offer much more data for the research. The posts reflected the level of biblical usage in the material. When groups were given opportunities to offer their own material they were clearly in the a) category of links and associations often with long lists of chapters and verses. Occasionally there were more nuanced reflections using the texts (26, 59) as analogies and one (31) which actually questioned the efficacy of the text.

c) The Groups Themselves

i) The Overall Sample[130]

There are several noteworthy points about the sample as a whole – i.e. those people who were either part of the observed group session and/or the focus group interview.

In choosing the context as separate town / rural the age profile was significantly different to that of the church overall which is of course different to that of the general population. Thus 55% were retired compared to a Nottinghamshire average of 15%[131] and 87% were over 51 years of age. The gender ratio was fairly normal for church groups with females predominating 65:35. The majority had or were in 'middle class' occupations and so they could easily be classified as 'non-poor.' This was confirmed by their usage of media with 91% using BBC, and 54% of those listening to radio news using Radio 4 and 65% of those reading newspapers using "broadsheets."

66% had been socially immobile for more than 10 years (35% > 30 years). Very few had worked overseas while many (35%) had visited beyond the EC. Only 17% had visited a developing country and just one person had been to South Africa.

All the contexts were areas in which almost no-one is from an ethnic minority however 22% still declared that they felt some people were. Only 5% would have

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[130] See appendix III, section 3 for the detailed statistics.
[131] Census 2001 at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/37-A.asp (accessed 11/07/05).

liked to live with many people from ethnic minorities, the others being split between 'some' and it making no difference. 72% scored a law against promoting racial hatred as higher than 5 on a scale of 'goodness' from 0-10.

ii) The Five Focus Groups[132]

Focus Group A was fairly typical on most criteria although it was the smallest of all five at 4 members. Significantly 2 members had visited developing countries. Group B was very similar with again 3 of its 6 members having visited a developing country. This perhaps indicates an interest in attending the focus group over and above others in the original group.

Group C contained a significant majority of males compared to the average but otherwise was typical. Group D was proportionately younger, working and more socially mobile than any of the others and had an equal gender balance. Group E reflected its slightly more deprived context (see above) with a larger proportion of semi/unskilled jobs reported and 50% having no academic qualification.

We can conclude therefore that the choice of locations for the observations and focus groups was largely successful in developing a "mono-cultural" sample over the different groups.

d) Group Observations

In this section I want to conflate all three areas because there is highly significant evidence in five of the six groups observed that dealing with the 'other' in the material enabled a new place to be reached which was surprising, shocking and sometimes deeply challenging for the participants. I will therefore describe this evidence from each of the groups in turn.

Group A

A collection of four females, three males and a female leader were observed engaging with the AIDS issue and using role play to enter into the experience of the

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[132] Again detailed comparison data on the focus groups is available in appendix III, section 3.

'other.' The group discuss the presence of 'First' and 'Third' world elements in Natal and the difficulty of knowing what to do. One member comments it's like being 'caught in the headlights like a rabbit.' Two of the males in the group have experience of travelling in the developing world. One of these has travelled to Nepal and notes, in relation to the Bible study on the haemorrhaging woman, how women there have to live in a small hut outside their homes when menstruating. He comments on this that 'it's in our world!' By this I take it to mean that somehow we are connected to these people by our common humanity but at the same time they are so very different from us.

This comment led the group directly into a discussion of 'gospel and culture' where the unchanging gospel was understood to be 'love of neighbour' which is separate from the changeability of culture.

While the discussion moved on from this point to other matters it was significant that the group made it to that point through interaction in role play as people in Natal. The intention of the material was not to relate this discussion to culture at home, but there is no doubt this could have been possible.

Group B

This is an ecumenical gathering from several churches in a large village. They are working with the same material as Group A and are not threatened by interacting with the 'other.' At one point however I observe a male participant make an oblique reference to the Roman Catholic Church's stance on contraception with reference to the AIDS issue 'which doesn't help women, but can't be mentioned tonight.' The threat is not from overseas but from across the road in the village!

In one of the groups, having completed the Bible study and understood Jesus' radical acceptance of uncleanness in the woman, the discussion turns to what to do and whether to be judgmental about the causes of AIDS. The courage of Nelson Mandela is mentioned who named AIDS as the killer of his son. Then a woman speaks about a 'buddy system' for HIV+ people in the nearby city in such a way as to invite

participants to get involved. Others in the group assume it's a church project and react positively, but they are corrected by the originator who says it is not a Christian programme at all. At which point there is a long pregnant silence.

Such a challenge would not have been felt I do not believe if there had been no exposure to the issue of AIDS in Natal.

Group C

This group consisted of 3 males, 3 females and a female group leader in a commuter village. Most are in their 60s and 70s except significantly for a mother in her 40s with her daughter who is in her late teens. They are observed on week 4 looking at material on generational relationships. The material deals with the problem of the infirm elderly in the UK and street children in Natal. The presence of the teenager as 'other' clearly affects the group and their reactions to the material as issues of young people are discussed from time to time. Some tension is evident as well and there is an avoidance of the elderly issue when it comes to the action phase of the study. However the teenager forces the group to confront the problem of drug taking young people outside the Village Hall – she claims she knows some as young as 5 and 7 years old who are involved and therefore comparable to the street child example in Natal. The group begins to engage with this real issue while struggling with a further level of threat from imagining possible scenarios of their involvement.

Group D

This group is working with the same material as Group C and consists of a male and a female leader with 3 males and 4 females. They are clearly threatened by engaging with the issue of the elderly infirm especially as they interact with the Bible passages. One male member says about a Bible text; 'it hit me between the shoulder blades like a dagger' and then he goes on to admit; 'I really must ring my mum.' At this point the female leader makes an aside and under her breath; 'as if I don't feel guilty enough already.'

After some further discussion a female says; 'well, we have dealt with old people' which produces much laughter and then she realises what she has actually said. She tries to withdraw the assertion and she moves the discussion on by saying 'everybody has avoided the problem of young people' when really it's the old people that are being avoided under the surface.

The group continued for some time and did look at how to engage young people culturally, but they were struggling for concrete actions to implement.

Group E

This is the group in a slightly less well off context than the others and is made up of 2 female leaders 7 females and 3 males. The material is Week 3 on Wealth and Poverty which engages the participants with the meaning of what it is to be rich and poor and uses the story of Nathan and David to ask whether the rich steal from the poor in order to stay rich.

In a smaller break out group of 3 females (F3, F5 & F7) and 1 male, the male displays the classic ideological reactions to the UK poor as personified by 'Jim' in the material (Evans et. al., 1987: 224; Spencer and Snape, 1994: 31) and there is the possibility that the group will fall into the passive coping style reported by Christian Aid when researching this area in the 1990s (Spencer and Snape, 1994: 72).

However starting from the biblical passage the group does engage with the difficult questions it raises about the rich and their dependent relationship to the poor. The conversation goes like this:

M: the problem is anyone who exploits his neighbour in the final analysis.
F7:   but that doesn't negate what I'm supposed to do.
M: is it asking me to change the world – or to change me – how am I supposed
        to respond to it? Unless something happens in my backyard I'm quite happy
        to let it go on.
        [he quotes the summary commandments – have to think it out for your self,
        Jesus doesn't give sloganistic answers]
        [F3 is withdrawn at this point as M is monopolising the discussion – she is
        reading her Bible]

F5:   need to look at yourself before passing judgement.

M: it's dangerous to cast judgements on others - I'd want to protect my lifestyle – we have saved all our lives and have not had to dip into our investments in retirement.

F3:   would you protect it to someone else's detriment?

M: well I did work for 30 years and put money away but we don't need to draw on it – there is no one answer to this.

What is remarkable about this conversation is that an essentially middle-class English male is actually prepared to discuss his investments and retirement income in public.[133] While the conversation did not result in any concrete action the male could have been encouraged from this point to move from the passive to the active coping strategy for dealing with the problem of the poor.

Group F

This group, consisting of a female leader, 7 females and 3 males followed much the same process as Group E with the same material and the same ideological resistances are exhibited. For example the contrast between the UK poor and the "beautiful" poor of Africa:

F3:   the poor seem contented there compared to people in our country – the expectations are higher here.

F4:   every programme you watch [on Africa etc.] – we come at it with our western approach – with our culture – their standards are appalling but they do seem to be happy and the children – they are gorgeous African children. So may be all that we see doesn't need putting right – perhaps they wouldn't want it.

The group then shows resistance at several points to engaging with the story of 'Jim' and finally leaves it with some laughter when actually they were coming close to the real issues.

The Bible passage using Nathan's confrontation of David is skimmed over despite F6 almost entering into it fully:

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[133] For the counter-cultural nature of this talk see Kate Fox (2004: 120-121).

F6:   I don't want to slip into being David – but maybe the implication of the
        material is that I'm already doing it …

I believe for this reason the group does not really engage with active coping

strategies and the session rather fizzled out.

e) Focus Groups[134]

1. Interaction with the 'other'

Evidence from the focus groups suggests a real tension in the participants between

recognising the common humanity between themselves and the foreign 'other' and

the sense of the vast gulf that also exists between them. Three of the groups

recognised the similarity (A12, B1, E3) – Group E were surprised by this, summed up

by a female member:

F1:   There are very few differences we could identify. We couldn't find the
        differences and we did look hard!

One or two participants had made personal journeys from poverty in childhood to a

more middle-class existence (A5, C6), but this did not necessarily make them more

sympathetic to the UK poor.

All five groups identify the gulf of difference either between their own contexts and

UK inner cities or with Natal (A1, B4, C2, D5&6, E10). A male member of Group D

notes:

M1:   What strikes me is that actually I would be no more at home in a lot of these
        inner city areas than I would be in South Africa. It's a very different culture to
        what I'm used to.

The tension is resolved in several ways – being grateful for their position (e.g. B4,

C12) or more seriously questioning the reality of the world of the 'other.' For instance

in Group C:

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[134] Reference is made to specific evidence from the interviews by giving the Group letter and the page number
on the transcript – i.e. C7. Where individual speakers are identified they are given a male or female identifier
with a number which differentiates them from other speakers quoted - e.g. F2, M1.

NR: *What about Africa in general then?*
M1: I think they are going through growing pains the way this country did say 100 years ago. They are still trying to find their identity.
NR: *What images come to mind?*
F1: Aids.
M2: Apartheid.
M3: A vast continent.
M1: Insufficient food.
M2: Always having revolutions.
M3: Dictatorships.
M2: Dictatorships yes, corruption.
M1: Different tribes.
M2: Uneducated.

A female in group E actually crossed the tension between sameness and otherness in one fascinating speech:

F1: I think it was surprising for me anyway to see so many similar sort of problems. I felt that they would be different but they're not. Really at base they are human beings who experience and have the same things that we do. Not that I didn't think they were human beings [*laughter in group – followed by pause*]. You know what I mean though, because of the very different way of life you tend to think that their problems would be different. They're not really.

Moving onto attitudinal issues in the participant's interactions with the 'other' there is a large amount of evidence in all the groups of resistance and threat presented by the 'other' of the UK poor and particularly as represented by 'Jim' (A4 & 9, B4, C1, 4 & 6, D4, E6 & 7).

Feelings ran high in Group C when studying Week 3 and this emerged in the focus group:

M1: I was trying to think of an actual word I could use. I think insulted is perhaps the most defining word. I took this particularly – a left wing social engineering event … I was trying to – "it's not, not half as bad here as waiting in the DSS mate – 4 bleeding hours I was here." Well I mean… that's not the kind of thing... I know it exists for a course on this, I'm not taking a course to be a social worker (*laughter from the other males in the group*) I felt very insulted.

In Group E the threat level was manifested by giggling, laughter and even tasteless joking when specific mention of 'Jim' was made and how they might relate to him personally:

NR: *So again if they walked into the room here, Shane and Jim, what would we say to them?*
      [Laughter]
F2:   Get off your backside and get on with it.
M1:   Probably get the air freshener out!

A further category can also be identified related to that of threat and resistance that was not in the original list – that of guilt feelings which the 'other' raises in the participants (A2, B6, D7). This is summed up by a female in Group B who had previously received some members of a South African choir on tour into her home:

F1:   I think when they came here I was terribly aware. I felt terrible that my house seemed so big, do you know what I mean? You suddenly saw it through different eyes. I thought they must think I'm so spoilt – the car - just jump in the car and go ... and all the things we've got. I was very aware that, you know, I didn't want them to think "oh they are so spoilt, aren't they horrible." You know what I mean – I felt very awkward about it. You couldn't suddenly move into the garden whilst they are here, could you? [laughter from group]

Meanwhile there remains also in Group B the idealised view of the esoteric other that demands compassion (B2):

F2:   I suppose Africa is a place we've heard about since Sunday School days. I think we know, we used to have little collecting boxes – I suppose all my life I've known there's a place a long way a way where people need our help and prayers.

More positively Groups B and D did confirm the evidence of the internet forum that people in Natal could be understood as 'brothers and sisters' (B9, D10) while two of the groups had a mature discussion of their reactions to the issue of the elderly infirm 'at home' (e.g. E4). There was respect for South African leaders such as Mandela and Tutu (B2, E3) and the concept of *ubuntu* was again affirmed as a helpful and striking idea (A6, B10, D12, E15).

2. Level of outcome

As in the internet forum most of the actionable outcomes emerge from the issue of Fair Trade in Week1 (C8, D11, E17) or they are related to changing shopping habits etc. (e.g. A11, B9). How far these concrete actions are a 'surplus of compassion' will need to be explored further in the conclusion.

There is clearly a large amount of information gathering and awareness building on issues both at home (e.g. A1) and in Natal (A12, C7, D8) that is an outcome of the course (and it can be noted was the original intention of the Bishops). However this is not really translated into action beyond the issues raised in Week 1. Some groups and individuals felt helpless and paralysed by the scale of the need (B5 & 9, D1) as in Group B:

F2:   I was just thinking you could perhaps help Jim on his own, but there are so many Jims! There are hundreds and hundreds of Jims so you get lost as to what you could actually do.

It may be that the leap between 'theory and practice', i.e. what we know we should do and what we actually do, is in some cases too great – this was reported in how to deal with both 'Lee' and 'Sipiwe', the street child (C3, D4).

What is not present is any sense generally that the problems of the poor can be fixed by giving money or fundraising – this is evident even in those groups that were not part of the internet forum where this issue was discussed.

There is some small amount of evidence that the process of entering the less-threatening world of the other can result in action in the more threatening domestic world. In fact the most concrete outcome beyond that of Fair Trade was the issue of drugs and young people in Group C as discussed above. New information, awareness and action happened as a result of the discussion and by the time of the focus group the issue had moved on and actions were being taken to address what had emerged.

What is required perhaps is taking the impact as described here in Group A of this process and using it more directly to relate to practical outcomes (this refers to the experience observed with Group A and described above):

F1:   Particularly the week when we took the 2 different sides, when we had to put ourselves in the position....we were the ones in Durban and we kept falling back into our own role and you couldn't ... that because... that was.. the impact that made was terrific.

3. Use of the Bible

The focus group material on the use of the Bible was also disappointing in the sense that not many groups remembered specific or striking passages. With some the passages they did mention were the most recent at the end of the course (B,C, &D). Overall groups A, B and C were fairly negative about this aspect of the course with D and E more positive. Looking back over the course in Group E:

F1:   We read your stories, or read the stories in the book and we discussed them, we discussed the situation. Then you read the Bible passage and you'd be feeling really low wouldn't you? Then you'd read the Bible passage and there would be answers – well there would be help, guidance, support, hope and therefore we went away feeling a lot more, I can't say happy but we'd, I learned a lot hadn't we? ... than we would have been if we hadn't had the Bible passage.

In terms of what 'gospel' the participants discerned through the material there were only two occasions when this fell into traditional dogma (such as the *Alpha* content). An emphasis was placed on the importance of community (and our common humanity), loving one another and being enabled to do that through Christ.

Conclusions

The *Ubuntu* course asked its participants to enter another's world at various points. This was mainly an imagined, but nevertheless real place on the other side of the planet as well as at points the world of the UK poor or elderly infirm. These are examples of "cultural dissonance" introduced by the material.

From both the observations and the focus groups it is clear that the large majority of resistance and threat to the 'other' is from a domestic 'other' whereas the groups are happy to engage with and talk about a foreign 'other.' Ideological positions are taken up with respect to these 'others,' especially the UK poor confirming the findings of the report *The Gospel, The Poor and The Churches* (1994).

We can conclude therefore, following Hull's analysis described above, that there is an inverse relationship between what we have termed the 'cultural dissonance' of the 'other' and the threat level provided by them. [135] Threat and therefore educational resistance is lower in the case of the foreign 'other' compared to the domestic 'other.'

It is possible that the local 'other' can be dealt with, but only first via engagement with the esoteric 'other' – as in Group C dealing with a local drug problem via street children in Natal facilitated by the presence of a young person as 'other.' In addition entering the world of a Bible passage may also be a route to real engagement locally as in the observations of Groups A and E. I will return to this theme below.

During the observations, where resistance to the domestic 'other' remained without being challenged from outside, no significant outcome was recorded. Negotiation of the cultural dissonance tension with the 'other' is significant for the research. John Hull notes (2004), following Brian McGee, that in relations between the worlds of the sighted and the blind the sighted understand the world of the blind 'to be scarcely any longer a world.' Thus he concludes:

> Those without sight are usually thought of as being excluded not merely from *a* world but from *the* world. A deficiency model of blindness is the tribute people pay to their own normality. But a deficiency model is based upon exclusion, and exclusion if it is charitably inclined must seek for a benevolent inclusion, and must approach the other with a surplus of compassion, in view of the fact that the blind person, being excluded from the world, has no world.

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[135] There is more general evidence for this conclusion from history and experience – it is those who are close but different who are often the most hated – e.g. Jews and Samaritans in NT times and the "local derby" phenomenon in rivalry between football clubs.

We have noted a similar reaction in the participants of the *Ubuntu* course when confronted with the 'other' – foreign or domestic. There are questions about whether they have identity and even, when thinking unconsciously, whether they are human at all. A joke is made about their possible smell. As Hull goes on to point out this state of affairs must be resisted (especially by the Christian[136]) and so leads to a compensatory 'surplus of compassion.'

An interesting aside at this point may be that the large number of action outcomes which relate to Fair Trade and shopping habits are being driven by this surplus of compassion. Certainly reasons need to be identified for the dearth of other outcomes from the course and this may be one of them – providing as it does a line of least resistance for the energy created by the cultural dissonance.

However I do believe the observations demonstrate the potential of this method for real pedagogical engagement with both the foreign and domestic 'other' and therefore with culture and the inculturation project. Paradoxically, as Hull concludes his article, the problem is not pedagogical, but rather ontological and epistemological. Of course our participants know and confessed, as Hull says, that 'the many human worlds remain human.' What is required is using 'experience, familiarity and imagination' to enter, for learning's sake into the world of the other. The role of teacher as a 'trans-world professional' is to enable this to happen by being able to cross between the worlds.

The clue to the next stage of the research is to be found I believe in Group C. Here by entering into the world of the street child in Natal the group was able to make the connections with their own domestic world of young people and drugs. They needed a bridge between those worlds and it was the young person who provided that 'trans-world' role. This will form the basis of the third case study in the next chapter.

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[136] In addition in another paper: 'Self-Deception as a Coping Strategy for Christians' *Christian Action Journal,* Autumn 1995, pp19-21.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CASE STUDY THREE –
THE *EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY (EFM)* COURSE

Overview

At the end of the previous research cycle we had established the idea of 'cultural dissonance' and its relationship to the threat level from the 'other.' When the cultural dissonance was high there was the possibility of engagement with new cultural worlds closer to home. What may be required of an educational course delivering inculturation is that participants, using 'experience, familiarity and imagination' enter, for learning's sake into the world of the 'other.' The role of teacher (or facilitator) as a 'trans-world professional' enables this to happen by being able to cross between the worlds. Such a 'bridging' or connectivity between worlds is the necessary work of the imagination (Tomlinson, 2001: 15).

The *Education for Ministry*[137] course (hereafter *EFM)* uses a method of theological reflection that requires the facilitator (actually called a mentor by *EFM*) to lead the participants into many different human worlds and this is the course which will be examined for the third and final case study. In a sense it could be one response to Tomlinson's call for theological education to develop the imaginations of students so that they become 'graced with a receptive dexterity of the soul' (2001: 20).

EFM takes place over four years and uses a methodology called "Theological Education by Extension" which is illustrated by the analogy of a two-rail fence – see appendix IV, section 1. Participants study written material at home before attending the weekly group theological reflection (TR) session. There are 36 of these sessions per year (although not all may have a TR element) and the years rotate around Old Testament, New Testament, Church History up to the Enlightenment in Year 3 and afterwards to the present day in Year 4. Both these years combine 'history, theology, liturgics, spirituality, ethics and ecclesiology' (USST 2002: 6-2-1). Groups can combine people in all four years of the course and new members are usually 'apprenticed' into the group at the start of each year.

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[137] Full details of the course can be found at www.efmuk.org.uk

EFM was initiated in 1975 as an extension programme of the School of Theology of the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee in the USA for the Episcopal Church there (De Bary, 2003: xv; USST, 2002: 6-1-1). In 1996 it is claimed that there were 7000 participants 'in almost every diocese of the Episcopal Church [in USA] and …. in a number of English-speaking countries' (USST, 2002: 6-1-3). The overall purpose of the course (as distinct from the narrower purpose of theological reflection methods within it) is to prepare lay people (specifically) for their 'ministry' as the baptized people of God, on the premise that all the baptized are 'ordained' into ministry. This ministry is defined as continuing (USST, 2002: ix):

> ... the ministry of Jesus, who reconciled the world to God. We are called to incarnate that reconciliation in our own time and our own place through worship, in service to others, and by proclamation of God's Word to all people.

The two main sources of information about the course, beside the course material itself, are De Bary (2003) and Killen and De Beer (1994).

Whilst there are common elements and overlaps in the approach of these two works, the latter is more clearly presented both theoretically and practically and I shall therefore refer to it more frequently.

However before moving on to examine the course in detail I want to spend some time exploring the assumption[138] of the research thesis as it relates to the second and third case studies.

Dick McCleary (1993) describes a fundamental paradox 'essential to all teaching' (1993: xxiii) which picks up an issue we recognised in the second case study:

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[138] As outlined in chapter 4.

Students can make sense out of the alternative contexts of understanding and coexistence about which they are being taught only if they can somehow relate these contexts to their own familiar world. Yet in order to understand the alternative contexts, they must also stop interpreting them in terms of their current context and confront them in their unfamiliar reality.

Using an example of this paradox from the pedagogical conversation of Socrates and Meno described by Plato (where Socrates uses the analogy of teaching geometry to his slave to instruct Meno), McCleary claims that Socrates' method of developing the analogy attempts to resolve the paradox. Putting this in contemporary terms he continues that the paradox concerns (1993: 3):

> ... the relation between "accommodation" and "assimilation." To help learners understand what they do not know, teachers must help them accommodate their already established context of reality to an unknown reality beyond this context. Yet learners cannot make sense out of what they do not know unless they can assimilate it to their already established context of understanding.
> The answer Plato suggests in the *Meno* is that assimilation and accommodation are indispensable aspects of a dialogical teaching method helping learners use their imaginations to grasp analogies between their practical sense of their already established context of understanding and the new context to which they must accommodate.

The terms assimilation and accommodation originate from the educational psychologist and "polymath" Jean Piaget (1896 -1980). They fall under the overall term adaptation (Richmond, 1970: 65; McNally, 1973: 7) and Piaget uses the analogy of the digestion of an organism such as an amoeba to describe the process by which children learn to adapt to their environment (1981: 102). Just as the organism needs to assimilate into itself those useful parts of the food it comes into contact with, so the very act of assimilation will change the structure of the organism itself, therefore it will also accommodate. Piaget's work has attracted some criticism over the years since his death (e.g. Cohen, 1983) but this does not seem to include these ideas about assimilation and accommodation. Indeed they form two of David Kolb's learning styles (1984).

Here we have a deeply suggestive connection between the pedagogical and inculturation tasks. We have noted in chapter two how inculturation is 'a process that can be discovered in the creative tension between culture and faith, enculturation and acculturation, emic and etic perspectives, incarnation and conversion.' We could now add from an educational stand point – *assimilation and accommodation.*

What is required then, McCleary states for an engagement with this basic paradox of both education and inculturation, is *imagination* (1993: 8). To imagine is to 'respond to the here-and-now as expressing the not-here-and-now …' and these two elements are related in:

> ... "dialectical complementarity": each stands in opposition to the other, yet each expresses the other, and it is only in the dynamic development of their reciprocal opposition that each is what it is.

Imagination has had a 'bad press' for much of history in the West (Tomlinson, 2001: 12; Degenhardt and McKay, 1988: 239) and particularly during the Enlightenment period. Tomlinson (2001: 13) traces its recovery in the academe in the twentieth century. Seminal to this recovery is the work of Mary Warnock (1976) and several others. Warnock understands imagination to be ubiquitous in our perceiving of the world – i.e. assimilation and Tomlinson shows how important it is also for accommodation by going beyond Warnock (2001: 14).[139] Metaphor and the use of models in science and theology have grown in importance for the 'creative, interpretive character of human existence' in the last decades of the twentieth century – for example in the work of Sally McFague (1975, 1982) which Tomlinson quotes and in the theology of Garrett Green (1998 [1989]).[140]

Graham, Walton and Ward (2005) also underline the importance of imagination and therefore metaphor in their second "method" of theological reflection; 'Speaking in Parables.' Following the philosopher, Paul Ricoeur they state that metaphors bring

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[139] See also Karen Hanson (1988) for a critique of Warnock along similar lines.
[140] This movement begins with the idea of 'paradigm shifts' in the history of science based on the pioneering work of Thomas Kuhn in his book (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* 2nd ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

together what were previously distinct terms into a new conjunction so that (2005: 64):

> ... metaphor shatters not only the previous structure of our language, but also the previous structures of what we call reality.[141]

Tomlinson affirms this position by stating that (2001: 15 – her emphasis):

> Imagination is thus no longer construed as *re*productive in Warnock's definition, but as *pro*ductive of new meaning.

Thus through metaphor we receive a 'new way of being in the world' which when combined with the thought of Rowan Williams gives metaphor (and consequently literary text) a *revelatory* function according to Graham, Walton and Ward – quoting Williams (2005: 65):

> … it [revelation] displays a possible world, a reality in which my human reality can find itself, and inviting me into its world the text breaks open and extends my possibilities.

This dynamic and dialectical understanding of revelation can lead to the human person not being required to submit to a prescribed truth (e.g. as in the *Alpha* course) but rather the imagination being called upon to open itself to new possibilities. It is noted that this is how the parables of Jesus and his miraculous actions work in the gospels. This approach is, at the very least related to the inculturation task.

Theological reflection in the *EFM* course combines the use of metaphor within its overall approach of 'correlation' and a cyclical methodology not unlike that of the pastoral cycle.[142] It therefore fits into at least three of Graham, Walton and Ward's 'methods' of theological reflection.[143] In their opening statement of a definition of

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[141] This is also the position of Max Black's "interaction" theory of metaphor as described by Lynne Cameron (2003).

[142] The pastoral cycle is referred to in the "Common Lessons and Supporting Materials" (USST, 2002: 6-5-1)

[143] I am not entirely convinced by their typology of 'methods' – they use the terminology of methods rather than models for reasons which are not clear – especially since methodology is a broader term than that for which they are using it.

theological reflection Killen and De Beer, I believe demonstrate the possibilities that their method offers pedagogy for inculturation (1994: viii):

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

We have discovered the importance of imagination and metaphor and we need to introduce the idea of correlation which is the fifth method in Graham, Walton and Ward's typology: 'Speaking of God in Public: Correlation.'

Correlation is a technical term first coined by Paul Tillich which he used to name the process of theological engagement with the cultural world he found himself in post-WWII.[144] It informs the approach taken by David Tracy who states that the task of theology is to (1981: 64):

> … locate itself at the interface between human experience and culture, and Christian truth claims.

When this is worked out in practice using a refined model of 'revised critical correlation' (Graham, Walton and Ward, 2005: 160) it results in theological reflection practice such as that suggested by Whitehead and Whitehead in their book *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection in Christian Ministry* (1980). This book is referred to by both Killen and De Beer and De Bary as informing their approach to theological reflection via correlation. It is now time to explain their method in detail.

The *EFM* Method Explained

Killen and De Beer begin by stating that reflection in itself is a human activity which is motivated by the need for meaning, just as we are driven to find food and drink for

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[144] See the quotations from his works *Systematic Theology I* and the *Protestant Principle* in Graham, Walton and Ward (2005: 154).

survival (1994: x). They name this human search for meaning the *movement towards insight* (1994: xi) and describe the process by which they believe this takes place in all people (1994: 20-21). The process has five stages as follows:

> When we enter our **experience**, we encounter our **feelings**.
> When we pay attention to those **feelings**, **images** arise.
> Considering and questioning those **images** may spark **insight**.
> **Insight** leads, if we are willing and ready, to **action**.

We can see here then, as described above elements of both an imaginative approach to reflection and the cyclical 'Kolbian' methodology.

For reflection to take place Killen and De Beer are clear that the reflector has to take up a position of exploration and therefore not be bound by certitude in a particular ideological tradition or, on the other hand, remain with a fixed and immovable identity which they name 'self-assurance.'

Tracy (1981), as quoted above offered two sources or starting-points for the correlation – namely human experience and culture. The Whiteheads expanded this to three (De Bary, 2003: 118) – tradition, culture and personal experience. This apparently was the original basis of the *EFM* method with the three sources being, tradition, experience or action and position (or belief) including the individual's cultural perspective (2003: 119). Killen and De Beer then separated culture from personal beliefs and position so that a four-source model emerged. The four sources are then (1994: 54-59):

a) **Action** or 'lived narrative' when a story is told of a particular experience or action which includes thoughts, feelings and perspectives around the action. There is some resonance here with the use of verbatim accounts in Clinical Pastoral Education which is also used in some detail in the Whiteheads' work.

b) **Tradition** for Christians will normally be their own authoritative tradition of Scriptures and Creeds, but may include other inter-religious authorities if they are believed to be appropriate.

c) **Culture** has three elements – i) the symbols, mores, assumptions, values, sciences, artefacts, and philosophies of human groups ii) the patterns of organized interaction within human groups e.g. social structure iii) the physical environment.

d) **Positions** are attitudes, beliefs, opinions and convictions which clearly include the values and assumptions that persons carry with them. They are the 'starting points' of meaning that people bring with them to the reflection process.

Killen and De Beer then offer a pictorial representation (1994: 60) of the theological reflection process. They describe how the 'river' of experience which is constantly flowing can be 'frozen at an instant in time' and be represented by a sphere within which is a prism (or quadrilateral pyramid), the points of which stand for the four sources. The prism as a whole denotes the dynamic relationship between the four sources which are essentially 'constructs we put on experience to organize it' (1994: 59).

Only one of the four sources is used as the starting point for any one event of theological reflection. The source is then subjected to the *movement towards insight* method which releases what they describe as the *heart of matter -* by paying attention to the feelings and images that arise from the given starting point. The heart of the matter refers to the 'central question, tension, issue, theme, problem or wonderment of an experience' (1994: 61).

The next stage is where the process of 'correlation' occurs and this takes place in two parts. Firstly the heart of the matter is interrogated by questions developed from the 'central themes of our Christian heritage' – which they state are 'creation, sin, grace and salvation' (1994: 65). However in an important educational tactic, I believe, the questions used '*do not use these theological code words*' (my emphasis).

The second part is where the heart of the matter continues to be interrogated but this time in relation to some item from the Christian tradition, Scriptures or otherwise.[145] Overall it seems to me – a new 'world' is created by the image which is the *heart of the matter* and this can be played in and with by the interrogative questioning process.

Out of this emerge the insights which can lead to action, however there is some equivocation about this in Killen and De Beer's work. They offer a four stage process as described above which moves from experience (from one of the four sources) to identifying the heart of the matter to exploring this heart in conversation with the wisdom of the Christian heritage and finally to the overall goal (as noted above) which is **'new truths and meaning for living.'**

On the other hand they also state that the result of any reflection may not always be something new (1994: 67):

> It can be a deepening confirmation of a truth we have long accepted. It can be a different perspective that sheds light on a complex of feelings or behaviors with which we struggle. It can be a shift in attitude or emotion that frees us to live with a different tone or quality. It can be an intense insight that leaves us in a new world, a place far more textured and rich than we ever noticed before.

They also recognise that when new insight leads to action (as in the pastoral cycle) reflection 'proceeds more like a directional spiral, a gyre, as in a dance, which allows backward and forward movement within a larger trajectory' (1994: 68).

Finally they state that all *EFM* theological reflection methods contain these four elements. However it is at this point that we must jump to the actual methods of theological reflection described by the *EFM* course materials themselves. These differ somewhat in their detail from the overall schema described by Killen and De Beer.

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[145] Apparently and logically this is not done if the source used was the tradition source in the first place. It may be worth noting that De Bary (2003: 126) has a very complex schema here which relates the four sources to four methods of teaching, but that this is not taken up by Killen and De Beer.

In the materials the four stages are described as: identifying, exploring, connecting and applying. In the exploring stage the use of metaphor is encouraged but not in every case. When in the connecting stage, the "world" created by the metaphor developed from the *heart of the matter* can be interrogated from any of the other three sources that were not the starting point. The materials remain with the doctrinal themes of creation, sin, judgment and redemption as the basis for asking theological questions of the imagined world.

As well as the four methods which begin with each source[146] and use metaphor as part of the exploring stage there are two other methods described. One, the 'Wide-angle Lens Method' (USST, 2002: 2-3-1 – 2-3-7) is much more like the pastoral cycle in that it brings the four sources to bear on a general theme and issues in 'civic or social' impact or action. Metaphor is not employed.

The final method is 'Reflection beginning with an Issue or Paradox' (2002: 2-4-1 – 2-4-15) which looks very like the 'compressed conflict' method employed in "Synectics" and described by McCleary (1993: 22-32). This method may or may not use the issue as a basis for creating a world to be interrogated by the sources.

For our purposes then, in this case study we will focus on the four basic methods which employ the imaginative use of metaphor as the connective bridge between experience and the Christian tradition. A fascinating example (albeit a probably unconscious one in terms of the *EFM* method) of what theological reflection can look like using metaphor is found in Hull (1991). In the paper he discusses the derogatory metaphor "mishmash" in order to theologically reflect on multi-cultural religious education in Britain at a particular point in its history – and uses all the four *EFM* sources. Interestingly he writes of 'entering the world of the metaphor' (1991: 38).

Initial Critique of the *EFM* method

At this point it is worth offering an initial critique of the *EFM* method as outlined by Killen and De Beer as this provided clues to the direction of the case study research

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[146] The usual method employed in *EFM* groups in my experience from observation and the interviews is the 'microscope method' which begins with the experience source – see evaluation of data below.

question(s). We begin the critique by attempting to define the underlying assumptions of the *EFM* programme.

Killen and De Beer are clear that engaging in 'critical and conscious' theological reflection is a requirement of the Christian community's authentic 'witness to the gospel' because (1994: ix):

> ... our capacity to comprehend and live faithfully as Christians exists in direct proportion to our capacity to notice, describe and discover the revelatory quality of our human experiences.

EFM is therefore a consciously interventionist approach to developing Christians as theologians in contrast, say to Jeff Astley's idea (2002) of 'ordinary theology' which already exists in the hearts and minds of 'ordinary' Christians. The interventionist approach is therefore slightly at odds with the claim that the human drive for meaning is universal (and even rivals the drive for survival) (1994: 20) – and it may also betray the Western cultural bias of the origins of the programme where survival can be taken for granted.

What is helpful, however about the approach here of *EFM* is that it takes an *incarnational* stance; in that it begins with human propensity for reflection and meaning making before developing that through its method of theological reflection. In this way it models the basic working definition of inculturation that it is found in the dynamic interaction of incarnation and conversion.

There is an assumption made at several points of the fluidity of the Christian revelation. Revelation was discussed in chapter 2 and we have noted how easily Christian faith can be reduced to propositional 'ideology' if it is not open to feedback from its particular context. Transformation for an inculturation which includes both assimilation and accommodation is predicated on an exploration of the experience/culture – tradition dialectic in *EFM.*

There is a connection here between the fluidity of revelation and the idea of 'performance.' Schreiter (1985: 113ff) develops this by using an analogy from Chomsky's study of language. Language is 'performed' by people even young children in a language group who may not 'know' the grammar rules for how they are performing. Similarly Christian faith can be received and performed by all its members while the 'loci of orthodoxy' i.e. the grammar of faith, are at one removed from the performance. McCleary also speaks of performance in the 'teaching learning dialectic' (1993: 96) which is delivered through pedagogical dialogue. Theories of communication and perhaps even intercultural hermeneutics are then also relevant (c.f. Schreiter, 1997: 28).

An impressive aspect of *EFM* is the comprehensive understanding of 'experience' that it entails and for our purposes the way that culture is included as one of the four sources. It does require the 'freezing' of experience for the purposes of reflection, but this is set within a dynamic understanding of the overall process. It is difficult to see, in addition what other way the reflection could happen without such a freezing.

For such an 'open' process what is surprising is that when interrogative questioning occurs in the correlation phase only four Christian themes are used and these are drawn from the classical Augustinian approach of creation-fall-judgment-redemption. This is not that far from the *Alpha* course! Other themes could be offered such as those of Green (1990: 15): kingdom, incarnation, church, holy trinity, crucifixion, Eucharistic presence.

The approach of Killen and De Beer does seem to equally value individual theological reflection alongside that of the group. In addition it appears that it is unusual for *EFM* groups to be formed from a single Christian community. Of course the theological reflection method can be applied to individuals or groups but one of the issues with generating a single metaphor in a group must be how the metaphor is chosen and owned by the whole.[147]

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[147] A similar point is made by Graham, Walton and Ward in relation to 'Canonical Narrative Theology' (2005: 106).

Finally as McCleary points out (1993: 33) a deficiency of an imaginative metaphorical method such as *EFM* is that it may not take into account a proper historical imagination such as that proposed by Paulo Freire. So McCleary asks that educators always question 'whether the[ir] pedagogical theories, aims and practices ….are themselves miseducational *ideological* social fantasy systems' (his emphasis). Presumably this is the reason for the addition of the 'wide-angle lens' method to the list of possible approaches in the *EFM* material.

The Case Study Research

EFM courses have been running in UK for some twenty years or so and were particular popular in the East Midlands in the 1990's and into the new Millennium. There are therefore 48 graduates of the course living within the proximity of the researcher (out of a total of 175 nationally) and these people offer a significant resource for the research. Currently, only two groups are running locally, but these were helpful in the early stages of the case study.

There is an issue here about the length of the course (four years) in comparison to our other case studies which examined much shorter pedagogical enterprises. While the constituency of *EFM* is essentially the same as that of the other courses studied (this is confirmed by the initial sociological data gathered – see appendix IV, section 2), we might expect much deeper and long-lasting outcomes from *EFM* simply because of the length of engagement. This issue needs to be taken into account when developing the research questions as outcomes of the course could be due to any number of factors – not just engagement with the metaphorical method of theological reflection. We must be careful not to claim too much for the method on the basis of the whole course.

The case study then consisted of two stages:

i) Initial data collection and learning about the course
All 48 graduates were questioned for the basic sociological data that enabled them to be compared to the other case study participants.

A group currently running were visited on three occasions for observation and learning about the theological reflection method. Full *EFM* materials were obtained.

ii) The case study itself consists of:

    j)   the course material and experience of current groups doing theological reflection

    k)   1:1 interviews with a selected set of 15 of the 48 graduates

    l)   two 'focus groups' which attempted to model the *EFM* theological reflection method and which were led by the researcher.

The research questions in the case study were identified as:

Does *EFM* deliver its stated objective of enabling participants to take up their 'ministry' as the baptized people of God?

How well is the metaphorical theological reflection method of *EFM* able to deliver 'new truth and meaning for living'? Where is it affirmed and where is it contested? This should also be reflected in the following questions:

What are the outcomes of this method in terms of the three domains of learning - knowledge, attitudes/values and action? Has the "content" of the participants' understanding of the 'gospel' changed as a result of the course? How wide-ranging or deep have been any changes in attitudes and values? Are the action oriented outcomes less evident because of the lack of a historical/political approach?

Are the four interrogatory (perspective) questions restrictive for correlative theological reflection?

Where is the balance of individual and/or group application of the method and has this made a difference to the outcomes?

Do graduates continue to use theological reflection methods in their everyday lives? Are they able to repeat the methods at some distance from the course? What factors enable them or disable them in this ability?

The Process of Data Collection

    d) The Course Material and Initial Observations of Group TR work

The whole of the course material is available to the researcher however we shall focus particularly on the methods of theological reflection within the course (USST, 2002: 2-1-1 – 2-13-2). Within the methods we also further focus down on those using the four-source model incorporating the generation of a metaphor – the most used version of this is described as the 'microscope-method' (2002: 2-1-1 – 2-1-15). The initial observations of the metaphorical methods of theological reflection actually in use can then be used for evaluation alongside the course material and theories of metaphor and metaphorical education such as McCleary (1993) and Cameron (2003).

I observed one group of 8-10 people doing their 'TR's on three occasions – two evenings and one all day event.

e) Interviews

Sociological information from the initial questionnaires (appendix IV, section 2) was available for the graduates before the interviews and this was the basis on which the set was selected.

Of the 28 replies (from 48 sent) 19 were prepared to be interviewed and so I only had to eliminate 4 in order to replicate as far as possible a group representative of the initial 28 – e.g. the male/female ratio was kept constant. I also avoided some respondents whom I knew quite well from my professional life.

Semi-structured interviews (Robson, 2002) were conducted based on the questions found in appendix IV, section 4.

Most interviews were conducted in the homes of the interviewees and took between half an hour and three quarters of an hour. All interviewees were able to make appointments and the full sample of 15 was completed. Interviews were recorded and transcribed into a full text of the conversation. Anonymity of the interviewees is preserved in the reporting and the ethical basis of the interview was explained each time before proceeding.

f) Focus Groups Modelling *EFM* Theological Reflection

The purpose of these groups is three-fold. One is to develop the skills of leading this type of reflection in the researcher. The second is to test the claims of some of the interviewees around their ability to use the *EFM* method at some distance from the course and so offer some triangulation to the interview data. The third is to attempt a 'pedagogy for inculturation' i.e. using culture as a starting point can participants be led to engage with a relevant issue for inculturation in their own context?

It proved difficult to arrange convenient meeting times for the 16 respondents who had shown an interest in these groups. In the end a group of 6 and a group of 7 were convened at neutral locations. However due to last minute drop-outs etc. both groups ended up consisting of four participants and myself.

The choice of a cultural starting point for the reflection[148] came from my reading of a recent anthropological study of 'the English' (Fox, 2004). This work is both a popularly written and a serious participant observational study of English behaviour. Fox offers several rules in conclusion about Englishness. The 'core behaviour' she describes as 'social dis-ease' (2004: 401) and this can be illustrated by several proverbs and well used phrases. I decided to use one of these as the starting metaphor for the *EFM* TR: *An Englishman's* [sic] *home is his castle.*

Evaluation of the Data

a) Sociological Data on Course Participants

The 28 respondents were very similar in profile to the other research I have conducted on those taking UK adult theological education courses. They are white, predominantly middle or lower-middle class and aged mostly in their 40s and 50s. The ratio of female to male at 3:1 was high – as is usual. Only 40% were working above their current educational level.[149]

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[148] I used, as a basis for the session, the *EFM* method described as 'Reflection beginning with a Text from Culture or Tradition' (USST, 2002: 2-2-(2)-1 – 2-2-(2)-3).

[149] The *EFM* course has recently been validated by a UK University at HE Level 1 (Certificate).

b) Course Material and Initial Observations of Group TR Work

Dick McCleary (1993: 129-132) at the end of his book offers seven methodological principles (not rules) which govern what he calls 'generative metaphorical dialogue' such as that used by *EFM*. The principles are predicated on the assumption of the dialectical approach to teaching and learning that he is advocating throughout the book, following Freire.

The principles are complex and highly specific to McCleary's understanding of imaginative learning, but may, with some simplifying work be applicable to an evaluation of the *EFM* 'microscope method' which utilises metaphor and provide a way of developing the critique of it. Some of the initial observations of it in action are included here.

The principles, as McCleary sets them out are found in appendix IV, section 3. They are simplified and explained for our purposes below. They need to be set alongside a technical and theoretical understanding of metaphor from applied linguistics which is available from Lynne Cameron (2003). For instance McCleary (and mostly it would seem in *EFM*) is clearly dealing with what Cameron calls process metaphor and not linguistic metaphors – where metaphor is an uncountable noun referring to the process of 'mapping across domains' (2003: 12). Linguistic metaphors are countable almost as single point occurrences.

Process metaphor has two sides which are held in tension. These sides are technically called (among other things) Topic and Vehicle. The Vehicle is the focus of the metaphor and the Topic is the content of the discussion. Thus in the phrase 'religious education in this country is a mishmash,' mishmash is the Vehicle and religious education is the Topic. It is important also to note the ubiquity of metaphor in 'human thought processes' (2003: 2) because in this way metaphors are assimilated into cultural assumptions and then become our 'mythic' reality (as in the example of the English proverb about homes as castles).

1. The relationship between Topic and Vehicle should be explored and their relationship defined. In *EFM* this process is minimised except in the phase where the appropriate metaphor is being chosen.

2. Participants should be helped to overcome any inability they have to understand the metaphorical world they are entering from the perspective of their own environment (McCleary calls this 'alienation'). Both the perspective questions of the metaphor and the connectivity of the four sources enable the participants here in the *EFM* process. However I believe for a small minority of *EFM* participants, characterised by the important exception among the interviewees of Mary (see below), this bridging process does not take place.

3. By collapsing the metaphor into a simile (this is literally that) the strength of the metaphor can be tested.[150] This is a risk because it could also break the relationship between Topic and Vehicle. However it may bring illumination by starkly showing their 'strange' connectivity. I think this is the purpose of the perspective questions asked of the metaphor generated in the *EFM* process – they enable the participants to 'live' inside the metaphor as a new world – the extent to which they do this or resist it is clearly important in the group process.

4. This should lead to the breaking of assumptions in the familiar world (or in Cameron's Topic domain). "Take it and break it" could be a maxim here. The initial observations do suggest that this is what is happening in perspective questions and we will return to this and further discussion of the points below through the focus group data. In the meantime one observation I had in the third session (by which time I was accepted as a participant observer) related to this. The metaphor was 'an unexpected hug' and there seemed to be a

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[150] Classically, in written text, topic and vehicle in metaphor only *resemble* each other in some way while the reader is invited to *liken* or *compare* them to each other in simile. While it is true to say that in speech metaphor and simile are often indistinguishable (Cameron, 2003: 231), metaphor is a more 'open' linguistic device than simile. In metaphor there is more space allowed for both similarity and difference between Topic and Vehicle and for the interrogation of that space. Although simile clearly includes this idea of difference, when someone uses the simile 'she rode *by as fast as a bullet*' the hearer is invited to consider that literally the riding was like a bullet. It is the invitation to consider the literal equivalence of Topic and Vehicle that we consider to be the 'collapsing of metaphor to simile.'

Topic assumption about the asexuality of hugs. When I questioned this there was a strong emotional reaction in the group.

5. Consequently participants should be able to unmask the metaphorical nature of their own reality and not remain with its assumed 'mythic' reality. We can come to see ourselves as part of a set of historical circumstances and not just enslaved by the metaphors we live by. That imagination is a key to freedom is a point made by Sartre (Hanson, 1998: 138).

6. The process should then lead to genuine 'performance' on behalf of the participants that results in ritual, worship, belief and action which is informed by engagement with the metaphor. We might think of the idea of the 'movement towards insight' in *EFM.*

7. Finally not only should the metaphorical nature of reality be unmasked but the power relations behind the metaphors could also be exposed. This would enable participants to be aware of their own history and take part in their own and others' transformation.

We have already noted that *EFM* seems to combine at least three of Graham, Walton and Ward's (2005) seven methods of theological reflection. However working on the course in the context of a conference on their book I came to realise that there are other connections with more of their methods. The starting point of the 'microscope method' resonates well with the first method called 'theology by heart' since it uses 'living human documents' following the Clinical Pastoral Education model (as noted above). The tradition source in *EFM* TR links with the third method – 'telling God's story' – canonical narrative theology as does the culture source (at least potentially) with 'theology in the vernacular' – local theologies, the seventh method. Our critique that the course is individualistic is supported by the only method that is really absent from the course – the fourth one; 'writing the body of Christ' or corporate theological reflection.

Before moving on to the interview data it is worth stating at this point that the home study material is essentially pure information – whether for instance describing

historical criticism in the Hebrew Scriptures or Enlightenment theology. The hermeneutical task is left entirely to the TR process.

c) Interviews

Evaluation of the interview transcribed texts took place using the tactics of Miles and Hubermann as in case study one (Robson: 2002: 483-485). Numbers in brackets e.g. (13) refer to the number of the interview question found in appendix IV, section 4.

Since the interviews are triangulated with other data they do give a helpful long-term perspective from 'course finishers' in contrast to the more immediate initial group observations and focus 'TR' groups. We are testing for patterns and offering explanations which are then tested themselves – particularly against the exceptions.

On the basis of semi-structured interviews the interviewees were all asked the same 19 questions with some deviations where appropriate. The interviews begin with some general scene-setting and putting-at-ease questions and then work through the 'microscope method,' its elements; metaphor; four sources; perspective questions. Then there are some outcomes questions which eventually return to triangulate some of the initial questions about the experience of doing TR and its on-going use in participants' lives and 'ministry.'

The questions were formulated after the initial group observations, which in this case was important as I could interview in some sense as a 'course insider' and gain the respect of the participants early on in the interview with my understanding of the course.

The initial questions (1-3) show a group of *EFM* graduates[151] who have had a common experience which was generally good. A scaling of participants' replies to the question about their overall experience (2) show 80% having a positive or very positive response to the course. They exhibit the characteristics of adult learners who

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[151] They had finished the course between two and ten years ago and on average about five years ago.

'want to do a course' at this appropriate point in their faith journeys.[152] Some were put under peer pressure from other course members or from clergy 'championing' the course, but even then recognised the decision to join was a personal one.[153]

What was intriguing in the data analysis was the presence of one strong exception (Mary) and another slightly less strong exception (Mike). There was also one 'extreme case,' (Robson, 2002) Bill, who had so internalized the use of metaphor that his speech was constantly infused with it.[154] In addition there were strong emotional and intellectual reactions as interviewees remembered their experiences of encountering TR (as a whole) and the use of metaphor for the first time (4, 5). These were strong both positively and negatively in relation to TR. On the other hand apart from the two exceptions all the other interviewees demonstrated a wide range of cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes from the course (12-14, 20) and without equivocation put these down to the effect of 'doing TR' (15) alongside the weekly home study (i.e. the home study on its own would not have had the same effect).

I propose then to interpret the interview data collected under three headings, the first of which attempts a way of understanding the data which takes into account the exceptions (Richards, 2005: 125).

i) Culture Shock in the New World of TR

The interviewees were asked about their initial and later reactions to 'TR'[155] and the use of metaphor (4,5). They nearly all reported that TR as a whole was very difficult at first and there were only four positive initial reactions to the use of metaphor. In addition the group of interviewees was divided over their longer term reactions to TR.

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[152] So they are probably ready to move from stage 3 (received faith) to stage 4 (owned faith) on James Fowler's typology of *Stages of Faith* (1981). So Joan said 'I felt there was something more I needed to do' and Gail; 'I came to this point in my life that I felt I needed something, didn't quite know what it was…'

[153] e.g. Mike and Hazel.

[154] I counted at least 21 process metaphors used during the interview – although some are repeated or recycled.

[155] In my observations of the course this is how the whole process of theological reflection was referred to by course members and participants whichever of the methods was used. It seemed to be invested in itself with some "mythic" quality.

Some were very positive,[156] virtually all the group were able to do TR somewhat "automatically" after a while, yet some were still unsure about it even at the end of the course.[157]

When asked (for triangulation purposes) towards the end of the interview whether they continue to use TR in the present (16), apart from our two exceptions, everyone admitted to doing something even if it was subconscious, but only one person used the actual method step-by step in his own church-based lay ministry (John). In general the method was 'adapted' or 'natural now' or 'done in my head.' In addition, as reported earlier when asked if the course would have had the same effect on the participants if TR had not been present (15) all but the same two answered negatively.

The clues to making sense of this data came in the question relating to the use of metaphor; Mike described it as 'foreign'; Gail as 'terribly, terribly difficult'; Jim as 'exciting and strange.'

I realised another metaphor could help me understand what was going on. Joining *EFM* and starting TR was in itself like going to live for some time in an exotic foreign country and the participants were describing undergoing a kind of culture shock. Having experienced this myself I recognised the different reactions within the group of interviewees as authentic responses to the situation they found themselves in.[158]

Culture shock manifests itself in several ways – one of which is to hide away and feel threatened by the new environment. Some never get over this and either leave or find ways of distancing themselves permanently from what is really going on (like the elder daughter in Kingsolver's novel). It seems this is how we can understand the exception of Mary who found it difficult to answer many of my questions. She herself

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[156] Linda: 'Smashing, because I love TR.' John: 'I loved the [TR] …'

[157] Gail; 'I think we ended the four years still being sceptical about it.' Ruth; 'I can still [i.e. now at distance] say I'm not sure whether I cracked the whole thing…'

[158] There is an extensive theoretical literature on culture shock, but a good narrative example of the different human reactions to it is found in Barbara Kingsolver's novel *The Poisonwood Bible* (2000, London: Faber & Faber).

puts the reason down to her old age (she was the oldest of the interviewees) but behind this is a cultural distancing of herself from the other group members and the TR process, a preference for other methods of study and a previous course she had been on. Mike also fits here although his interview was problematical in that he had 'prepared thoroughly' for it and only after it was over did he divulge what he really wanted to say – which was fruitful and less negative than the impression he had given up to that point.

Another reaction in culture shock is the equal and opposite of withdrawal and that is 'going native' which is, it seems what Bill did and he has permanently interiorised the change now. In fact twice in the interview he likened *EFM* to learning a language – pointing to Schreiter's idea of performance again (see further below - iii).

In general however the first few weeks and months in a new culture are a mixture of difficult, strange, exotic and even exciting new experiences (as with Jim above). Some focus more on the difficulties of being in the new place and unless they learn the language and culture thoroughly never really understand what is going on around them (Gail and Ruth). Others through the ups and downs of the change become acclimatised and begin to enjoy their new surroundings and learn from it so that it also changes them permanently over time. It seems there is evidence that this is what happened for the majority of the interviewees as we shall see.

It may also be possible to extend the metaphor to finishing the course being like leaving the exotic country and 'coming home.' Only a few of the interviewees could remember at the distance they were from the course specific details about metaphors they had used or insights they had had. The technical details of the TR method had also been lost – so no-one remembered the perspective questions in detail or how they related to theological themes (9). When occasionally the interviewees tried the method on others without adaptation it didn't really work and people wondered what it was all about (17). These are all experiences that returnees find on coming 'home' – the detail of life in the country is lost – specific memories are there and the changes

that have occurred in the person, but these are not usually appreciated in the home country.

In conclusion then what is fascinating here is that the course itself is, in a 'macro' way, modelling the 'micro' process of doing a TR – entering another world in order to be changed. This is probably not a conscious objective on the part of the course creators, but it is clearly an effect of the TR process they offer. Key to the success of the project then is the mentor who is able to negotiate the culture shock for the participants – as a 'trans-world' professional.[159]

The outcome of all this is that participants see the world they actually live in via the hermeneutical process of TR in a new way – as Rose said, to use a different metaphor[160], it was like 'putting on God glasses.'

ii) Negotiating position – Tolerance

In contrast to TR overall, metaphors and perspective questions, the element of the process that received most approval in the interviews was that of the use of the four sources (8). Rose adapted them in another setting minus the 'technical' language and found them very useful. Others focused on one or two of the sources as more helpful than others. Some respondents mixed them up with the perspective questions, which was understandable given their distance from the course as explained above.

There is a suggestive connection here with the responses to question 13 about the affective outcomes of the course. Remarkably 8 out of the 15 interviewees mentioned the word tolerance and/or inclusivity as something that had changed for them in their attitudes. Another five (leaving our two exceptions) offered a relational outcome to this question – something about dealing better and more happily with the 'other.'

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[159] There is some evidence for this from the interviews – John stated this overtly and others mentioned help they had had from *EFM's* national mentor trainers in making sense of the process.

[160] It goes without saying that Bill also used the same metaphor when referring to apprenticing new group members: 'I suppose it's giving them the TR specs.'

I believe the use of the sources is key here and while tolerance could be expected to be a general outcome of a course at this level it is remarkable the consistency with which it was revealed. Several used the idea of stating 'position' when describing events or episodes as examples in this area. So Gail:

> I also learned to appreciate Christianity in all its diversity. I learned, I tend to quite like, not a charismatic type of worship, but I certainly like a lively type of worship but I learned to appreciate stillness and quiet and contemplative worship – and all the different styles. I could see much more this broad church and I'm quite comfortable. It doesn't change for me and it doesn't change how particularly, what I prefer, or what I believe but it makes me think I'm not necessarily right.

Gail later has a recent example of when she negotiated her position on inclusive language in a group that was quite divided over it.

The metaphor combined with positional thinking also enables participants to see from another's standpoint, as Deb did:

> Also using these metaphors and when you get inside the metaphors and you begin to see – you are out of yourself. You are trying to see things, what the situation is like for other people within the metaphor – which is something I'd never really tried to do - was think like somebody else would in a given situation.

Once again here is significant evidence that that entering another world ('you are out of yourself') provides a pathway for significant change.

iii) Performance of Faith – Life as Ministry as 'gospel'

The overall purpose of the course as stated above is that participants take their place as the baptized of God who are the 'ministers' of the church in the widest sense. Unfortunately because of the meaning of the word ministry in a UK Church context this makes the title of the course problematical as it seems to suggest something entirely focused on church as one or two of the interviewees pointed out; e.g. Sheila:

> I don't like the name ...I think everybody I have ever spoken to, my husband included (he had a real panic attack when I said I was doing it) assumes that it's something to do with being ordained – at the end you're going to be a Vicar basically.

However fourteen of the fifteen interviewees offered significant outcomes for themselves (even Mike who disclosed his after the end of the formal questions). These outcomes were holistic in the sense that they related to people's personal, social, church, business and community lives.

Gail claims to have been 'cured' by *EFM* of the burning need she started the course with to "have" a ministry - at the end of course she spoke in a final meeting;

> I said to them after four years of *EFM* and being together I want you to know I'm cured [laughs].

Others were able to deal with personal bereavement and life-threatening cancers. Money and lifestyle were issues for others which had been worked through. Business ethics became much more important for John as a salesman in an international company. Thus the course fulfils its aim of understanding the whole of life as ministry – as Gail put it in somewhat of a cliché; 'walking the talk.'[161] This is significant as there is extensive research which shows that church attendance is not usually helpful in enabling Christians connect their faith with daily life, especially their work.[162]

This understanding extended to the question on what the 'gospel' was for the participants and whether this had changed as result of the course (11). It may be that the question was not very well formulated, but it seems that either the participants did not work with the assumption of a 'core' set of beliefs or that simply this was not an issue since again all of life was now 'gospel.' So Rose:

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[161] Also Viv; 'So I think my whole life is a ministry'; Joan: 'Ministry is just a part of my life – it's there all the time.'
[162] see e.g. Board of Education, Church of England (1999), *Called to New Life: The World of Lay Discipleship* London: CHP.

...it [TR] heightens your awareness that the whole of your life is the gospel, is the good news.

Jim expressed this well in describing a change for him from a set of creedal beliefs to what he calls 'Christian faithfulness:'

For me, ... before *EFM* I think I thought in terms of faith as being something that one adhered to, a creed, a set of beliefs. ... I think [now] in terms of Christian faithfulness ... it's much more about faithfulness and much less about things that you adhere to.

Further research would need to be done to understand how notions of gospel drove the performance of the participants or whether since personal positions are always affirmed some participants remained with unchallenged assumptions about core doctrines. A few participants hinted at the possibility of the latter in some of their responses – e.g. John and Ruth. On the other hand Bill was clear that his motivation for action was not humanistic, as he put it, but specifically Christian – the group was definitely not a club made up of like-minded people.

In concluding this section we can see that there is much evidence of 'genuine performance of faith' resulting from the course.[163] The majority of interviewees fulfilled the overall objective of the course – taking up their 'ministry' as the baptized. This performance includes worship (which the sessions always finished with) and which was remarked on by several participants.[164] Inculturation then seems to be happening and this was tested by the final part of the case study.

An objection may be, as noted above, that these outcomes could be expected after four years of any course at this level. However we need to be discerning here. Although we do not have statistics on the drop-out rate from *EFM* or any data from such participants,[165] the very length of the course itself is noteworthy in that it has been completed by significant numbers of people. That they remain committed to it

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[163] We have already noted Bill's reference to language learning, Gail likens the process to learning to drive a car and others refer to its fluidity and rhythm once the technique has been mastered.

[164] Actually this was Mike's significant outcome – being able to lead imaginative worship much to his own surprise.

[165] Again a useful area for further research.

for so long must be significant (especially since most of the groups work on a fluid membership, so it's not just the group dynamic that holds them) – even Mary stayed to the end, despite struggling with it.

d) Focus Groups Modelling *EFM* Theological Reflection

In both groups I explained that we would start with a metaphor chosen by myself and in the second one I gave them the option of an explanation of why it was chosen, but this was declined. In this way they were unaware at the start that the issue would be to some extent 'Englishness.'

Deciding on a starting metaphor, rather than having to choose one was disconcerting for some in the two groups, as was having, in their eyes, a new and untried facilitator. However we did overcome these issues and both groups I felt demonstrated the power of the *EFM* imaginative method to deconstruct the starting metaphor and build a Christian inculturated response to it. The participants had no problems being drawn back into the *EFM* method and positively enjoyed and were energised by the experience.

I learnt that it is the perspective questions that enable the deconstruction of the metaphor to take place while affirming aspects of its goodness (McCleary's stages 4 & 5). Thus begins both the incarnational living within the reality of the metaphorical world and its possible transformation into something better. I believe, therefore that the perspective questions could possibly be simplified into the incarnational and pilgrim (transformational) elements of inculturation.

In one of the groups there was a specific moment when the metaphor was unmasked – 'that saying is an English myth,' remarked a male member! In the other group an insight was that, as the English are also 'us' the use of the myth shows up our own insecurities (exactly the point Kate Fox was making). The groups very quickly then got through McCleary's stages to at least stage 6.

The tradition source was helpful in both groups – each using a very different verse of Scripture (one each from OT and NT). These offered further critique of the starting metaphor as they were brought into conversation with it.

Both groups dealt with some very deep and personal issues in the discussion – ranging over identity, community, belonging, the meaning of home and the physical buildings in which we live.

Interestingly the position statements towards the end of the session provided more of a conclusion to the reflection than the actions which were offered.[166] It was here that the insights gained could be translated into a kind of statement of faith and the platform from which action could be taken – a few examples demonstrate the inculturated nature of these positions:

> The castle is all gift
> The walls of church and home must be porous
> The castle as home is mine and not mine – it's to be shared
> This isn't my real home – it's not permanent

The actions offered were not as significant, but some were clearly affirmed in their attitudes to their current home and others were challenged about it – one even relating the reflection to recent thoughts about moving house.

This final element of the case study then fulfilled its objectives; I was able to deliver and learn from two *EFM* type sessions and develop my skills; the participants were well able to pick up TR again at some distance from the course – they put on (or perhaps focused in a particular direction) their 'God glasses'; the groups showed a significant engagement with an 'English myth' and discovered an approach to it which demonstrated inculturation in action.

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[166] We noted this above from Killen and De Beer that changes in position may be as significant as actions undertaken – this could be given more emphasis in *EFM* from my limited experience.

Conclusion

We have examined in detail through interview and practical experience all the stages of the *EFM* TR process. Overall it fulfils its objectives in educating people for 'ministry' in the widest sense.

The method is comprehensive (combining possibly six of Graham, Walton and Ward's methods of theological reflection), complex and taking it up is like 'going to an exotic country.' Killen and De Beer's assumption then that it is for everyone may be mistaken[167] – however for the majority of participants it offered significant cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes which can be related to inculturation.

The perspective questions for our pedagogical purposes could be simplified and indeed broadened (using, say some of Green's themes) into two main areas – incarnation and transformation.

It is noted that a weakness of the microscope method[168] is that actions remain personal to individual participants and groups don't seem to take up any corporate action, political or otherwise (apart from occasionally continuing to meet after the end of the course because the group dynamic had been particularly good).

It should be possible on this basis to design a pedagogical course to engage participants imaginatively with their own culture using popular sayings and proverbs (possibly, for English participants developed from Fox's material). There is a similar approach made to American culture by the missiologist Stan Nussbaum (1998) using the common sayings of everyday language.

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[167] This could also be conclusion from answers to interview question 18 – some of which were quite equivocal and careful about a blanket recommendation of the course –e.g. Gail, Bill and Viv.

[168] Once again we note that the 'Wide-angle Lens' method (USST, 2002: 2-3-1) does include 'social and civic' outcomes for participants – but this does seem under-used in the groups studied perhaps because participants come from different churches and social contexts.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

In the final chapter of the thesis there are three sections. We begin with a 're-vision' of the three case studies, taken together now at the end of the project in the light of the literature review in chapters two and three as well as relevant further reading which has emerged along the way. This is especially the case for the final study with *EFM*, since it is the most significant for the research question and remained in a somewhat 'unfinished' state at the end of chapter seven. Secondly the conclusions to the research questions are presented alongside some further issues that arise from them and a listing of pertinent pedagogical good practice. Finally a further section sets out some theological and missiological implications of the project in general and for the researcher in particular, before concluding by exploring what areas require further study and proposing future action.

Section a)   Revisiting the Case Studies

The first task in this chapter is to review the case studies in the perspective of the whole project - re-examining them again for the insights they can offer to the overall thrust of the research. One approach to this review would be to use Bevans' *Models of Contextual Theology* (2002) to place the three courses' methodologies and approaches to culture on his continuum.[169] Thus broadly speaking the *Alpha* course fits into his first translation or adaptation model; the *Ubuntu* Lent Course into the praxis model; and *EFM* is a mixture of the synthetic and transcendental models.

As such all have value and interest for the inculturation project, but with perhaps increasing sophistication. Bevans concludes his book by stating that use of the models may also be better driven by context, i.e. that a particular model may fit more appropriately in a particular context and moment in time (2002: 139-140).

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[169] Another might be to refer back to the foundational material on hermeneutics discussed in chapter three. The *Alpha* course is firmly rooted hermeneutically in the enlightenment paradigm; strongly individualistic and dichotomising fact and value. The pastoral cycle, as we shall see is founded in socio-critical hermeneutics and *EFM* draws heavily on imagination and metaphor following the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur (see also Graham, Walton and Ward, 2005: 63-67).

i)   The *Alpha* Course

What is noteworthy in the *Alpha* course at some distance from the study is the assumption of the course, which we can now affirm, that teaching the Christian faith will be transformational. The critical element is embedded within enculturated formational material and as we have seen this is good educational practice. The course therefore has the potential to offer both assimilation and accommodation in the participants. Clearly in some individual cases this is what happens and is the reason why the course continues to be a (limited) success. The conclusion of the case study that *Alpha* fitted best in the prison context confirms Bevans' thesis above.

However *Alpha*'s outcomes are mitigated by several factors. First its unidirectional methodology or 'theory-to practice' approach limits the critical element in terms of the course content. A related aspect is that assumptions about the prior "faith" knowledge of the participants and an assumption about a particular enculturated content of the 'gospel' which is presented as *the* authentic faith lead to a negation of the critical potential of the formational elements of the course. *Alpha* may then have a limited "shelf-life" and other approaches to the current UK context more suited to Alan Mann's 'sinless' society are required.[170]

ii)   The *Ubuntu* Lent Course

Case study two offers for the research, on reflection, a helpful anticipation of the destination of the research and an example of the limitations of the pastoral cycle.

The cycle is fundamentally hermeneutical which is what Green understands to be the key to theological reflection (Le Cornu, 2006: 18). What is suggestive as the hermeneutical process is played out in the case study is the way in which engagement with the cultural 'other' introduces other kinds of "texts" for that process. Hermeneutics is not just about the reader and biblical text. So participants have to negotiate their 'position' and their culture as they try to understand what it is to be 'in the shoes of the other' in relation to their own life experience. The biblical text also becomes another world which has to be negotiated. Thus the four sources of *EFM*

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[170] Another possibility might be to explore whether the enculturated nature of the content could be deliberately 'fore-grounded' (see below) or even presented more critically alongside other approaches.

and its method of entering of other worlds are present, if not explicitly so, within the study of the *Ubuntu* Lent Course.

Another point of interest is what Thiselton called the 'premature assimilation' of texts within the horizons of the 'reader.' Such assimilation he states traps the 'reader' in their own horizons. There was clear evidence to support this in the case study as we established the inverse relationship between 'cultural dissonance' and level of threat as well as an unwillingness (which I also noted in the action research on theological reflection) to engage with the full 'otherness' of the biblical text. Thus although the cyclical method promises feedback from context to content in the case study there was little evidence for it.

We noted in chapter three how the Pastoral cycle's hermeneutics are those of the socio-critical school which lead to an emphasis in educational methodology of the critical over the formational. Thus there was resistance to using such a methodology in a *Lent Course* which carries an expectation of being formative and based on the events of the Passion of Christ. Nevertheless such an approach is valid in certain circumstances. The definition of inculturation, for some commentators includes socio-economic issues as we remarked in chapter two and the praxis model of contextual theology utilised in the *Ubuntu* course remains important.

Since socio-critical hermeneutics 'grow on the same hedgerow' as the whole enlightenment project[171] another criticism of the pastoral cycle is that it does not result in or deal with liturgy, ritual and symbol (Evans, R., 1987: 277), rather it emphasises the critical and theoretical as we have seen. There was evidence for this in the case study as the observed group discussions sometimes became adversarial when dealing with a difficult 'other' and hardly ever resulted in liturgical or prayerful action.

Alison Le Cornu, an adult theological educator, in recent research (2006: 16) has identified two distinct 'ways of knowing' following Belenky and others; the Connected

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[171] And so for westerners perhaps the 'liberationist' approach is not so much of an 'epistemological break.'

and Separate – 'the one relational and predisposed to trust and the other more adversarial and predisposed to doubt.' The pastoral cycle is particularly associated, she claims with the Separate way of knowing. The cycle's concomitant hermeneutics, she states therefore (2006: 32), 'do not suffice,' because of the necessary internalization of knowledge that is the result of theological reflection. We will return to this important concept below.

Perhaps in conclusion, following Bevans we could state that the pastoral cycle may not be the best method to use with the non-poor as it seems to be too theoretical, critical and confrontational.[172]

iii)   *Education for Ministry*

Reflecting further on case study three after interacting with some advocates of metaphorical theology such as McFague (1975, 1982, 1987) and Green (1998 [1989]), leads me to the conclusion that the metaphor offered in the case study could be fruitfully collapsed to a simile, as McCleary advocates in step three of his generative metaphorical dialogue. The experience of the participants was best understood using the metaphor of culture shock. However it may be helpful to explore the possibility that the participants were *actually* being inducted into a new and very real epistemological world. If this were so then being formed theologically through the *EFM* course is to enter a different world in order to develop another way of looking at the world itself. An implication of the study then is that there was a deep 'epistemological break' occurring in the participants through this new TR method.

This immediately reminds us of Bevans' fifth model of contextual theology – the transcendental which is employed when (2002: 103):

> ... there are some things we cannot understand without a complete change of mind. Some things demand a radical shift in perspective, a change in

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[172] Further research would be required here to see if there is good or better practice that could be applied to the educational tactics employed when utilising the pastoral cycle under these circumstances or whether it indeed it is simply not sufficient or even that there is a limit here to what educational interventions can achieve. See also the whole of Evans, Evans and Kennedy (1987) for approaches to the non-poor.

horizon... Until we make this shift, whatever we are trying to understand will defy understanding.

The transcendental model shifts theology from (2002: 108):

> ... thinking of [it] as some kind of content to be studied, written about or lectured on to thinking of it as an actual activity of seeking understanding as an authentic believer and cultural subject.

This is a 'turn to the subject' as the transcendental knower following Bernard Lonergan and others. Of course the model is open to the criticism of a strong subjectivity devoid of objectivity leading to relativism, as Bevans points out. Nevertheless, as we have seen, when synthesised, as it is with other models[173] *EFM* is a very powerful tool.

It seems that use of the imagination is key to the transcendental model. Bevans offers the work of Sallie McFague as one exemplar of the model. McFague's point of departure is in the parables of Jesus (1975) where she develops the idea of the imaginative metaphor that both 'is and is not' and can become a 'model' when the metaphor is controlling or overarching (1982). The method becomes, for her, a peculiarly Protestant way of doing imaginative theology over against David Tracy's analogical (Catholic) approach which she states employs more symbol than metaphor (1982: 14). This is because she wants to stress the shocking aspects of the 'is/is not' possibilities of the metaphors she herself uses. Thus we have an exploration of 'the world as God's body' and God as 'mother, lover and friend' (1987). Her theology is personal and contextual to North America, but theology in this key is not limited to such professionals. Any person can articulate their faith in this authentic way as long as they recognise their subjective position (Bevans, 2002: 106-107).

There are connections here to be made with the shift that was demonstrated in some of the *EFM* participants such as Jim who noted the transformation from 'believing' a creedal statement to living 'Christian faithfulness.' There is an authenticity and

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[173] As noted in the case study there were elements of at least six of seven methods of TR outlined by Graham Walton and Ward (2005) which correspond to at least three of Bevans' models of contextual theology.

integration about the *EFM* graduates at the end of the course which echoes Magesa's call for an integrated spirituality as the goal of inculturation in the individual that we noted in chapter two.

It is worth theoretically examining at this point what is occurring in *EFM* through using the imagination. The imagination, we might conjecture, is able to bridge seemingly unbridgeable enlightenment dialectics such as the sacred / secular and nature / grace. Garrett Green offers imagination as 'the point of contact' between God and the world (1998 [1989]: 40):

> Imagination, properly understood as the name of a basic human ability - one of the things that people *do* in the course of living in, acting on, and thinking about the world - identifies that specific point where, according to Christian belief and experience, the Word of God becomes effective in human lives. More formally: imagination is the anthropological point of contact for divine revelation. It is not the "foundation," the "ground," the "preunderstanding," or the "ontological basis" for revelation; [*contra* Barth] it is simply the place where it happens - better the way in which it happens.

Following Green it is possible to understand that there are Christian imaginative paradigms[174] ('what the world is like') that have operated throughout the history of the church – often based around the creed (1998 [1989]: 67). It is these paradigms that are being shifted in a course like *EFM*. Green criticises McFague as overly subjective because she privileges experience without defining it and without recognising its prior formation in a 'paradigmatic imagination.' All data are theory laden. This is important because we have quoted *EFM* participants summing up their experience as like 'putting on God glasses,' but this metaphor only helps if we recognise that the God glasses they put on replace a different pair that may not have been adequate for the task.

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[174] A concept again developed from the philosophy and history of science and championed by Thomas Kuhn in (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd Ed. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press – a book which Bevans, McFague and Green are all indebted to.

Green takes McFague to task over her theoretical understanding of metaphor (which is nevertheless central to religious language) which leads to a mistake in thinking about its function (1998 [1989]: 133):

> Religious language is not the expression of pre-linguistic religious experience but rather speech arising out of commitment to religious paradigms.

The metaphors generated by *EFM* participants do not arise in a vacuum – they describe an experience and agree on a metaphor to identify the controlling point in that experience but they do this as believers already. It is worth quoting Green at length here (1998 [1989]: 134):

> ... because religion is imaginative, religious language is metaphorical, and theology is hermeneutical ... Christian faith can be characterized accordingly as *faithful imagination* - living in conformity to the vision rendered by the Word of God in the Bible. Theology is one function of that faithful life, performing the task of critical interpretation. Biblical literalists, on the one hand, confuse this function by denying the imaginative character of scripture, thus effectively identifying revelation with theology. Liberal theology, on the other hand, confuses the function of theology by reversing the priority of imagination and experience, thus in effect making experience the criterion for revelation rather than the other way round. A truly critical theology performs the task of interpreting the imaginative language of scripture on behalf of the community seeking to live in conformity to its vision. Like all interpretive activity, theology will therefore be historically and culturally grounded, not speaking from some neutral vantage point but in and for its human context.

We noted this grounding in *EFM* in the use of the four sources which place the participants at a specific point when they want to make a statement of faith (or 'position' as it is technically known in the jargon of the course). Here is clearly an important factor in the search for good practice in pedagogy for inculturation.

A further issue arising from the third case study is that of the remarkable unanimity of the participants around the issue of developing a 'tolerance' for the other at the end of the course and their ability to negotiate their position. Why might this be so?

A clue is to be found, I believe, in the ecumenical work of Timoteo Gener (2005) in the Philippines. Gener employs the theology of David Tracy to negotiate a 'middle way' response to the inculturation of folk religion between evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics. Before we can understand how this applies to the research we need to outline Tracy's approach to theology, which we noted was in the background of the development of *EFM* as 'revised critical correlation' (Graham, Walton and Ward, 2005).

Tracy (1981) emphasizes the universality of hermeneutics for human beings with every person living within a bounded horizon both temporally and spatially and explicating that space. Tracy develops the notion of the classic which allows this human interpretation to have a universal and yet particular manifestation. A classic can be many things – including (1981: 102) 'the reading of a text, the reflections of a solitary thinker ... the witnessing of a work of art…. texts, images, symbols...' and as such it provokes, challenges and transforms a person's horizons such that following Van Ghent; 'something else might be the case.' Since the classic is essentially bigger than itself – it holds a surplus of meaning; it does not lead to propositional colonising truth. Classics are in themselves pluralistic (1981: 113) which allows them to be negotiated through dialogue in the public realm. Meaning is developed in relation to a classic (Gener, 2005: 33) 'through the related strategies of intensification of particularity and intensification of distanciation.'

In relation to religion and then theology the dialectic that Tracy has discerned in the classic becomes two distinct but complementary ways of doing theology. He follows Ricoeur here in developing first an understanding of manifestation and proclamation (1981: 204) in religions. Manifestation is the pre-verbal use of myth, symbol and ritual and in Christianity the 'Christian sacrament' (1981: 214). This is the basis of his analogical imagination. Proclamation is clearly the verbal element in religion, the Word in Christianity, and is the basis of so-called dialectical theology. Thus word and sacrament are the two forms in which the classic 'Christ event' is present to the Christian community (Gener, 2005: 34).

Analogical theology is therefore a language, an interpretation of reality, 'of ordered relationships articulating similarity-in-difference' (Tracy, 1981: 408) leading to a harmony in the world between self, others, world and God. Analogical theology however holds a dialectical element embedded within it as there is always, in the analogy similarity-within-difference.

Dialectical theology denies any analogy of being in stressing the radical disjuncture between humanity and God. It is the theology of the reformation as well Barth and the liberation theologians. Nevertheless Tracy believes that dialectical theology has to take an analogical turn just as analogical theology is not properly devoid of a dialectical element.

Here then is a position related to Ricoeur's hermeneutic of both suspicion and retrieval, Le Cornu's Separate (dialectical) and Connected (analogical) ways of knowing and the double movement of the pilgrim and indigenising elements in inculturation. This is the reason therefore that Gener can employ Tracy to help in an ecumenical dilemma requiring dialogue and why through *EFM* participants learn to hold together, I believe, the analogical and dialectical approaches – complementary visions or imaginations (Gener: 2005: 50).[175]

EFM takes an analogical approach overall in employing the use of metaphor and imagination (and this contributes to the 'epistemological break' for the participants) in its hermeneutical approach. However in the 'perspective questions' that are used to interrogate the world of the metaphor or the 'text' of the tradition, there are four or five areas that are used in each reflection – creation, sin, judgement, redemption including the eschatological dimension) and sometimes repentance. As was pointed out in chapter seven, taken overall, these themes are more dialectical than analogical in approach.

I was concerned at the end of the case study to possibly conflate these questions into the pilgrim and indigenising elements of the inculturation movement. However I

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[175] Terry Veling also comes to the same conclusion (2005: 205-214).

think now that we could be more explicit and offer improved perspective questions which hold the dialectical within the analogical – which is how we have noted both the death of Christ functions within the Christ event and how adult theological education may better proceed with the critical element embedded in the formational. Thus a set of 'cosmological' questions might revolve around creation[176] (what is this world like?), incarnation (what is it like to live in this world and what 'gospel' does it evoke?), death and resurrection (what deaths are required in this world to transform it) and the eschaton[177] (what is the best possible picture we could have of this world?).

Section b)   Conclusions to the Research Questions

i)   Initial Conclusions

The research questions and qualitative hypotheses, including a definition of inculturation, which support them, were set out in chapter four, based on work done in the initial chapters. Actually on reflection, through the research, the qualitative hypothesis about a connection between inculturation and adult theological education has become 'fused' together via hermeneutics with the other qualitative hypothesis which offers a definition of inculturation.

We have established therefore, I believe, in every related field inherent in the study a confirmation of the definition of inculturation as a double movement of the pilgrim and indigenising principles. Ricoeur's post-Gadamerian hermeneutics call for both suspicion and retrieval and Le Cornu affirms these separate and connected 'ways of knowing.' Sociologically inculturation places itself between acculturation and enculturation, anthropologically between emic and etic perspectives. The double movement in inculturation is also discernible as something common to humanity in the educational field through Piaget's concepts of accommodation and assimilation (which in turn are derived from animal and human biology). Astley holds together

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[176] Which could include historical consciousness – what is this world like now and how has it changed?
[177] I believe this perspective requires more emphasis as it provides 'horizons of ultimacy and universality' following Pannenberg (Thiselton, 1992: 25).

formation and criticality in his approach to Christian religious education. Theologically Tracy offers the complementary visions of analogical and dialectical approaches.

Thus hermeneutics, as a universal human endeavour, bridges the missiological field of inculturation and that of adult theological education, is the reason the second qualitative hypothesis holds and has allowed the project to develop in the manner described.[178]

Employment of the imagination is the process by which the double movement of analogical and dialectical theology can proceed to draw out any 'rooted novelty' or newness which is the outcome of inculturation. In conclusion to the main research question we can offer a positive response; that it is possible to develop an educational course, based on the *EFM* approach, which will deliver inculturation.

Such a conclusion, while clear in what it affirms does need some qualification. The aim of the research was to reach a point like this, while understanding that it was not necessarily an 'end-point' of the journey. The scope of the thesis does not allow us at this stage to begin another cycle of the research which would identify in detail the content of an actual course and test it in practice. In section c) however we will make some initial observations as to the future direction of the project.

Additionally, at the present time the evidence gained from the research for the positive conclusion is stronger in the direction of inculturation at the individual level of 'spiritual integration' and authenticity rather than the corporate. Translating the success for the individual of a long and sophisticated course like *EFM* for a local group, church or wider body of Christians would be another major challenge for the future.

Two further issues arise from this conclusion – firstly what is the picture we have built up of the 'rooted novelty' nature of inculturation, which we will deal with in a moment.

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[178] Given the connection we have made with practical theology throughout the research it is interesting to note that Terry Veling (2005) makes the same conclusions about the importance of hermeneutics for practical theology – see especially chapters 2 & 3.

Secondly in what proportion and/or in what relationship are we to understand the analogical and dialectical visions as they relate to developing pedagogy for inculturation?

ii) Analogical - Dialectical approaches to Pedagogy for Inculturation
Actually there is choice here. Just as Bevans' models are all authentic and appropriately applicable to different contexts so we can consciously relate any pedagogical approach to a particular situation.

We have noted how the pastoral cycle emphasises the dialectical over the analogical and this is Johns' preference as a Pentecostal (1993: 23). It may be that the cycle is best suited when working with contexts on the underside of socio-economic life[179] or where there is pain, injustice and marginalisation.

McFague has majored on the dialectical nature of metaphors and models within an overall analogical approach; Bevans notes (2002: 112), as a fellow North American that hers is 'one of the most authentic' theologies for that continent that he is aware of. Whether it travels much beyond her context is another question and one that she herself consciously does not address.

Le Cornu (2005b) identifies a little studied method of theological reflection and learning which she calls 'assimilative' in a monastic setting. It derives from Leclercq and his 'theology of admiration' and majors on the analogical while being deeply transformative. It is suggestive for our purposes because it seems to catch up the 'whole self' as a result of regular prayer and worship. It is the 'embodied proclamation' which Garrett Green calls for in worship, particularly with reference to the sacraments (1998 [1989]: 152).

Green, himself as a 'post-liberal' (Brueggemann, 2005: 161) is concerned with holding together the analogical and dialectical through 'acts of paradigmatic

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[179] Interestingly Laurie Green (1990) initially developed his version of the Pastoral cycle with people in a poor urban part of Birmingham around "Spaghetti Junction."

imagination.' Green's approach seems closest to what is happening in *EFM* and is fruitful I believe, as is evidenced by the case study, for our current UK context. Le Cornu (2005b: 443) would concur as she offers her 'related' way of believing which relies on integration of faith and experience as the 'only truly viable route forward.'

Here then is another caveat to the initial positive conclusion we made to the research question. There are a range of approaches that could be taken when developing a specific pedagogical intervention for inculturation. There is no 'one size fits all' course that would 'work' in every context. Each setting and its needs has to be taken into account when identifying which approach may be most appropriate.

iii)   Picturing inculturation

In chapter three we touched on the possibility of "measuring" inculturation. As the research has proceeded it has become clear that although there is some helpfulness in evaluating pedagogical interventions for inculturation in terms of knowledge, meaning, attitudes, values and behaviour these outcomes do not give us the whole picture. Furthermore the inquiry has been ultimately a theological one which has rightly therefore employed mainly qualitative not quantitative research methods.

We have noted 'conversions' through *Alpha* and theological action being taken about local drug taking through the pastoral cycle. In and through the *EFM* study there was personal integration of faith and life leading to improved business ethics, a change in 'paradigmatic imagination' from creedal statements to Christian faithfulness. All these are examples of Sedmak's (2002) 'little' or 'local' theologies of the inculturation project. But there is more.

Le Cornu (2005a) develops from Jarvis the notion of internalization in education. She examines particularly the processes of reflection which, according to Jarvis' revised model of Kolb's learning cycle, have a 'horizontal' flow over time towards a quantitative outcome just as we have noted above. She critiques this view and develops a 'vertical' understanding of learning as progressive internalization which is ultimately qualitative. It is what is traditionally known as 'formation' in Christian

religious education. Internalization, she claims proceeds by reflection either on the sign (for a surface approach) or on the signified (for a deep approach) which then results eventually in Polanyi's 'tacit knowing'[180] and existential change. There was plenty of evidence for this in the *EFM* interviewees exemplified by Bill who had internalized the use of metaphor into his everyday speech, but also in others if less obviously so; as Le Cornu remarks (: 175), such knowledge was 'exceedingly difficult to excavate.'

Inculturation work then through pedagogy will be a 'holistic' enterprise of experiential learning (Le Cornu, 2005a). The *EFM* method as Le Cornu points out in a review of TR methods including that of Killen and De Beer (1994) comes close to 'articulating the link between reflection and existential change' (Le Cornu, 2006: 20).

Jim, our *EFM* interviewee has epitomised this qualitative and quantitative nature of inculturation in his confession of 'Christian faithfulness' at the end of the course. This is a faithfulness that can be 'performed' as it interprets the world theologically. Garret Green affirms our position here on performance and the 'grammar' of Christian theology (1998 [1989]: 148):

> Doing theology ... is more like doing literary criticism than elaborating a philosophical system. Christian theology is systematic in the way that the grammar of a natural language is systematic ...

Despite Marx's disavowal of the hermeneutics of the philosophers in history for transformation of society Green concludes his book by stating that (1998 [1989]: 152) 'the most powerful way to change the world is by interpreting it.' As we have noted there is a limit to the 'diverse mix of theological proposals, political programs and moral convictions known today as liberation theology' which still somehow separates theory and practice. It is employing the 'paradigmatic' or faithful imagination that can ultimately affect 'the relationship between the activity of the human spirit and the processes of historical change.'

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[180] i.e. not knowing what you know or better, knowing rather than possessing knowledge – in the same way as biblical or *yada* knowing was described in chapter three.

iv)   Good Practice in Pedagogy for Inculturation

The second part of the research question revolved around developing good practice in pedagogy for inculturation. We recognised that there probably isn't a 'best' practice in the strict sense of a practice that could not be surpassed, because of the nature of education as improvement without a particular endpoint. Furthermore, the discussion related above with regard to the range of appropriate approaches along an analogical-dialectical continuum led to the conclusion that there is not one particular course that would suffice for all contexts.

It was originally suggested there also might be criteria in terms of theory, process and content that could be applied to the practice of a course. However again on reflection at this point in the project criteria sounds too prescriptive given the qualitative nature of the subject. Norms and limits may be a better description of what can be offered here in terms of the research outcomes in relation to 'good practice.'

What follows then is a listing of the most important learning points discovered on the research journey during the cycles of the case studies.

- Adult theological educational interventions are not for everyone, nevertheless as they exist, with good design, they can bridge the gap between implicit and explicit inculturation.
- Inculturation is a theological and hermeneutical *process* which has its correspondence in educational process. Any good educational methodology for inculturation is then likely to be cyclical rather than linear as well as taking account of the 'vertical' or formational elements of the learning process.
- It follows that education for inculturation will always be 'on the way' rather than an end in itself.
- All adult theological education is enculturated, even if it presents itself as 'acultural.' It is important therefore to explicitly 'foreground' culture in the educational process. In this way prior understandings and assumptions can be exposed and future possibilities opened up. Foregrounding of culture would

also go a long way to minimising the 'false universals,' referred to by Gorringe in chapter two, of imperialism, colonisation and, in educational terms indoctrination.

- Different approaches that combine analogical and dialectical theology are equally valid to develop pedagogy for inculturation. There is a slight preference for an analogical/formative approach with the dialectical/critical element embedded within it – especially for the current UK context. The context may ultimately dictate the choice of a particular method.

- In making such a choice again there should be a conscious awareness of what is being left out e.g. a critical historical consciousness in a particular socio-economic context.

- The hermeneutics of inculturation requires the negotiation of 'worlds' or horizons. These are formed at the boundary and the skill of the pedagogical facilitator is the key to helping participants reach the boundaries and cross to other worlds.

- The difficulty (and therefore limit) of developing community, local church inculturated responses from individually focused pedagogy needs to be recognised and faced.

- 'Modelling' of the theory, process and content of the educational material on the context (as in parts of *Alpha*) and the underlying epistemology (as in *EFM*) is good practice.

- Imagination and negotiating horizons and worlds form the content and process of the most helpful of the three courses studied. The idea of cultural dissonance is useful in choosing which kinds of worlds to explore educationally.

- McCleary's stages of 'generative metaphoric dialogue' apply as good practice to the imaginative method.

Section c)   Implications of the Research for Doing Theology and the Future

In this section having presented an endpoint to the original research questions we move on to making further conclusions with regard to the implications of the research and its further possibilities. These conclusions may not necessarily be new or

original, but are of significance to the researcher and any future developments of the project.

i) Hermeneutics, inculturation and practical theology

The case studies as theological and cultural explorations of education and faith in context have drawn us to confirm the possibility of culture being in some way revelatory. If it is true that we can never be certain where Christ is *not*[181] we need to be always open to the possibility of God working through culture. We have concluded since chapter three that inculturation is at root a hermeneutical process and hermeneutics therefore provides a proper "grounding" for it.

Cultural boundaries within which human beings are perpetually situated are then another kind hermeneutical horizon which gives rise to the importance of intercultural hermeneutics for missiology (Schreiter, 1997). Culture, as *EFM* shows is another 'source' of theological reflection and is therefore 'holy ground.'

By a roundabout route we have thus confirmed the importance of the *Missio Dei*; God as missionary in the unity of the three persons.[182] Mission from the beginning in God, through both creation and redemption, is fundamentally about crossing boundaries. The task of the church, its people and ministers is to join in that mission (MPAC, 2004). The degree to which they are able to reach and cross beyond their own cultural boundaries will be the degree to which they are able to interpret faithfully their own culture. That faithful interpretation will be revelatory in the people's time and place, thus enabling the church to anticipate its eschatological future when *panta ta ethne*, all nations and cultures will be represented before God (Rev. 15: 4).

A spirituality of mission then will include the kind of hermeneutical *discernment* of culture that the research has been concerned with. If culture is the human task, what keeps us human, knowing where God is within it, alongside the possibility of God's absence is vital.

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[181] Bevans and Schroeder (2004: 297) quoting the Orthodox theologian Michael Oleksa.
[182] For a full treatment of this idea see Bosch (1991: 389-393).

That there is a process which enables the understanding and discernment of the revelatory nature of culture is a conclusion we have already made. Key to this process is the hermeneutical entering of other worlds to 'play,' as Gadamer put it.[183] A significant moment occurred in the research when I realised that it was not necessary to physically fly to another culture beyond one's own in order to 'play' in another world. The human capacity for imagination allows this process to happen even while we remain in the same physical space.

Thus by negotiating and interpreting different worlds, Christians can *perform* their faith. This is the reason we have made clear connections in the course of the research between inculturation, practical theology and theological reflection. Theological reflection is (Graham, Walton and Ward, 2005: 6); 'a critical, interrogative enquiry into the process of relating the resources of faith to the issues of life.' It proceeds via *praxis* and generates *phronesis,* practical wisdom (Browning, 1991) while incorporating *theoria* and *poiesis.* Ultimately this is the reason why 'happening across' *EFM* in an adult education conference could connect the search for pedagogy for inculturation and theological reflection.

There is a sense then in which theology, because it is hermeneutical, is ultimately pedagogical.

ii) Performance - the 'gospel' revisited

In chapter two we discussed inculturation as the bringing together of gospel and culture rather as the two poles of a battery combine together to give electrical energy. We critiqued any understanding of an 'isolatable' gospel, preferring a universal *process* of translatability which leaves the gospel content always to be found within a creative interaction with culture.

Only in the first case study was there an assumption of fixed gospel content because the translation or adaptation model of contextual theology was being employed.

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[183] See also Browning (1991: 212).

In the third case study we identified the phenomenon of *performance* of faith in the participants which could be construed as the practical theological equivalent of Walls', Sanneh's, and Bediako's concept of translatability. This is why it is so difficult to extricate what 'gospel' means for the participants, since as we have seen performance is arising out of an internalization – a formation; thus they simply are unable to easily answer the question.

We can posit then a missiological confirmation of the approach of Bevans and Schroeder (2004) in that the 'constants' of faith, the universal elements are not isolatable in the same form at any point in space or time.

The Christian narrative cosmology, the 'grammar' of faith, namely creation / incarnation / crucifixion / resurrection and eschaton is performed in the process of inculturation through theological reflection by employing the imagination. Such performance is holistic - it affects body, mind, spirit and results in action, liturgy, worship and ritual. In the process culture is both indwelt under the indigenising principle and critiqued under the pilgrim.

iii)   Imagination as key to inculturation in the postmodern West

Why would a course, which on one level forces UK adult learners (who choose to be there) to study the minutiae of biblical and historical theology for four years, hold its participants for the whole of that period and receive a greater than 80% positive rating at the end? One answer has to be because the participants are captivated by the use of their imaginations through the TR methods to negotiate different worlds. Since the Western world is rapidly changing from modernity to late modernity or post-modernity, the *EFM* approach enables its students to understand the world in which they are in, in a way in which previously they were unable to – thus echoing Bevans' comments about the transcendental model of contextual theology. Here is theology that is not at one removed from ordinary Christians in the academy or the church; it offers them a new future and a grounded, rooted present.

A final conclusion therefore of the study is the importance of the imagination for inculturation in the West and possibly further afield if we follow Gener. Paul Ricoeur,

David Tracy, Garrett Green and Sallie McFague all offer imaginative theological methods that speak in different ways to our culture. On the ground practitioners, such as the New Zealander, Steve Taylor (2005) write of working at boundaries and crossing cultural horizons while drawing on any number of imaginative sources and texts for their practice. Terry Veling's understanding of the whole field of practical theology is fundamentally imaginative and metaphor driven (2005: xviii).

The challenge to the researcher as the journey comes to an end and new beginning is to develop an educational course that synthesises models of contextual theology around an imaginative analogical approach and it is to this that we now turn.

iv)   Future Possibilities

The research project has been described as a journey, given the methodology employed. The problem on some journeys, and this may be one of those, is knowing when to stop, if even for a break. Perhaps, for me, researching the thesis has been somewhat like climbing a mountain in cloud, but on nearing the top the cloud has blown away. The way I have travelled can be reviewed now with clarity and I can also see the way ahead (whether up, round or down!). So my current position feels like the right place to conclude for the moment, knowing that the journey(s) will continue, probably in several directions.

There are two areas that can be helpfully explored as the next stages of the journey, arising from the current position of the researcher. The first is further reflection and 'grounding' of aspects of the project and the second suggestions for the future journey from the new starting point.

The limits of the thesis have precluded further study of some elements of the research that merit treatment in more depth, but here I suggest some directions for the future.

We have identified the importance of pastoral or practical theology and theological reflection for the inculturation project – certainly the publication of Graham, Walton and Ward's (2005) overview of the field of theological reflection was very timely for

the project. Elaine Graham's previous major work *Transforming Practice* (2002[1996]) is also useful here as a corrective to the individuality of *EFM* and possibly the deficit we noted in the pastoral cycle. Graham locates the foundation of pastoral theology in the community and its practice (2002[1996]: 111). Her idea of the formation of practical ideas, attitudes and wisdom in a community, its *habitus,* which is not static but continually undergoing change (2002[1996]: 100-111, following Bourdieu), resonates strongly with the double movement in inculturation. In addition her proposals develop the '*praxis*' model of theological reflection in a particular direction which may be more fruitful than the pastoral cycle alone (Graham, Walton and Ward, 2005: 192–196). There is however criticism of locating the whole theological enterprise in local practice when questions of universality and the place of the scriptures and tradition remain (2005: 195; Bartholomew, 2005: 147).

The whole area of models, metaphor and the imagination, which has been so important in the conclusions, probably needs further theoretical grounding and development. Helpful here is the work of Sam Wells (2004; 2006) as he takes the use of metaphor and imagination to the study of Christian ethics which of course is related to the programme of practical theology as he understands it. Like Graham he locates ethical work firmly in the Christian community (2006), but wants to go much further than narrative or even dramatic approaches, which as we have seen require *performing*. He calls for *improvisation* (2004: 12) to be the character of the community's method for how to live well and act ethically. In describing improvisation Wells proposes a staged process based on the theory of improvisation from the world of the theatre (2004: 65). There is a suggestive correlation between his proposal and the analogical approaches to inculturation described above. For Wells all so-called ethical dilemmas can be described as 'gift' (2004: 125) and he applies his method fruitfully in several actual situations. There is therefore material here for the development of this project – especially as it applies to the whole Christian community.

Secondly I am clear that I have sufficient proficiency in the imaginative theological reflection method based on *EFM* to be able to reproduce it, suitably adapted and

acknowledged, in a variety of situations. The negotiation of 'worlds' through the imagination in relation to the four sources of culture, position, tradition and action is key to this method. There is a sense now in which I can consciously take up the position, as a theological educator, in John Hull's words of a 'trans-world professional.'

One route perhaps as a start for the next part of the journey would be to design a course, as mentioned in chapter seven, based on Kate Fox's (2004) anthropological and proverbial definitions of Englishness. A good beginning would be to draft a six-week Lent Course for field testing in the right setting for next Lent.

There is probably also a more distant task beyond this beginning to which the research points (perhaps up a further cloudy peak). It may be that there is real synergy to be discovered by laying alongside each other Graham, Walton and Ward's methods of TR (most of which were identified as involved in the *EFM* process), Bevans' transcendental model of contextual theology with the others in his schema, and Le Cornu's model of the educational process which is both 'vertical and horizontal' in her terms. Emerging from this synergy may be an educational approach or approaches that could enable participants to theologically interpret many different UK contexts and perhaps even travel further afield.

Appendix I:

Rooms, Nigel (2002), *Towards a Pedagogy for Inculturation: Adult Theological Education and the Interaction of Christian Faith and Culture*, Unpublished research methodology essay, Birmingham: Birmingham University.

A research thesis is a discrete programme of both intentional education and personal learning for the researcher. The research thesis being discussed here under the title given above is a project which attempts to theologically and missiologically integrate the idea of inculturation (or contextualisation) with Christian adult education in a creative and original manner. The research question aims to find what "best practice" in education for inculturation is. "Best practice" here is not just a set of materials, "content", rather it is the development of criteria for a pedagogy for inculturation that will include theoretical, process and content issues. As a piece of research then the thesis requires a methodology. Since it is both of itself education and dealing with education it would seem reasonable to discuss its methodology from within the discipline of education and learning. It could then be possible for the process of the research, as a piece of intentional education, to model a preferred educational methodology[184].

Colin Robson (2002) is helpful in showing how a "real world" research project[185] proceeds through defining a research focus and research questions (alongside its hypotheses or assumptions), followed by a strategy or design and finally tactics or methods. Robson thus provides a structure for this essay which will begin with the focus of the research in education and inculturation along with certain hypotheses of the research, then develop the research questions before moving on to strategy and tactics. Overall this will constitute a full discussion of the methodology of the research project.

Before moving on to education in the research focus an initial theological definition of inculturation would be helpful. Inculturation can be defined as a double movement of both the "indigenising" principle of incarnation and the "pilgrim" principle of transformation and change (Walls 1999:17-28). Many authors are agreed on this double-movement within inculturation as a theological term[186]. Walls himself begins (1999: 17-21) by asking a question of Church history – whether people who called themselves Christians in different epochs of the Christian church have any essential continuity. He concludes (: 21) that despite the vast differences in outward forms there is a discernible essential continuity:

> "continuity of thought about the final significance of Jesus, continuity of a certain consciousness about history, continuity in the use of the Scriptures, of bread and wine, of water."

Bediako (1999: 146-147) claims that Walls' position here can teach us that the Christian religion is "culturally infinitely translatable"[187]. Translatability can then be read for

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[184] Colin Robson states a general principle of research design (2002: 80); "*The research strategy or strategies, and the methods or techniques employed, must be appropriate for the questions you want to answer".*
[185] Real world research is defined by Robson (: 3) as: "some kind of investigation involving people in 'real life' situations" – e.g. office, school, hospital, home etc. as opposed to the controlled conditions of the laboratory.
[186] E.g. see Arbuckle (1990: 18-20), Kirk (1999: 93) and Schreiter (1999: 74).
[187] Bediako here follows Sanneh (1989) using the word translation "beyond the narrow, technical bounds of textual work'(1989: 3). Sanneh understands Christianity (: 7) as a "vernacular translation movement in

universality such that the Christian faith has a "fundamental relevance and accessibility to persons in any culture".

Inculturation then is a process that can be discovered in the creative tension between culture and faith; to speak sociologically between enculturation and acculturation; in anthropological terms between emic and etic perspectives; and finally theologically between incarnation and conversion.

This position enables boundaries to be formed around inculturation that are related to the boundaries formed by the orthodox creeds. These function like the touchlines of a football pitch which are drawn to give enough space for proper play, but not so much that the game is not focussed and therefore not able to be completed. It is difficult to offer specific criteria for any attempt at inculturation, but there are general guidelines that can be offered as Schreiter (1985: 118) does, as well as the World Council of Churches (WCC 1999a: 193; 1999b: 227). Often authentic inculturation will create an exciting "newness" which is recognisably Christian while using and transforming elements of the foundational culture in a creative manner. The best examples of this in the literature are an indigenous church attempting to deal with wizardry in Zimbabwe (Daneel 1990) and Juan Sepúlveda who discusses Pentecostal inculturation in Chile (Sepúlveda 1999).

The outcome of inculturation is then a 'rooted novelty' which has identifiable continuity and discontinuity with the old realities[188] – that is it effects change which is new, but rooted both in the culture and in the 'gospel'[189].

Robson (2002: 18-43) discusses approaches to the methodology of social research and deals with the question of a 'scientific' approach. There is a continuum of approaches between a purely scientific 'objective' method (positivist and universalist) through to the purely subjective or relativist position. While taking note of recent developments in post-positivism and constructivism he opts for a 'critical realist' approach. This would seem to be helpful since it takes reality seriously while acknowledging its time, place and context bound nature. There is a suggestive connection here with the discussion of the nature of the 'gospel' above.

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contradistinction to Christianity either as Scripture or as a dogmatic, creedal system, without, of course, denying the validity of those views".

[188] This claim or hypothesis begs many other questions for the research such as: How is the "rooted novelty" idea of inculturation to be measured – what does it look like and how can one tell when one has found it? By what process does it come about? What happens when this process goes wrong? What are the boundaries of continuity (rootedness) and discontinuity (novelty)? Is there any truly "novel" cultural situation? (e.g. the claim that we have never been in a 'post-Christian' situation before) or do we face constant ever-changing cultural novelty?

[189] It is of course contentious to claim any kind of isolatable 'gospel' and this issue will need to be addressed in the research. At this stage it is worth quoting Sanneh again (: 53) "Thus if we ask the question about the essence of Christianity, whatever the final answer, we would be forced to reckon with what the fresh medium reveals to us in feedback. ... This locates the message in the specific and particular encounter with cultural self-understanding". Therefore while the essence or message of the faith may not have an existence separate from culture, nevertheless there is a recognisable continuity or 'rootedness'. The alternative would be to encourage an inappropriate relativism.

A realist researcher is one who is concerned about "what works best, for whom, and under what circumstances" (: 39) which is relevant to this research since it is 'best practice' which is the main question. It is perhaps an 'engineering' stance as opposed to 'pure science'.

A further claim or hypothesis of the research, hinted at as it is in the title, is that there is a theological reflection and connection to be made between the theory, process and content of inculturation, as described above and the theory, process and content of adult theological education. That is, there is a method of adult theological education, which includes both formation and critical reflection, which is an effective instrument for delivering inculturation as "rooted novelty"[190]. Realism also postulates that "social structure is at the same time the relatively enduring product, and also the medium, of motivated human action" (: 35) which would enhance the argument for a connection between the methodology and the end product. Thus it is to education that we now turn.

Education and learning are based on the accrual of knowledge and knowledge then provides a starting point for this discussion. From the time of Aristotle knowledge has often been divided into three types[191] – theoretical, practical and productive or to use the original Greek terms, *theoria, praxis* and *poiesis*. These three ways of knowing and Aristotle's understanding of them are discussed helpfully by Groome (1980: 153-156).

The *theoria* way of knowing for Aristotle is about stepping back and thinking; it is "the quest for truth by a contemplative / reflective / non-engaged process" (: 153) and it is an end in itself. *Praxis* knowing rather is a means to the ordering of society, it is about ethical behaviour and politics. *Poiesis* knowing is the means by which artefacts can be manufactured, but it also extends to the creative arts and includes architecture, poetry, drama, dance and music.

Groome then traces the way in which these three ways of knowing were combined in Aristotle and amongst later philosophers and theologians in the Western tradition such that they became to be understood in a hierarchy. *Theoria* became the ultimate way to gain *sophia*, or wisdom and was elevated above the other ways of knowing, such that they almost disappeared from the Western mind[192].

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[190] At this point in the research project it is not possible to define completely this connection (Once again there are many other questions to be addressed: Can the practice of adult education bear the weight of what is being expected of it here? What is the connection or relatedness between formation and enculturation and critical reflection and acculturation? How is the change and growth (the transformation) delivered by education to be measured? What is the process of this kind of learning?). However, it is clear that there are definite resonances between inculturation and adult Christian education. Adult Christian education is about both formation, i.e. enculturation, and developing a "self-critical" tradition (Astley 1994: 92-93; Heywood 1988) – i.e. acculturation.

[191] Although Aristotle's is not the only way to understand knowledge it is the earliest and most original. Habermas, who will be discussed briefly later on discussed knowledge in terms of it forms or "knowledge-constitutive" interests. Psychological approaches to knowledge are also more recently available leading to the classic three domains of cognitive, affective and behavioural learning.

[192] It is worth quoting Groome (1980: 160) here: "From the Neoplatonists onward Western education was generally understood as the imparting of theoretical knowledge (i.e. from outside lived experience) which would be applied to practice. *Praxis* as a reliable way of knowing had been lost to western philosophy."

Thus the major educational methodology that has prevailed over many centuries is a linear 'from theory to practice' process. The starting point can be disengaged thought or data produced by observation and experiment or thirdly experience itself. A theory is then generated and the theory is then applied in practice. At its best it has produced, for example the scientific revolution late in the second millennium. However this "from theory to practice" approach can be criticised from biblical, humanist and Marxist perspectives.

Cheryl Johns and her husband[193], following Groome and others have described a Biblical epistemology based on the Hebrew word *yada*. This is knowing and being known in relationship, even sexual relationship, it is dynamic, experiential and covenantal knowing, it is not so much about information, but about obedient behaviour in response to God's grace. In contrast a "from theory to practice" process can be static and separates thought from action, that is it does not join up behaviour stemming from the heart and the head.

Groome (: 162) claims that it was the philosopher Hegel that recovered the idea of *praxis,* for the Western world relating it to history and critical reasoning, while holding onto the dialectic of theory and practice. This enabled Marx to develop the idea of *praxis* as a way of humans themselves understanding and shaping their own history without any transcendental reference point (: 165).

In the area of educational research Jean McNiff (1998) describes action research as "a real alternative to the more theory-based approach" (: 1) which could be described as the "empiricist tradition" (: 10). This tradition has an epistemology in which theory determines practice and results in control, linearity and stasis. John Elliott (1991) actually claims that action research resolves the theory – practice tension (: 45) and that theoretical abstraction definitely plays a subordinate role (: 53). Action research rather has a humanistic philosophical base (McNiff 1998: 8), a social basis in involvement and an educational basis in improvement (: 3). Action research utilises and aims at action and therefore change.

It was the Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire that developed *praxis* as a way of knowing and an educational methodology. Rather than abstract thought as the starting point he begins with the concrete historical experience of the oppression of the poor. Much Liberation theology also springs from this starting point and analysis and sets itself against theology that asks about the existence of God, not on whose side God is[194]. Freire thus introduces the question of power relations in the educational process and its outcome which for him is political action to transform society emerging from reflection on experience. Praxis education then is about a dialectic between action and reflection which enables *conscientization* to occur in the student. Freire proved praxis to be a very powerful educational methodology as he was able to teach illiterate peasants to read and write within six weeks and in the process politicize them.

Since then however *praxis* has been critiqued, especially when it is magnified or even set against a *theoria* way of knowing, because Freire's praxis is contextually dependent, possibly overly idealist, without guarantees, humanistic to the point of unhelpful optimism about the nature of people, and works with little or no reference to the transcendent[195].

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[193] See both her *Pentecostal Formation* (Johns 1993: 35-36) and his *Yielding to the Spirit* (Johns 1999).
[194] Fabella, V. and Torres, S. *Irruption of the Third World*. Maryknoll: Orbis 1983 quoted in Bowen (1992).
[195] This is David Bosch's critique summarised from its use by Roger Bowen (1992).

What is important to learn from the *praxis* way of knowing however is that it has a) rediscovered the importance of action (and change) as the outcome of education and b) introduced issues of power into the educational process. Thus, as education engages the student not just in the search for knowledge for its own sake, but also in changing society and the relations within it, then transformation of the learners can occur. This is not to deny the importance of *theoria* in itself, but to recognise that *theoria* and *praxis* must be held together for a balanced approach to education.

A linear model of education and change is not therefore adequate in itself since the process of action and reflection results in change and therefore a new situation which requires further action and then reflection. Kolb (1984)[196] has therefore developed a cyclical model of experiential learning which does seem to combine helpfully the elements of both *theoria* and *praxis* (see Figure 1 on page 7). In fact his vertical axis between concrete experience and abstract conceptualization which he calls "grasping" (or understanding) via apprehension and comprehension could be understood as the *theoria* axis. The horizontal "transformation" axis between active experimentation (action) and reflective observation is then what has been described as *praxis.*

The juxtaposition of these two axes points to a debate in adult religious education which is between those who advocate a critical, transformative even converting education and those who emphasise formation, or the socialisation of learners into the faith[197].

It would then seem possible to relate the earlier discussion of inculturation, (i.e. that it is a 'double movement' of both conversion and transformation as well as incarnation and indigenisation), to the learning cycle which incorporates both these ideas through transformation and grasping.

This supports the hypothesis noted above that there is some kind of theological and missiological connection to be sought between pedagogy and inculturation, such that whatever best practice of education for inculturation is discovered it is consonant with inculturation itself. It points to using the Kolbian cycle and action research in the research strategy for the project.

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[196] By drawing in addition on the work of Lewin (action research), Dewey and Piaget (psychological/cognitive growth).

[197] As noted in 6. above.
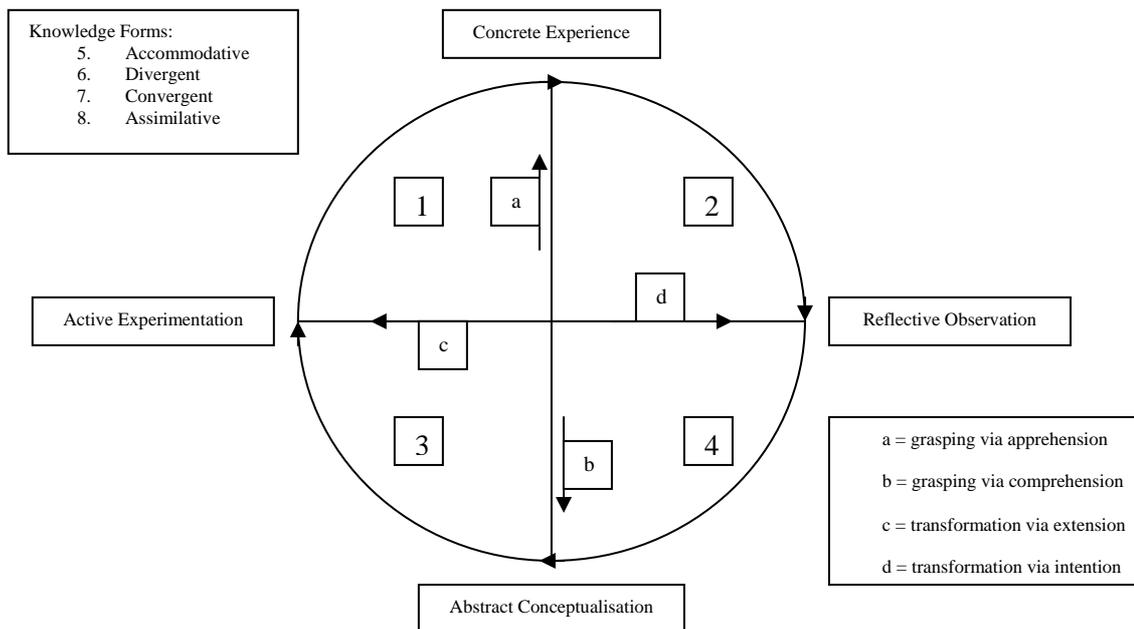
Knowledge Forms:
5. Accommodative
6. Divergent
7. Convergent
8. Assimilative

Concrete Experience

1

a

2

d

Active Experimentation

c

Reflective Observation

3

b

4

a = grasping via apprehension

b = grasping via comprehension

c = transformation via extension

d = transformation via intention

Abstract Conceptualisation

Figure 1. Structural Dimensions underlying the process of experiential learning (Kolb 1984: 42)

Before moving on a word must be said about the place of *poiesis.* The weakness of a *theoria* approach to education has been noted in that it results in a linear "from theory-to-practice" methodology. Both *theoria* and *praxis* are important in an educational methodology which utilises the experiential learning circle and results in transformative education. *Poiesis* has not been recovered in the same way in Western education as *praxis*. However in the current postmodern context it is sometimes recalled from its premodern past as a tool for the teacher. Examples would be Ah Nee-Benham (2000) and David Day (1992).

Having discussed both education and inculturation as discrete entities it remains, in the research focus stage, to bring them together. Approaches that have been taken to the practice of inculturation will be examined with reference to the educational methodologies employed by them and in relation to the above critique of *theoria*, *praxis* and *poiesis* approaches. This will provide the background for a discussion of the strategy and tactics to be employed in the research.

The literature on inculturation is largely of a theoretical nature and originates mainly in a Roman Catholic setting. Certainly the two most often quoted texts (Schreiter 1985; Shorter 1988) discuss the theory in great detail, (utilising the semiotic theory of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz) while engaging with practice only at the very end of their treatises[198]. Bevans' (1992) overview of contextual models is more helpful since it places "*praxis"* approaches amongst the other models in a continuum. However the work remains mostly

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[198] See Shorter (1988: 244, 264ff) where he discusses the catechetics of inculturation but relies very much on the ability of the Small Christian Community (the African equivalent of the "Base" Community) to deliver inculturation.

descriptive and typological and in conclusion he simply recommends particular contexts in which the various models may be most helpfully employed. Often in this kind of work, if a practical application is required then it is limited to liturgical inculturation[199], which tends to be a "top-down" imposition (Magesa 1993). Arbuckle (1990) is the writer with the most practical approach, but even he is still using a "theory to practice" methodology[200] and alongside Schreiter and Shorter employs the semiotic cultural theory as the basis of his work.

It has been possible to obtain the outline of two educational programmes which illustrate the issues that have been discussed above. Firstly an educational syllabus from Anthony Gittins[201] that is used for training pastoral workers in the inner-city of Chicago as well as parts of the Pacific basin can be examined.

While stating that it is using a "participatory learning" method the "design" is described as follows:

> "The Course has two main parts or foci. The first half will be largely devoted to theory and the second to methods. The theoretical component will introduce some of the most important contemporary writing in the field of ethnographic research, while the methodological component will identify some of the actual research being carried out under the rubric of inculturation".

This programme therefore falls clearly into a 'from theory to practice' methodology. While this *theoria* approach is certainly valid and important it has to be questioned whether it can actually deliver the transformation required on the ground. It requires considerable academic training and ability (one of the course's aims is about developing doctoral level research) which requires considerable time and effort as well as some specialisation. This perhaps inevitably will introduce an educational 'distance' from the subjects which leads again to Magesa's critique that it can only produce a top-down imposition of inculturation.

Materials have also been obtained from Jon Kirby at the Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies in Ghana[202]. The Institute is training priests and missioners at Masters level and above in cross-cultural ministry – i.e. in what Kirby calls "learning to leave" and "leaving to learn" in the movement out of the home culture and into the new one. There are several programmes available which vary in duration from one month to one year, but the most interesting is the one year "Field Education Programme" which is based on experiential learning, as most of the time is spent living in a Ghanaian village. Theory is offered, but only as part of the experiential learning programme.

What is interesting to note about the programmes at TICCS is firstly the difficulty of doing this kind of education in the field especially with Western people[203] and the lack of impact of

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[199] See for example Ch.s 6-9 of *Inculturation in the South African Context* (Various Authors 2000) or Ch.s 4, 7 & 10 in Gittins ed. (2000).

[200] He begins with "theoretical considerations" and moves to "pastoral issues".

[201] Not appendixed here because of its length, but available for inspection from the author.

[202] Similarly due to their length these are available from the author.

[203] "It is often felt that village conditions are less healthy than in the towns and much less healthy than in the average mission station because of malaria, typhoid and water-borne diseases. Although this is not necessarily true at all, the belief that it is true can affect the learner's attitude and morale and can influence the decisions of superiors." (Kirby 1993)

such approaches since it is many years now that these courses have been available, but their overall take-up has been very small [204]. Further reflection is clearly needed since having a good methodology does not necessarily mean that a programme will have an impact. It is clear that while inculturation has been discussed for many years in large parts of the World church its impact has hardly been felt at the grass roots. Magesa (1993: 70) concludes:

> The official level of inculturation [i.e. from the Roman Catholic hierarchy] has up to now been mainly deductive and intellectualist. Its impact on the spirituality of the people has been minimal.

Magesa himself points in a direction that can now be taken in this review of the practice of inculturation as *praxis* is examined as a possible method.

It can be claimed (and it remains only a claim) that the worldwide Pentecostal/ charismatic movement is a "naturally indigenising" force[205]. For example Harvey Cox has documented the way in which Pentecostalism is "Russian in Russia, Chilean in Chile and African in Africa" (Cox 1996: 102). However this movement is not a conscious or critically centred one, rather it arises from the central Pentecostal *experience* of God that occurs in a particular context and brings about action and change within that context[206]. Johns names this experience in Freirean terms as a type of conscientization (Johns 1993: 62-110) which can form the basis for a distinctive Pentecostal catechesis (: 111-140).

Thus it could be concluded that the predominantly Roman Catholic authors have majored on a 'from theory to practice' approach to the practice of inculturation while the Pentecostals have discovered, almost by accident, a *praxis* approach.

Before this section is concluded it is worth discussing *poiesis* as a method in the practice of inculturation. There are narrative approaches to inculturation such as the use of proverbs and oral literature. For instance Nussbaum (1998) uses key proverbs to describe American culture. Healey and Sybertz (1996) have collected hundreds of African proverbs and systematised them into theological themes which can be used for education and catechesis. This, as has been noted, is a helpful approach as far as it goes, but it may be more relevant for the "indigenising" pole of the inculturation process as opposed to the "pilgrim" principle of transformation and change.

Having reviewed the different approaches made to education for inculturation it is clear that *theoria, praxis and poiesis* need to be held together to form the basis of the methodology in this research. The limitations of a purely *praxis* approach have been noted and given the development of the experiential learning circle which takes into account these limitations it should then be possible to understand the method of the research in terms of Kolb's cycle.

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[204] Kirby, in a personal communication noted that the present take up of the courses was minimal – numbered in ones and twos.

[205] This is discussed further in my essay "The Pentecostal/charismatic contribution to contextualisation and inculturation".

[206] There is of course considerable debate about how far the Pentecostals do go in *praxis* – especially in the political sphere. But Cox notes a left wing Pentecostal leader in Brazil (1996: 165) and Sepúlveda (1999) has some concrete examples.

Because this research has been described in educational terms it may be appropriate to discuss what follows in the first person since it is dealing with the author's learning in terms of Kolb's experiential learning circle. The research begins with active experiment and concrete experience in Tanzania. I wrote a short course of studies addressing the issue of inculturation in an open learning text (Theological Education by Extension or TEE) in Swahili aimed at lay Christians at the grass roots in the Anglican Church of Tanzania. The end result did not seem very satisfactory in terms of content and overall this was a negative experience of discovering a lack of ability to engage at depth with the issues of inculturation and a "gap" between the theory of inculturation and its practice. I also noted a gulf between theological education institutions in Africa and the grass roots, issues of inculturation were discussed and reflected on at the college level, but the grass roots of the church remained unchanged.

However at the affective level in myself I also experienced Tanzanian Christians worshipping with a deep sense of joy and belonging when they occasionally used musical idioms from their own traditional culture. This was in contrast to the normal rather stiff approach when singing translated Western hymns to European tunes. This led to the desire to study the issues further and address culture questions whenever possible in my work.

On returning to live in U.K. I brought this experience to the beginning of the reflective observation phase that began when I started the Th.D. programme that this research is the conclusion of. I have completed some reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation through reading and writing in the first part of this programme. This has begun to form the basis for developing the research question and answering it with regard to what might be best practice for a pedagogy for inculturation.

At this point then an outline of the process, and by inference, the methodology of the research can be made. Certainly the focus and questions of this project have been outlined already above and a discussion of design and tactics is now required.

The first question in discussing design is that of fixed (quantitative) or flexible (qualitative) approaches.

There are three main reasons why a flexible approach is to be preferred in this research. The first is that there is so little actual educational practice that could be quantitatively studied in the inculturation field. Secondly the research questions are focussed broadly on premise, process and content rather than on specific outcomes[207]. Finally change and improvement in practice are required in the preferred Kolbian methodology which indicates action research as part of the strategy since this bridges or resolves the theory and practice tension, as noted above and enables *theoria, praxis* and *poiesis* to be held together.

The issues for flexible research revolve around validity, generalizability and reliability (Robson 2002: 90). However these can be overcome in the design stage to which I now turn.

In this research then I shall propose a 'two-track' approach in the design which will bring both personal and institutional practice under the research spotlight.

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[207] See Robson (2002: 87) for the justification here.

The first track is based on action research and relates directly to improvement of my own educational practice in the faith and culture arena. Action research utilises a cyclical process for improvement of practice[208]. Tactics in this track will be to write a learning journal (for validity and reliability) covering the various cycles[209] of action research to be engaged in on certain courses that I teach[210] as well as to engage in some form of triangulation with peer educators (for generalizability).

The second track utilises case study as a strategy as opposed to grounded theory or ethnography which are the alternatives in flexible design (: 87, 165) neither of which are particularly relevant to the research question here. For generalizability and reliability three case studies are proposed in three different areas in another type of triangulation. The first is a "negative case analysis" (: 175) and involves a course that has no overt aim to address the faith and culture issue[211]. The second two cases will be chosen from two different theological standpoints so removing the researcher's own biases from the equation (: 176)[212].

The tactics employed in the case studies i.e. the methods of data collection will also involve triangulation if possible for reliability purposes. Thus observation/participation, interviews and documents will be sources of data for the case studies[213].

It is important to note that any generation of theory and/or criteria for the practice of inculturation will be developed alongside the field research. This is normal in flexibly designed research (: 83). The implication then is that each case study will follow from the

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[208] For a description of the methods of action research based on the work of Kurt Lewin see Elliott (1991) and McNiff (1998) quoted above.

[209] At least three cycles would be preferable over the research period.

[210] The courses that I facilitate will be the Southwell Diocese's Bishop's Certificate in Lay Ministry and a University of Nottingham Certificate Level course in Inter-cultural theology.

[211] The Alpha Course (for more information see the website: www.alphacourse.org). This course is currently the most popular piece of 'evangelistic adult education' in use in the churches of England. Originating in charismatic evangelical Anglicanism, it is used across a wide spectrum of churches including the Roman Catholic. It does not address directly the issues of inculturation, but does claim to move people from outside the churches to an owned Christian faith. As such it incorporates elements of both conscious and unconscious enculturation and formation.

[212] a) Broadly evangelical courses dealing with the issues of faith and culture.

At this early stage in the research it is difficult to define which course will be used from a range that fall into this category. Three are offered here, but it is clear that only one will eventually be chosen in accordance with the purpose of the case study.

      i) The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity
      ii) Damaris

Damaris's mission statement is to "help people relate Christian faith and contemporary culture". They run various ad-hoc courses which may be interacted with.

      iii) Diocese of Bristol Course. "Mission: Tradition confronts the future".

  b) Liberationist/transformative education courses dealing with the issues of faith and culture.

One of the courses/institutions below will be chosen for case study.

    i)   Diocese of Liverpool – Ordained Local Ministry Course.
    ii)   The Urban Theology Unit – Sheffield

[213] Therefore the case studies may proceed by observer participation on the courses in some cases, or by developing a set of questions for the delivering institution and/or participants and using them on an interview basis or by interrogating the course materials and methods themselves and evaluating them on their own terms.

previous one and research ideas and conclusions will be carried over to be tested again in a cumulative fashion.

Therefore there will be more reading required on both education and inculturation[214] leading to, in Kolbian terms, theoretical conceptualisation of the issues involved while developing the active experiment and concrete experience phase of the field research. In this way *theoria* and *praxis* can be held together with the possibility of *poiesis.*

The final phase of the research will be to make a proposal regarding 'best practice' in education for inculturation which will incorporate the improvements discovered in the process of the research. This will complete the overall cycle of Kolb while incorporating several cycles of action research and case study within that.

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[214] For instance I need to further study the meaning of inculturation in the "abstract conceptualisation" stage with reference to "Cultural Studies" and possibly intercultural hermeneutics beginning with Schreiter's approach in his more recent work (1997). An initial bibliography for this reading is given in the research proposal.

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The Alpha Course – Initial questionnaire statistics:

40 questionnaires were completed in the three different venues.
Churches Together Group – 14
Student group – 13
Prison group – 13

Age profile

Age	%
- 21	30
22-30	12.5
31-40	35
41-50	2.5
51-60	15
61-70	5
70+	0

The profile in this study is significantly different from Hunt's (2001: 82) because of the deliberate attempt to approach young people and the significant number of Category B prisoners between 25 and 40. What is notable in this sample is the lack of people in the 41-50 age group.

Gender

	%
Male	57.5
Female	42.5 %

Here we note that again the figures are biased to the male because of the approach to male prisoners. At the Churches Together group the females make up 71% of the group compared to Hunt's 66% (2001: 81)

Ethnicity

At both the Student and the Churches Together groups the ethnicity was 100% UK White, but the presence of ethnic minorities in the prison increased the overall minority figures over Hunt's study (2001: 84)

Ethnic groups	%
UK White	87.5
UK Black	5.0
Caribbean/W.Indian	7.5

Marital Status

Status	%
Single	37.5
Married	42.5
Living with Partner	10
Divorced	10
Widowed	0

Again this is quite different from Hunt (2001: 84) where 70% were married which means this study is drawing on a significantly different cross-section of people than his work. At the Churches Together group however 86% were married.

Social Class
Occupation

This is not such an easy category to define for this study since it involved a number of students from the Student group, although their parent's occupations were given in the questionnaire. In addition some in the Churches Together groups were retired and some prisoners did not give an occupation! As best as possible the figures show:

Occupation	%
Upper professional	2.5
Lower Professional	47.5
Clerical/Admin	12.5
Skilled Manual	12.5
Semi or unskilled	10

The student group showed a significant bias to lower professional occupations and could be considered predominantly 'middle-class'. The opposite was true in the case of the Prison Group which certainly was mainly 'working-class'. There were no people who were or had been in any other occupations than Clerical/Admin or above in the Churches Together group.

Highest Educational Qualification	%
Degree and professional qual.	17.5
Certificate/Diploma	10
A levels	32.5
GCSE	27.5
Less or none	12.5

Prior attitude to Christianity
This was not researched by Hunt, but was important for this study in order to provide a base line for determining the attitude of the participants at the end of the course.

Attitude	%
"Anti"/antagonistic	10
Apathetic	5
Open	35
Sympathetic	7.5
"On the fringe"	12.5
Insider	30

Here we can see that a large percentage of the whole group are already committed Christians. It was also clear during interview that significant others, while describing themselves as 'open' were attending church regularly. Most of those set against Christianity before the course began were in the student group and all of them were under 30 years of age.

APPENDIX II - Section 2 - interviews[215] with participants

At the beginning of the group observation a questionnaire was administered asking questions on:

Age
Gender
Normal employment /social class (e.g. parent's occupations for students)
Educational background
Ethnicity
Marital Status

These enabled a comparison with the research of Hunt on the participants.

Semi-structured or more open questions were administered in an interview towards the end or after the course:

Why did you join the *Alpha* course?
Did you feel able to ask any question you desired? Were your questions answered?
Were you interested/involved in spirituality before the course began?
Do you understand yourself to be a "sinner" (Follow-up: Has your view changed about yourself here?)
Have you 'believed and received' Christ (Session 2 &3) – if so how do you know this has happened?
How would you sum up in your own words what Jesus has done for us?
Which of the four images of what Jesus has done was most helpful to you? (The Temple - sacrifice/ The Market Place - redemption/ The Law Court - justification / The Home - reconciliation) Why?
What did you think about the teaching on the Holy Spirit?
Who is the Holy Spirit for you now?
Did you experience the Holy Spirit in any way at all?
What does it mean to be "filled" with Holy Spirit?
What do you think about 'speaking in tongues'?
Do you do anything differently or act in new ways as a result of the course?
Have your attitudes and values changed in any way?
Did you disagree with any of the teaching on the course – especially about what Christ has done for us and the Holy Spirit - If you disagreed - what with?

Each interview took between twenty minutes and three quarters of an hour.

Anonymity of the interviewees is preserved in the reporting so each name has been changed.

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[215] In deciding between utilising interviews or focus groups the following considerations were made: one or two focus group sessions would increase the length of an already long course; the group dynamics will already be set and in any case the focus group could only really ethically take place at the end of the course since it may easily upset the objectives of the course leader if it took place before the end; then comes the problem of memory in dealing with old content. It may not also be possible at that late stage to involve drop-outs from the course who are an interesting group. Overall it may be that the focus group would be too similar a process to the course itself for the participants to take the research element seriously.

Since they are important for understanding the comments of the participants the stories of Shane and Jim and Lee and Sipiwe are reproduced here from the course material.

WEEK 3 - Wealth and Poverty
Stories from our dioceses:

a) A Conversation at an Advice Centre in Nottingham

This extract is part of a conversation that could have taken place in an Advice centre in Nottingham, the main city of Southwell Diocese – all names & reference numbers are fictional. The adviser is helping "Jim" to complete an application form to send to the DSS (Department of Social Security). The DSS helps with income support for people with no paying job (people in England do not generally have land which they can farm).

'It's not half as bad here as waiting at the DSS, mate – 4 bleeding' hours I was there.

We've run out of money again – electric card's run out, the cooker's broken, the missus is stressed out.
It's embarrassing enough going down to the DSS asking for a grant. But you have to wait forever. Then, they want your name & number – Jim Pacey, NN 54 63 78 C. They tell you you're a 'Job-Seeker' – well, I know I'm a job seeker – I've been looking for a bleedin' job since I was laid off 18 month back.
Me dad had a job at that factory for life, but it ain't like that now. I just want to earn enough money, some one to give us a chance. I just need a break – every time I go to a factory they say 'Come back next week'. It's always the same.
And when you tell the DSS your problem & that you need a grant they're not interested… they just hand you this form.
That's right mate, you've spelt it right. 2 kids – our Kieran, 13, in bother with school & the police. And our Stacey - she's 11 & upset 'cause all her mates have new trainers.

I need the grant for the cooker – we need to eat!
What! They only give out loans? Then they take it off my benefit each week?!
Yeah, I understand.
Other debts? We're behind on the rent & water & the phone's gone. And we owe £100 to that loan shark, Fletcher – he's bad news.
Long form, innit mate. When will I hear? I've only got a fiver (£5) to last us 5 days! Where do I sign, mate? I'll take it down to the office now.

b) Shane in Durban
Shane a middle class male is suddenly made redundant due to the down sizing of a large corporate company. Shane, 48, has been able to support his wife to enable her to stay at home and raise their two children. With a year's redundancy package Shane felt confident that he would find employment. However, rising levels of unemployment, age, race and gender in the context of affirmative action have weighed against Shane. His wife has found a lower paying job to cover household expenses. Shane now in depression and some two years later has no job and the future does not look good.

What are your reactions to the stories above? What feelings and emotions go with either having money or not having it?

WEEK 4 – Generational Relationships
Stories from our dioceses:

SOUTHWELL
Lee's parents split up when he was very young, his father drifted away and he hardly ever saw him. His mother met a new man and lost interest in Lee who ended up staying most of the time with his grandmother, Edith to whom he became very close. She is a fiercely independent woman who was not very pleased at her daughter's behaviour – especially since she had been a single parent after her husband was killed in the war and brought up her child alone.
Lee is now in his late thirties with a wife and family of his own living two hours drive away from Edith because of his work. He tries to see her every other weekend, but four weeks ago she fell and broke her hip and arm. The hospital and the social services are both recommending that she cannot now live alone anymore which she is extremely upset about. Lee has been visiting various residential care homes in his area, but is very unhappy about what he sees. His wife does not want Edith at her home as they have never got on very well and in any case Edith has fixed ideas on how children should be brought up. It's a real dilemma.

NATAL

Sipiwe is 8 and lives on the street. He was lured to the street by his peers who left a state of poverty and abuse at home to beg at street corners for survival. Because of the influence of older children Sipiwe now sniffs glue which reduces the hunger pangs and wards off the cold. The routine of life is the same with little hope that he will ever know the stability of family life and will probably end up involved in criminal activity.

What does the group feel about these stories? What should Lee do? Who will help Sipiwe? Do we know of similar stories from our own place?

APPENDIX III – Section 2

Case Study Two – Ubuntu Lent Course – Focus Group Interview Questions

Did the participants enjoy the Lent Course – what were their overall impressions?

What experience do participants have of other cultures? Have they travelled outside Europe? Been to South Africa or a developing country?

What images do the group have of Africa / South Africa now – have these changed as a result of the course?

What are their feelings and attitudes towards a) UK inner cities b) asylum seekers and c) UK poor wherever they are found?

Did the group use the internet forum to input material and/or to look at what other groups were doing? Did individuals go on the discussion forum?

What do the group think about the Natal-Southwell link in general? Has this view changed after the course? (is it good to be in relationship with another Diocese?) How does the group think of Christians in Natal Diocese – what is our relationship with them … as honestly as possible?

What did the group learn, if anything about *Southwell Diocese* and its people? Were there any surprises or even shocks? (Make an initial list and then discuss)

What did the group learn, if anything about *Natal Diocese* and its people? Were there any surprises or even shocks? (Make an initial list and then discuss)

Explore the surprises for a while with the intention of teasing out assumptions which may have existed.

What about the Bible? Did using the Bible help or hinder what the group decided to do at the end? Again did the group agree on how to use it or were there arguments? Can they remember any specific insights from the Bible that threw new light on the issues raised in the course?

What emerged from the process of the course in terms of action – if anything? Again make a list of specific actions that have been agreed upon. Were the group happy with what they decided – will it make any difference? Does anyone feel radically changed by what has happened as a result of the course? Check that what was planned to be done has actually been carried out – any results yet?

If possible each person say one thing that is new for them as a result of the course and why – allow freedom to admit no change (choose people randomly – not in an order).

APPENDIX III – Section 3 – Sociological Data for the Case Study

63 questionnaires were completed.

Age profile		Current working status	
Age	%		%
- 21	1.5	Working	41
22-30	0.0	Not Working	2
31-40	4.5	Student	2
41-50	7	Retired	55
51-60	34		
61-70	32		
70+	21		

Gender

	%
Male	35
Female	65

Ethnicity

Not tested – but by observation = 100% UK White

Social Class

Occupation	%
Upper professional	5
Lower Professional	49
Clerical/Admin	23
Skilled Manual	11
Semi or unskilled	6
Not working / Not reported	6

Highest Educational Qualification	%
Degree and professional qual.	39
Certificate/Diploma	21
A levels	4
GCSE	11
Less or none	25

Social Mobility – years lived at current address

Less than…..	%
2	10
5	24
10	15
20	16
30	35

Usage of media

92% reported using some kind of media to receive news.

92% reported using TV

TV	%
BBC	91
ITV	7

80% reported using radio

Radio   %
Radio 4   54
Radio 2   22
Radio 3   2
Local   18
Saga / Classic   4

64% reported using newspapers

Newspapers %
Times   25
Telegraph   20
Daily Mail /
Express   18
Guardian   15
Independent   5
Local   7

Travel horizons
Participants were asked to indicate the limit of where they had travelled for:

	a) Work	**b) Visiting**
	%	**%**
Within British Isles	51	15
Within EC	8	24
Beyond EC	3	35
A developing country	6	17
South Africa	0	2
Not reported	32	7

Relationships with people from other countries % in each category

Question	Yes, several	Yes, a few	None at all	Don't Know / not working
Friends from another country	19	46	27	8
Work colleagues from another country	10	9	30	41

Where they now live in relation to ethnic minority populations % in each category

	Almost nobody	Some people	Many people	Don't know
Live in a place where…… is from an ethnic minority	70	22	2	6

Where they would like to live – preference for places with ethnic minority populations
% in each category

Question	Almost nobody	Some people	Many people	No difference	Don't Know
Prefer to live in a place where …… is from an ethnic minority	8	41	5	37	11

% of participants answering in each category

QUESTION	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No Ans.
A law against promoting racial hatred 0= bad 10= extrm'ely good	4			2		15	8	10	8	3	28	22

Focus Group Comparison Tables

GROUP	A	B	C	D	E	Total Sample
Sample Size	4	6	5	8	8	63
Age						
-21						1.5
21 – 30						0
31 – 40				13		4.5
41 – 50				37		7
51 – 60		33	40	50	50	34
61 – 70	75	50	40		37	32
71 +	25	17	20		13	21
Gender						
M	25	17	60	50	25	35
F	75	83	40	50	75	65
Occupation						
Working	50	33	40	87	37	42
Not working				13		2
Student						2
Retired	50	67	60		63	55
Social Class						
Upper prof	25					5
Lower prof		33	80	74	50	49
Clerical/admin	75	50		13	13	23
Skilled man		17	20			11
Semi / unskilled					37	6
Not working / reported				13		6
Education						
Degree/Prof'l	50	17	80	50	24	39
Cert/Dip		33	20	25	13	21
A level		33			13	4
GCSE	50			12.5		11
< GCSE / not reported		17		12.5	50	25
Social Mob'y						
<2	25	17	20			10
<5		33	20	50	13	24
<10				13	50	15
<20		17		37		16
<30	75	33	60		37	35

Focus Group Comparison Tables

GROUP	A	B	C	D	E	Total Sample
Sample Size	4	6	5	8	8	63
Media Use						
Watch TV News	100	100	100	100	83	92
BBC	75	100	100	100	86	91
ITV	25				14	7
Other						2
Radio News						
usage	75	83	100	100	50	80
4	67	80	60	50		54
2	33	20	20	25	50	22
3					25	2
local				25	25	18
other			20			4
Newspapers						
usage	100	50	100	25	63	64
Times		33	20			25
Telegraph	75			50	20	20
Mail/Exp	25		20	50	80	18
Guardian		67	20			15
Local						7
Independent			40			5
Travel						
For work						
<Br Isles	75	100	100	75	83	51
<EC				25		8
>EC						3
Dev	25				13	6
SA						
Not rep						32
Visiting						
<Br Isles		33	20		37	15
<EC			20	62		24
>EC	50	17	60	25	63	35
Dev	50	50		13		17
SA						2
Not rep						7

Focus Group Comparison Tables

GROUP	A	B	C	D	E	Total Sample
Sample Size	4	6	5	8	8	63
Racial Values						
Ethnic friends						
Several	50	50			25	19
Few		33	20	87	25	46
None	50	17	60	13	50	27
DK			20			8
Ethnic wk coll's						
Several	50					10
Few			20	25	25	9
None		33	20	62	37	30
Not working	50	50	40	13	25	26
DK		17	20		13	15
Choose to live						
Almost none		17	20	13	13	8
some	50	33	60	36	50	41
many				13		5
No diff	50	50	20	25	13	37
DK				13	24	11
Currently live						
Almost none	75	33	100	87	87	70
some	25	67		13	13	22
many						2
DK						6
Law good/bad						
0			20	13	12	4
1						
2						
3					13	2
4						
5	25	32			25	15
6		17		13		8
7			20			10
8			20	13		8
9		17				3
10	25	17	40	61	25	28
Not reported	50	17			25	22

Extract from EFM UK Website (accessed 5/1/06)

Education for Adults

EFM is a programme which is intended for those who want to take an adult look at their faith with all the joys and fears which that can sometimes bring. It is worth noting that in America the average age of EFM students has held very strongly at 42 years of age. This does not mean that you cannot do EFM if you are 80 or 18, but it does suggest that it is *particularly* appropriate to those people who are ready to take another look at their faith as they enter mid life.

The programme stands by one of the very basic principles of adult education, which states that adults learn what they want and need to learn at a time that is right for them. The primary responsibility for learning, therefore, belongs with the student. The amount of effort a person puts into EFM is directly proportional to what they will gain from it. In EFM there are no test papers and no exams although there is opportunity for personal written work.

Through study, prayer, and reflection, EFM groups move toward a new understanding of the fullness of God's kingdom. This process can be illustrated by a two-rail fence.

One rail is the Christian tradition. The other is the life experience of the group's members. The rails are linked by fence posts which represent the seminar sessions where life and study meet. The fence is grounded in the soil of regular worship which is vital to the life of the group.

Syllabus

The Education for Ministry programme is a four-year curriculum. Each "year' covers 36 sessions. New students always begin with the first lesson of the first year. Frequently students in the same group are reading different years.

Participants in the EFM programme study the entire sweep of the Christian tradition from the earliest period to the present. Students learn the disciplines of biblical exegesis and interpretation, systematic theology, church history, ethics, liturgy and modern theology.

The traditional content is not studied in a vacuum. Students belong to small "communities of learning" in which the events of each person's life may be examined in the light of the materials being studied. While the course materials provide substantial academic content, the focus of the programme is on life as ministry and understanding that ministry. EFM provides Christians with that basic skill which is the foundation of all Christian ministry - theological reflection. In doing this, it sharpens the skills of personal and cultural assessment and enhances students' abilities to be effective in a variety of ministries.

APPENDIX IV – Section 2 – Sociological data for the Case Study

28 questionnaires were returned – from 48 sent out – a completion rate of 58%.

Age profile

Age	% Current	% Starting Course*
- 21	0	0
22-30	0	0
31-40	4	11
41-50	11	43
51-60	36	28
61-70	31	14
71+	18	
not reported	0	4

Current working status

	%
Working	54
Not Working	0
Student	0
Retired	46

* these figure are approximate as they are estimated from the reported date when participants started the course

Gender

	%
Male	25
Female	75

Ethnicity

100% UK White

Social Class

Occupation	%
Upper professional	4
Lower Professional	54
Clerical/Admin	25
Skilled Manual	17
Semi or unskilled	0

Highest Educational Qualification	%
Degree and professional qual.	32
Certificate/Diploma	28
A levels	11
GCSE	25
Less or none	4

Usage of media

100% reported using some kind of media to receive news.

96% reported using TV

TV	%
BBC	96
ITV	4

75% reported using radio

Radio	%
Radio 4	62
Radio 2	13
Radio 1	5
Local	10
Radio 5	5

71% reported using newspapers

Newspapers	%
Times	20
Telegraph	20
Daily Mail	20
Guardian	15
Independent	5
Local	15
Mirror	5

APPENDIX IV – Section 3

McCleary's 7 Principles for Generative Metaphorical Dialogue (1993: 128-132)

1. Any pedagogical method that is to succeed in helping others understand a metaphorical expression, "S is P", in its concrete context of understanding and coexistence must be capable of helping them to determine the respects, R... Rn, in which S is like P.

2. The pedagogical method must be able to help those being taught overcome any alienation of the power they have to recognize that the literal sentence meaning the metaphorical expression has in their familiar world expresses a figurative meaning that invites them to imagine the possible world in which it is literally true.

3. The pedagogical method must be able to help those being taught to entertain respects in which S might figuratively be likened to P within the context of their familiar world, and on this basis imagine by analogy the strange context in which S is in these same respects literally P.

4. Consequently the pedagogical method must include metaphorical techniques teachers can employ to help learners have recourse to their experiencing in ways that require and enable them to begin to see the hitherto unquestioned certainties of their familiar world as alien realities to which, ... they must imaginatively accommodate to know.

5. Any pedagogical method must help those participating in the generative metaphorical dialogue of the teaching-learning dialectic understand their metaphorical expressions of their familiar contexts of understanding and coexistence as expressions of the dialectic of their own historical objectification and embodiment, and by abstract analogy understand metaphorical expressions of unfamiliar contexts as complementary expressions of the dialectic of others' historical objectification and embodiment.

6. The pedagogical method must help the participants in the teaching-learning dialectic understand the complementary expressions of generative metaphorical dialogue as performances.

7. A successful pedagogy of imagination must recognize methodologically that a) the understanding it is meant to help produce is an understanding of historical struggles between groups and classes seeking to establish or maintain conflicting contexts of coexistence and understanding, and groups and classes seeking to transform these contexts; b) that it is in itself inescapably involved in these struggles; and that c) to accomplish its aims it must become consciously and critically engaged in them.

Appendix IV – Section 4 – Interview Questions

1. How long is it since you finished *EFM?*

2. What would you say was your overall experience of the *EFM* course? Did you enjoy it?

3. Thinking back can you say why you joined it in the first instance?

4. The course majors on TR – what is your reaction when I mention 'TR'?

5. I want to focus particularly on the four-source model for theological reflection (TR) which uses metaphor (I know there were other slightly different methods using the four sources). Can you remember what you thought of it at first – especially the idea of inventing a new kind of world (via the metaphor) that you enter and ask questions of?

6. Did the process become automatic after a while or does it still seem quite difficult? What is it about it that either encourages you to use it or makes it difficult to use?

7. Do you recall any particularly memorable or life-changing metaphors or worlds that made a difference for you? If so how do you think they were 'working' on you? Can you give examples? If not, why do think this is?

8. The four sources for TR are action, culture, position and tradition – did you find the use of these sources helpful? In what way? Do you still find them useful when making decisions?

9. Did you always ask the same basic types of questions of the metaphors that the group created? (They are called "perspective questions" in the technical language of *EFM*) Can you remember what they are? [creation, sin, redemption and judgement and possibly repentance]

10. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of doing theological reflection this way?

11. Let's think about what the course 'did for you' for a while….
If I asked you what the 'gospel' or the good news was that Christianity offers to the world – could you say what you think it is now?
… and can you remember if that changed at all throughout the course? If so what did you think before it began?

12. Were there other significant things that changed for you in your understanding of your faith during the course – can you name a few? Why do you think you changed your view?

13. Would you say your attitudes and values changed in any way as a result of the course? Can you say in what ways – give examples? Again why do you think these things changed?

14. Did you do anything differently or act in new ways after the course compared to before you began? – give examples. Have those actions stayed with you – why?

15. Overall can you say why you think these changes occurred – i.e. what was it about the course that was life-changing? E.g. would the course outcome/result have been the same if you had just been studying the materials over the four years and not doing TR?

16. Do you find yourself doing theological reflection in your life today? If you do is it automatic or do you have to sit down and think "I am going to do TR now"?

17. Do you do it individually or in a group or in your church? If yes can you give me an example of something recently? How did it 'jump' from you individually to a group/church?

18. Would you recommend *EFM* to others? What kind of people should do it? Are there any who should not do it?

19. Why do you think you do / do not continue doing TR today? What 'ministry', if any do you think you have now?

APPENDIX V – Documents Demonstrating Research Ethics

Alpha Course Case Study – An initial questionnaire

My name is Nigel Rooms. I am doing research on a project entitled "Towards a pedagogy for inculturation: Adult theological education and the interaction of Christian faith and culture" for which I need to undertake a case study on the Alpha course. The research is part of a degree programme I am taking at Birmingham University.

I am directing the case study and can be contacted at:

[Address]

email:[email]

should you have any questions.

I would be grateful if you would fill in the short questionnaire overleaf and also to indicate your willingness or otherwise to take further part in the research by being interviewed by me for 30-45 minutes towards the end of the course. The information you give will be on the following basis:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary

- You are free to refuse to answer any question

- You are free to withdraw from the research at any time

The information given here and the interview will be kept strictly confidential. Individual results and excerpts from the interviews may be made part of the final research thesis, but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included in the work.

Nigel Rooms
16/09/03

Alpha Course – Case Study Questionnaire

Full Name ………………………………….……..

Circle as appropriate:

Age   17-21   22-25   26-30   31-35   36-40   41-45   46-50   51-55   56-60   61-70   71+

Gender   M / F

Ethnicity: African   UK Black   UK White   Caribbean/West Indian

Indian sub-continent   Other Asian   Other………………….

Are you?   Single   Living with partner   Married   Divorced
Widowed

Indicate **the educational 'level'** you have achieved so far:

Less than GCSE or none   GCSE or equivalent   A Levels   Certificate/Diploma

Degree   Masters + above   Professional qualification

Would you describe yourself normally as?   working   not working   a student

a person with disabilities

When you are working what is your job / trade?

………………………………………………………………………………

Before the alpha course began how would you describe your **attitude** to the Christian faith?

"anti"/antagonistic   apathetic   open   sympathetic   'on the fringe'   insider

Please indicate your willingness to be interviewed:

I would / would not* be happy to be interviewed sometime towards the end of the course.

*Delete as appropriate.

I would be grateful if you don't feel able to be interviewed to still have the rest of the information contained on this form.

………………………………
Signed

Alpha Course Case Study – An Interview

My name is Nigel Rooms. I am doing research on a project entitled "Towards a pedagogy for inculturation: The interaction of adult theological education and Christian faith and culture" for which I need to undertake a case study on the Alpha course. The research is part of a degree programme I am taking at Birmingham University.

I am directing the case study and can be contacted at:

Daytime: [Address]   Evening: [Address]

email: [email]

should you have any questions.

Thank you for your willingness to take part in the research by being interviewed by me. The information you give will be on the following basis:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary

- You are free to refuse to answer any question

The interview will be kept strictly confidential. Individual results and excerpts from the interviews may be made part of the final research thesis, but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included in the work.

If you would like to receive a copy of the case study report, please do not hesitate to ask me - it should be ready by mid-2004.

Nigel Rooms
10/12/03

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