

# IMAGINATION IN THE FORMATION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH:

: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CHILD (7-11-YEAR OLD)

by

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

Signature

Date



## ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the function of imagination for faith formation of the child aged 7-11 years.

Chapter one proposes the problems, proposition and significance of this dissertation, and sketches a brief overview of the further chapters.

Chapter two provides a general understanding of the children, aged 7-11, in terms of their developmental stages and using a holistic approach. To encourage them to have faith, this chapter primarily investigates the character of faith in dimensions: the cognitive dimension (knowledge and mystery), the affective dimension (trust and community), and the behavioural dimension (word and deed). In this holistic perspective, the imagination as the affective dimension, is placed in the centre through which the cognitive aspects and the behavioural aspects can be drawn together.

Chapter three deals with the Bible as the source of Christian child education in which the Bible is defined as story and image. Through this new understanding of the Bible, the purpose of this chapter is to present the relevance of the Bible itself for the 7-11 year age-group children. The Bible as story has a plot structure that process from conflict to resolution, through which children can participate in the Bible with wonder and mystery. The

Bible as image is an appropriate form to explain transcendent God to children who are living in perceived reality and can therefore engage with the Bible via feeling and seeing.

Chapter four explores the significance and function of imagination by defining it as 'the anthropological point of contact for divine revelation.' From Green's definition, this chapter develops three functions of imagination for 7-11 year-old children. These are: holistic imagination—helping towards the balanced faith development of children; incarnational imagination—incorporating God's revelation into the present situation of children; and alternative imagination—shaping the biblical word in the present world.

Finally, chapter five investigates the most effective method of enabling the child to imagine God and His world described in the Bible. For the answer, this chapter suggests the storytelling method which evokes and appeals to the imagination of children. Thus, I strongly propose that the alternative way for the effective teaching of children teaching, which overcomes the shortcomings of the traditional cognitive teaching is imaginative— narrative or imaginative— storytelling education.

## OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie is om ondersoek in te stel na die funksie van verbeelding in die geloofsvorming van die 7-11 jarige kind.

In Hoofstuk 1 word die probleem, hipotese en belang van die proefskrif bespreek en 'n breë oorsig van die verdere hoofstukke geskets.

Hoofstuk 2 bied 'n algemene verstaan van die 7-11 jarige kind, in terme van sy ontwikkelingsfases deur gebruik te maak van 'n holistiese benadering. Hierdie hoofstuk ondersoek primêr die karakter van geloof in drie dimensies, naamlik die kognitiewe dimensie (kennis en misterie), affektiewe dimensie (vertroue en gemeenskap) en die gedragsdimensie (woord en daad). Binne hierdie holistiese perspektief word verbeelding, as die affektiewe dimensie, in die sentrum geplaas waardeur die kognitiewe sowel as die gedragsaspekte mekaar kan ontmoet.

Hoofstuk drie stel ondersoek in na die Bybel as 'n bron vir Christen kinders se opvoeding, waarin die Bybel gedefinieër word as verhaal en beeld. In terme van hierdie nuwe verstaan van die Bybel wil die hoofstuk die relevansie van die Bybel self vir die 7-11 jarige kind voorstel. Die Bybel as storie het 'n bepaalde struktuur om van konflik na resoluë te beweeg, waardeur kinders deel kan hê in die Bybel, met wonder en misterie. Die Bybel as beeld is 'n geskikte vorm om 'n transendente God aan kinders te



verduidelik wat in 'n waarneembare realiteit leef, deurdat kinders die Bybel kan betrek deur te sien en te voel.

Hoofstuk vier ondersoek die belang en funksie van verbeelding deur dit te definieër as die “antropologiese kontakpunt vir goddelike openbaring.” Na aanleiding van Green se definisie ontwikkel hierdie hoofstuk drie funksies van verbeelding vir die 7-11 jarige kind naamlik: holistiese verbeelding - wat bydra tot 'n gebalanseerde geloofsontwikkeling van kinders; inkarnerende verbeelding - wat God se openbaring inkorporeer binne die huidige situasie van kinders; en alternatiewe verbeelding - wat lei tot die skep van 'n bybelse wêreld binne die teenwoordige wêreld.

Hoofstuk 5 ondersoek die mees effektiewe metode wat die kind in staat stel om God en Sy wêreld, soos beskryf in die Bybel, voor te stel. In hierdie hoofstuk word 'n verhalende metode (die vertel van stories) wat die verbeelding van kinders aanspreek en appél daarop maak, voorgestel. Daar word geargumenteer dat die alternatiewe wyse vir die effektiewe onderrig van kinders, wat verskeie van die tekortkominge van tradisionele kognitiewe onderrig oorkom, verbeeldingryke en narratiewe, of verbeeldingryke en verhalende onderrig is.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

I have been working as a Sunday school teacher in Korea for seven years and as a Sunday school co-ordinator for five years in the USA. During these periods I realised the absolute significance and necessity of developing the imagination in teaching the Christian faith to children influenced by negative, worldly images.

Many educators agree that contemporary children are exposed to various negative visual images. When attending children's retreats or sleep-overs with their peers, I had ample opportunity to listen to their conversations in which they excitedly told imaginative stories, e.g. nightmares, horrible dreams, ghost stories mainly derived from films or television shows, Internet sites, etc. Unfortunately this proves that the identities of children are shaped far more decisively by the stories and images of television superheroes than by the stories and images of the Bible. It is therefore a very common phenomenon that today's children idolise superstars and imitate their language, behaviour and lifestyles.

To make the situation even worse, there is an old-fashioned idea towards church education. No one should think that children are listening just because they are attending church school. Furthermore, church education does not overcome the hackneyed way of teaching by merely presenting



knowledge and information or data of the Bible. Church education has predominately depended on the cognitive aspect, considering the affective element as trivial. Ignorance of the affective aspect, such as feeling, emotion, sensation and imagination, makes our education irrelevant to visually oriented children.

In view of this twofold crisis of the situation of contemporary children influenced by negative images and an old-fashioned attitude towards the education of children, I, as a serious educator and teacher, have confronted a crucial question: how can our church education show God's truth and values effectively and relevantly to children who are deeply influenced by worldly, often satanic images? I have found an answer to this in the sound understanding of biblical imagination and its application through a relevant teaching form or method.

This thesis therefore sets out to present a way of counter-imagination against worldly imagination and to incorporate the way of biblical imagination into the church's education of children.

## **1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The present study is concerned with the solution of two problems. These two can be summarised as the problem of a one-sided learning process in education for Christian children and the influence of the imagination's negative power.

One of the goals of Christian education is to teach God's word, for our faith

rests fundamentally on it. For this, God's word should be presented and shown in its cognitive, affective and experiential (or behavioural) aspects. Groome (1980:57) emphasises the necessity of the three dimensions of the Christian faith, which is called the holistic approach:

Christian faith as a lived reality has three essential and constitutive dimensions: it is 1) a belief conviction 2) a trusting relationship, and 3) a lived life of *agape*. Given that we are speaking here specifically of Christian faith, and of this faith as lived, these three dimensions find expression in three activities: 1) faith as believing 2) faith as trusting 3) faith as doing.

Where one factor is over-emphasised at the expense of the others, sound faith formation cannot occur. Traditional religious education, however, has depended too much on the cognitive factor, where the educators seek to find propositional truth or have extracted the main ideas or themes from the Bible. In such a system, the faith formation of children has merely been considered as the transference of the "right" cognitive content (Simpson & Hendriks 1999:251).

As many scholars indicate, one of the primary dangers of an extreme cognitive approach lies in the fact that the affective element has often been neglected. According to DeVries (1995:173), this kind of church education that ignores the affective aspect is "not enough to support and nurture full maturity." When the affective aspect is absent in children's education, our teaching loses the mystical aspect of God's word (cf. Ephesians 1:9).



As Osmer (1992:149) appropriately observes:

mystery is an important part of faith. It is an acknowledgement of the fact that God cannot be comprehended fully by human understanding. God remains 'other'. As one of the great creeds of the early church puts it [the Athanasian Creed], God is 'incomprehensible'. God's ways are not our ways. There are limits on our ability to understand God.

DeVries (1995:173) argues, "While the word 'incomprehensibility' may sound too harsh—too final—for the present-day believer, this element of the 'mystery' of faith should be maintained."

Also, another danger of an extreme cognitive approach is that it leads to a distortion of the behavioural factor. In this one-sided cognitive approach, the common teaching form is a cramming method, where the teachers deal with the learners by way of manipulation, domination and indoctrination, while the learners often experience alienation from the message of the Bible (Simpson & Hendriks 1999:252–53). As a result of the failure to help learners experience engagement and reinterpret their life stories in the light of their encounter with the Christian story, the teaching primarily follows a legalistic form which replaces the message of grace or gospel.

Thus, for the sound faith formation of children, it is necessary that our education should proceed toward a balanced teaching approach to integrate the cognitive, affective and behavioural elements.

Furthermore imagination is not, by itself, either good or evil. According to the way it is used, children can be led in totally different directions. DeVries (2000:194), quoting Minneama, says

The human imagination needs to respond to a true and adequate object or it will create great disorder, illusions and falsifications. If the human imagination is responding to a true and adequate object – God as revealed in Scripture and creation – the result is celebration (as found in Psalm 150). If the human imagination is responding to a false and inadequate object, the result is escapism in one of its many forms.

The most serious problem that church education faces is the fact that children, even Christian children, are captured by imagination's negative power. Today children have been exposed to secular images such as ghosts and goblins, monsters, pocket monsters, and so on. Though it is an exaggeration to say that various images provided by television, movies and the Internet all lead our children to negative ways of thinking, no one can deny that they often make children imagine and see a false reality and unreal fantasy. Furthermore, this negative form of imagination can also be an instrument that Satan uses to seduce children into sins against God's commandments.

This can be illustrated by means of an example. According to an article in a famous Korean newspaper, *Chosun-II-Bo* (11<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2000), five hundred thousand out of five million children and teenagers are severely addicted to the Internet. They use the Internet more than three hours per day and show symptoms such as nightmares, insomnia, a lack of impulse control and stress. In addition, 44% of teenagers (10–18 years) who live in Seoul, Korea, have

already contacted sexual websites and mimicked sexual behaviours (*Chosun\_Il-Bo*, 11<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2000). Although these statistics were limited to those aged 10–18 years, we can assume that even children of 7–11 years are not exempt from the negative influences of the Internet, for they (7–11) live in an age sensitive to the electronic media.

What this report indicates, in fact, is that the negative imagination causes the sound growth of children to be distorted. As J. Loder says, certain forms of doubt, fear, or anxiety may be rooted in the secular imagination form when it is used negatively (Loder 1989:163–64; 174–76).

In the light of the challenges posed by the negative imagination in the new millennium and the milieu of post-modern culture that the Christian education of children has to face today, the church has to find a way to foster children in the faith. We therefore face a serious problem about how to present the most relevant way to redeem those who are captivated by the imagination's negative power.

In view of this discussion our research problem is :

What is the role of imagination in the formation of faith, especially in the child of 7–11 years and how can the church utilize imagination in its ministry to the child?



## 1.2 HYPOTHESES

1) An imaginative way is the most relevant way to teach the Christian faith to children. This imaginative way operates as an alternative function for children whose imagination is negatively influenced by the modern electronic media.

As secular imagination plays a role in leading our children to a false reality or world, so the biblical imagination has the power to transform our children so that they can understand the true reality and God's alternative world (Wilson 1993:135). Because of this function of the biblical imagination, Brueggemann (1993a:55) calls it the counter-imagination.

The situation of Israel in Babylon is a good example to explain what the counter-imagination is. According to Brueggemann, when in exile, Israel was governed by the Babylon-centred imagination where secular images captured the minds of the Israelites in fear, despair and self-destruction. What Israel needed in this situation was a God-centred imagination, a counter-imagination, where Israel was invited to enter God's new reality and world.

Brueggemann suggests that contemporary Christians live in a similar situation as that of the exiled Israelites in Babylon (i.e. worldly power). As counter-imagination was required of Israel to overcome the power of Babylon, so today it is required of us. And this is the significant duty that our church education should confront. Brueggemann says, "The church and its

ministers now have an opportunity to voice and imagine a counter-world that lives in and through the text. In facing this task, we should recognize that our voicing, imaging, and sketching are indeed counteracts, a subversion of the dominant perspective so powerful among us" (Brueggemann 1993:55).

From Brueggemann's insight we can formulate the basis of our study. Since today's children's minds are dominated by the culture and negative imagination of a powerful world, Christian education should move in the direction of counter-imagination, so that our children can imagine a counter-world (God's world). Where the power of biblical imagination is activated, God's people (children) are provided with an alternative reality against imperial reality (Brueggemann 1997: 76).

2) If the effectiveness of Christian education for children depends to a significant degree on the role that imagination plays in this education, storytelling or narrative teaching should be an essential method to convey the Gospel.

The connection between the role of imagination and the role of storytelling is very important. If God has revealed Himself to us by way of imagination, then educators (and preachers) should attempt to engage the imagination of their listeners in God's truth. In my opinion, storytelling is the most apt way to evoke the imagination of children. Storytelling invites the respondent to contemplate the mystery of the Gospel. This 'imaginative language' invites the believer and non-believer alike to investigate (rational) and experience (affective) the presence of God in their lives. Through telling the story of the

Bible, children are invited into the Bible story to participate imaginatively, fusing their personal events and stories into God's world and stories and experiencing what has happened as real to them.

### **1.3 METHODOLOGY**

This is a Practical Theological study. The praxis in Christian Religious education in which imagination as a formational factor is often neglected, is taken as the starting point. The insights of different disciplines are brought in discussion with theological insights and this lead to practical theological theory formation which provide guidelines for the development for a new praxis.

The research will hinge on three points of departure, namely a psychological developmental view of the child, a bibliological discussion of the Bible and a philosophical interpretation of the function of imagination in faith formation.

The lines running from the three points of departure meet in the final part of the thesis to lead to theoretical guidelines to facilitate the implementation of imagination in Christian Religious education.

Firstly then, in order to understand the child, in particular the child of primary school age, 7–11 years old, a literature study of the theories of child development is undertaken in Chapter 2. Child development will be considered from a holistic viewpoint: cognitive development, affective development and behavioural development, focusing on the role of imagination to link the cognitive element and behavioural element.



Secondly, in Chapter 3 there follows a discussion of certain theories on the nature of Scripture especially as related to its imaginative and narrative dimensions. The Bible will be considered as a book of stories and images. The major concern of this chapter is to argue the relevance or appropriateness of the Bible itself before we can make it relevant and meaningful. In order to recover a multidimensional or holistic view of the Bible, in contrast to the distortion of a traditional didactic view that sees the Bible as an inanimate object like a creed statement, information for dogmatic truth, or legalistic imperatives, this chapter will argue that the Bible is by nature story and image. The Bible as story has a plot structure that invites children to participate in the biblical truth with wonder. Furthermore, the Bible as image stimulates children so that they can involve God's world with their seeing and feeling. Likewise, where the Bible is presented as story and image, it can have a transformative power for a 7–11-year-old child.

Thirdly, the possibilities of imagination in faith transformation will be identified, described and evaluated in chapter 4. In this regard I use the writing of certain key exponents especially Ricoeur. The major interest will be the kind of role imagination plays in forming faith in children. For this, I briefly sketch a short history of the thinking on imagination. In this chapter I also define imagination as integration and incarnation. In order to know how imagination can be the centre of our educational theory and practice, I will investigate the opinions of three influential educators: James Loder, Craig Dykstra and Maria Harris. Finally, I will summarise the threefold function of imagination: to lead children's holistic development, to incarnate the Word



to the present situation of children, and to invite children to an alternative world.

Finally in Chapter 5 I put forth strategic theological educational suggestions for the formation of faith in children. I will propose storytelling as an effective image-oriented teaching form. The primary emphasis of this chapter is that storytelling (or narrative teaching) enables children to imagine God and the biblical world. To prevent the discussion from becoming too abstract and too theoretical, this chapter will suggest concrete storytelling steps for the effective teaching of children.

To sum up, the ideal teaching method to invite children into God's alternative world is called imaginative storytelling or imaginative narrative.

#### **1.4 DELIMITATION**

In this dissertation our study will be limited to children of approximately 7 to 11 years old. The reason why I especially limit my study to children 7–11 years old is that this age group, which is classified as having a mythic–literal faith, can most effectively learn and understand the Bible in story form via imagination (Fowler 1987:50). Referring to this period as the ‘concrete operational stage’ in the opinion of Piaget, Kolb (1984:25) argues that inductive teaching methods based on story and image are especially useful ways for 7–11-year-old children to actively participate in the biblical truth.

Working within the same perspective, Juengst (1994:49) also states when the

children aged 7–11 years are immersed in the story in imagination, they experience God's word in a way appropriate to their developmental stage. If these arguments are correct, then imagination and image-oriented education is the best way to engage children (aged 7–11 years) in God's world.

## IMPORTANCE OF A HOLISTIC APPROACH

### INTRODUCTION

The specific focus of this chapter is to explore the importance of a holistic approach to child development. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the concept of child development, followed by a discussion of the various factors that influence child development. The chapter then explores the importance of a holistic approach to child development, and concludes with a discussion of the implications of this approach for child development research and practice.

## 2.1 UNDERSTANDING CHILD DEVELOPMENT

According to Erikson (1950), one of the earliest and most influential theories of child development, child development is the process by which a child's physical, cognitive, and emotional capacities mature over time. This process is influenced by a variety of factors, including genetics, environment, and social interactions. Understanding child development is essential for parents, educators, and healthcare professionals, as it provides a framework for understanding and supporting children's growth and development.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **UNDERSTANDING CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR FAITH FORMATION**

The specific focus of this chapter is to explore the developmental world and faith formation of 7–11-year-old children in a holistic perspective. The chapter consists of two sections. The first deals with the various child development theories, especially involving the 7–11 age group: cognitive development according to Piaget, emotional development according to Erickson, behavioural or moral development according to Kohlberg, and faith development according to Fowler. Here, the proposed conclusion is that children are multifaceted in their makeup and relationships. The second section concerns the significance and major content of the holistic approach in forming faith of children of 7–11 years old based on Osmer's and DeVries' theories.

#### **2.1 UNDERSTANDING CHILD DEVELOPMENT (AGES 7–11)**

According to Elkind (1993:12), one of the serious problems facing modern child education is the distorted identity of a child who is often called 'the hurried child'. In our competitive society children are pushed towards precocious development by adults. The serious influence of such a trend leads



to an unbalanced education such as cognitive education, achievement-oriented teaching, and an excessively moralistic approach. Mirroring the spirit of our culture, Christian education is also eager to impart biblical knowledge to children, but without taking the child development seriously into account. Here our education often fails to meet the needs of children and to respond to their real question in their daily lives. In order to overcome the present predicament and to understand children and help them appropriately, thus, our first duty, before everything, is to consider some common developmental characteristics of children.

### **2.1.1 Cognitive/ intellectual development**

Before Piaget, children had been regarded as '*tabula rasa*' (blank tablets) who are influenced and formed by the designs of others, especially educators. In this view, learning is the process of recording objects or events in the child's mind. However, Piaget initiated and formulated the concept of cognitive development structure. As Pazmiño (1988:183) indicates, "for Piaget, the ultimate goal of education is not to fill the child's mind with an assortment of items of knowledge, but to advance the child from one stage of reasoning within a given hierarchy to a more mature stage." Here, the child is no longer a passive learner but a dynamic and positive explorer.

Even though no one can deny that Piaget and his followers achieved a milestone in the understanding of children's intelligence, his theory is not beyond criticism because of his one-dimensional approach. It places too much

focus on the single aspect of the cognitive/intelligence in the learning process. As many educators indicate, his theory looks like an I.Q test in which it is impossible to evaluate the child's intelligent capability sufficiently.

Among the various attempts to overcome Piaget's limitations, it is very important to investigate Gardner's seven-factor intelligence theory (Amstrong 1994: 2-4). At least Gardner's theory would allow for various routes in the process of knowing. In the following section, Piaget's cognitive development theory and Gardner's multi-intellegent theory will be investigated more specifically.

#### **2.1.1.1 Piaget's cognitive theory**

Piaget (1969:100) characterises the child's age stage between 7-11 years, generally called 'the primary school age', as "the concrete operational stage" because "they relate directly to objects" but "not yet to verbally stated hypotheses." For Piaget, the child of this age group "does not need to see the objects in order to carry out the operations but for effective operation they will be aided by viewing the real objects or pictures of them" (Thomas 2000:264).

The salient feature of the 7-11-year-olds is clearly evident when it is compared with that of the 4-6-year-olds, which is classified as the pre-operational period (Piaget 1969:209; 1959:262).

According to Richards (1983: 101), the 4-6-year age-group do not apply 'the Golden Rule' because he or she has "the inability to see others as

independent persons with their own feeling, wants, ways, and experiences.” Also, during this period of pre-operational thought, children do not understand the conservation principle—to recognise that a quantity remains the same despite of a change in its appearance (Elkind 1998:32). It is therefore true to say that “during this stage children are egocentric; they are unable to imagine any other perspective but their own” (Meier, Minirth, Wichern, & Ratcliff 1991:178).

On the other hand, during concrete operations the cognitive limitation of the pre-operational stage can be overcome to a relative degree. Unlike children in the pre-operational stage, children in the concrete operations stage develop an organisational system for environmental events, including logical structures. They are able to apply mathematical operations, measurement, language, and spatial concepts (Elkind 1998:32–33).

According to Piaget (1969:234–5), at this stage children can use and apply logical principles such as identity, reversibility, reciprocity and classification:

1) Identity: The children can figure out certain essential characters regardless of superficial changes and transformations. In a word, at this stage they understand the concept of conservation (Berger 2000:372–3). Meier (1991:178) explains this specifically:

For example, if two equal amounts of water are poured into two identical glasses, a child of age five, six, or seven will generally report that the glasses contain the same amount. If the water from one of the glasses is



poured into a taller and thinner glass, however, most five-year-old children will be convinced that there is more in the taller glass, whereas older children will probably see that there is still the same amount of water in the glasses. The concrete operational child has come to understand that the concept of amount depends on both height and width.

2) Reversibility and reciprocity: At this stage the children can achieve an understanding of reversibility, returning to its original state, or reciprocity, mutually relating and compensating in others (Berger 2000:373).

3) Classification: At this stage the child can systematically reorganise objects or persons in the process of classification (Piaget 1977:125; Berger 2000:375).

Whereas the child at the pre-operational stage remains in a state of egocentrism, for Piaget, the child at the concrete operational stage grows in ability to understand the viewpoint of others. The child is able to comprehend more of the “whole” picture (Cunningham 1992:145). From the above outline of Piaget’s theory, we can summarise that the child at school-going age is not just a mimic and passive learner, but an active learner, interacting with his or her physical and social circumstances (Anthony 1992:145).

### **2.1.1.2 Gardner’s multi-intelligence**

As already mentioned above, although a number of aspects reflecting intellectual potential were built into the theory of Piaget, some problems are encountered. In fact, focusing on the approach of a single factor of



intelligence like IQ, his theory raises problems in accounting for the various intellectual capacities of the child. Furthermore, Piaget's theory does not allow one to reflect on various factors within involving different cultural backgrounds such as race, social economic position, immigration, etc.

Because of these problems raised by Piaget's theory, it is worth mentioning Gardner's theory of multi-intelligence, in spite of the fact that his theory is not a developmental theory or approach. Gardner's development of a theory of multi-factor-intelligence was influenced by Sperry, according to whom there are differences in brain function between the right and the left hemispheres of the brain. The right hemisphere is able to recognise objects and is involved in processes such as appreciation of art, creativity, spatial orientation, etc. On the other hand, the left hemisphere is able to understand abstract concepts or control speech such as writing, spelling, abstract mathematics, etc. (Meier 1991: 45).

However, Gardner is not satisfied with Sperry's hemisphere theory of brain which Gardner regards as not being adequate to adapt to the learning process. As a way of overcoming Piaget's and Sperry's limitations, what Gardner tries to delineate is multiple-factor intelligence, such as linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal intelligence (Gardner 1993:17-25). The following diagram clearly shows the multiple intelligence capacities.

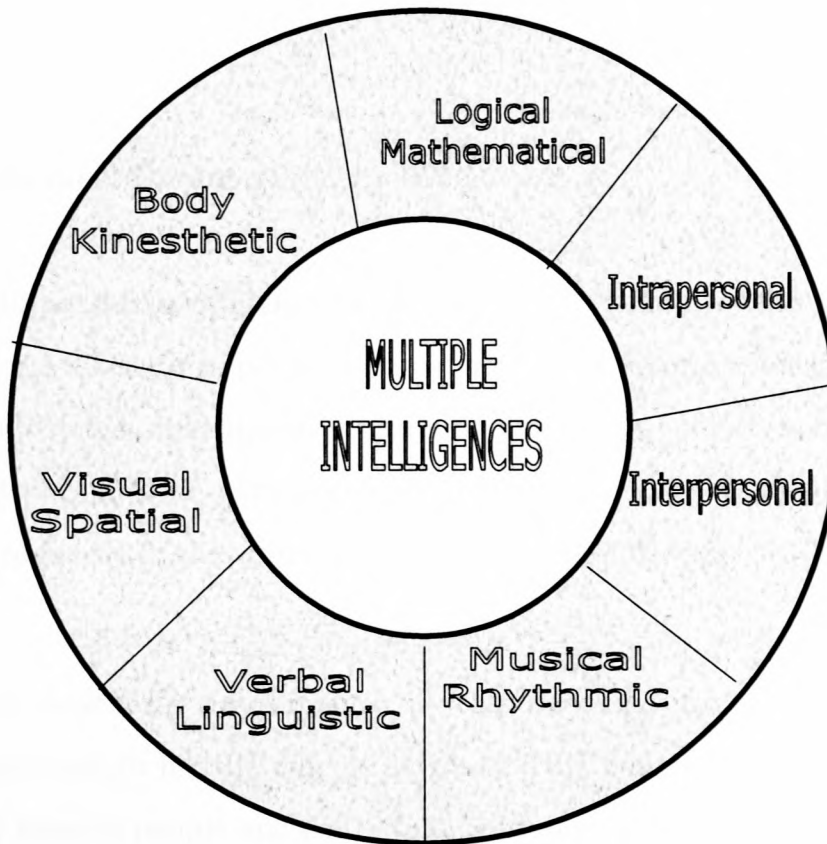


Figure 1. The multiple-intelligence capacities in wheel form. From Lazear (1991:201) *Seven Ways of teaching: The artistry of teaching with multiple intelligences*.

1) Verbal/ Linguistic Intelligence is the capacity to use words effectively, whether orally (e.g., as a storyteller, orator or politician) or in writing (e.g., as a poet, playwright, editor or journalist). This linguistic intelligence can be found mainly in people such as poets, playwrights, story-tellers, novelists, public speakers and comedians (Gardner 1993:21).

2) Logical-Mathematical Intelligence is the capacity to discern logical or numerical patterns; it is the ability to handle long chains of reasoning. This logical-mathematical intelligence is primarily found in people such as scientists, computer programmers, accountants, lawyers, bankers and

mathematicians (Gardner 1993:19–20).

3) Visual/Spatial Intelligence is the ability to perceive the visual–spatial world accurately and to perform transformations on one’s initial perceptions. This visual/spatial intelligence is primarily found in people such as architects, graphic design artists, cartographers, industrial design draftspersons, and of course, producers of the visual arts (Gardner 1993:21–22).

4) Body/Kinesthetic Intelligence is the capacity to control one’s body movements and to handle objects skilfully. This body/kinesthetic intelligence is mainly seen in people such as actors, athletes, mimes, professional dancers, and inventors (Gardner 1993:18–19).

5) Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence is the ability to produce and appreciate rhythm, pitch and timbre: appreciation of the forms of musical expressiveness. This musical/rhythmic intelligence is found in advertising people, professional performance musicians, rock groups, dance bands, composers, and, obviously, music teachers (Gardner 1993:17).

6) Inter–personal Intelligence is the capacity to discern and respond appropriately to the moods, temperaments, motivations and desires of other people. This interpersonal intelligence is usually commonly found in people such as counsellors, teachers, therapists, politicians and religious leaders (Gardner 1993:22–4).

7) Intra–personal Intelligence is self–knowledge and the ability to turn



inward. It is able to access to one's own feeling life and the ability to discriminate among one's emotions. In addition, it includes self-discipline, self-understanding and self-esteem. This intra-personal intelligence can be found in people such as philosophers, psychiatrists, spiritual counsellors and gurus, and cognitive pattern researchers (Gardner 1993:24-5).

Gardner emerges as a strong advocate of reforming the field of education. In my opinion, his contribution has been to overcome the narrow cognitive approach of Piaget in which every child has been treated according to the same standardisation without considering the unique characteristic of each individual child. With the increasing influence of Gardner's multi-intelligence theory, we find that the child can be reconsidered with his or her own style of learning process and a respect for his or her weakness as well as strong points is preserved.

### **2.1.2 Emotional and social development (Erikson's understanding)**

Erikson established a theory of personality development which covers the entire human life span (Erikson 1963: 247-74; Philips 1992:167). According to his theory, 'development' is defined as the ability to deal successfully with specific crises so that we resolve the problems, enabling us to maintain an equilibrium (balance) between ourselves and our social world (Pazmiño 1988:186).

Before the age of 7 the child has already experienced the developmental



crises of “trust versus mistrust”, “autonomy versus shame and doubt”, and “initiative versus guilt.” During the first year of life an infant acquires a sense either of trust or mistrust. If children are gratified in terms of their basic physical and emotional needs, they will develop a sense of trust. But if not, the result will be mistrust toward the world (Anthony 1992:80).

In early childhood (ages 1–3) they will face a struggle between “autonomy versus shame and doubt.” A child needs the opportunity of time to explore her or his world. If this experience is successful s/he will learn independence gradually, but it fails s/he will not establish self-confidence.

During the preschool age (ages 3–6), the child will experience the two senses of “initiative versus guilt.” If s/he has the freedom to examine her or his own initiative, s/he will learn more confidently and positively. But if the reverse is true, the child will develop guilt and be restrained from taking an active stance (Richards 1983:94–5).

As the child moves into the school stage (ages 6–12 or 7–11), she or he will swing between ‘industry’ and ‘inferiority.’ At this stage the child will learn and expand his or her knowledge and master the basic skills of reading, writing, etc. If the child is supported and encouraged to achieve these skills and knowledge, then she or he will increasingly develop a sense of ‘industry’ rather than a sense of ‘inferiority.’ On the other hand, if the child fails in what she or he attempts to study, then she or he will develop a sense of inferiority that overrules industriousness (Elkind 1998:40).

From Erikson's theory we obtain the following very significant insights. First, the 7–11-year-old will obtain and experience more emotion or affection than a younger child. This goes beyond the mere relationship between the infant and the parents, which has been experienced in the early stages. At this age, the child might become involved in relationships with friends as well as with family. S/he might participate in school activities, join clubs, play games, go on church retreats, etc. As they are involved in these larger groups, they will experience and struggle with emotional conflicts from social relationship.

Secondly, the affective is regarded as the motivation of intelligence. For instance, age 7 is called 'eraser age' (Trent, Osborne, & Bruner (eds) 2000:121). The child wants to do perfect work to gain approval. So they often try to erase their errors. If the child doesn't succeed in his or her own decisions, s/he will develop negative emotions (such as shame, doubt or guilt, etc.) or experience conflicts. However, when s/he accomplishes what s/he thinks, s/he will have positive emotions (such as trust, excitement, satisfaction, etc.) or overcome conflicts. These emotions will operate as a strong motivation to experience new knowledge (Elkind 1998:40; Trent, Osborne & Bruner (eds) 2000:121).

In summary, Erikson's developmental life-cycle theory provides a paradigm for the physical and psychosocial growth of the individual. Especially the 7–11-year-old child who experiences the 'industry versus inferiority' stage can enlarge emotional and social relationships. What is important to Erikson in relation to our study is that emotional assurance plays a significant role in exploring and learning new knowledge. In the same context, DeVries



(2000:72), quoting Palmer, says, “Intellect works in concert with feeling, so if I hope to open my students’ minds, I must open their emotions as well.”

### **2.1.3 Behavioural and moral development (Kohlberg’s understanding)**

Lawrence Kohlberg is the leading pioneer in moral development theory. As many scholars (Moran 1983:69–85; Meier, Minirth, Wichern, Ratcliff 1996: 180; Wolterstorff 1980:74–100) agree, Kohlberg’s theory is quite similar to Piaget’s in the sense that Kohlberg stresses the structure of cognitive reasoning in relation to moral judgement. As Moran (1983:75) indicates, Kohlberg’s major concern is not the content of moral thinking (the decisions people make), but the structure of their reasoning (the way people arrive at those decisions).

Kohlberg (1967:71–72) identifies three major moral levels, each divided into two stages: pre-conventional thinking (the punishment and obedience orientation, and the instrumental-relativist orientation), conventional thinking (the interpersonal concordance or “good boy–nice girl” orientation, and the “law and order” orientation), post-conventional thinking (the social-contract and legalistic orientation, and the universal-ethical-principle principle). According to Pazmiño (1988: 187), “Movement through these three levels takes a person from the pursuit of self-interest, to adherence to external standards, to the affirmation of internal autonomous principles.”

In relation to our study, the 7–11-year-old child belongs to the transitional stage, which moves from pre-conventional moral reasoning (stage one) to



conventional level of reasoning (stage three) (Anthony 1992:121). Thus, in order to understand children at this stage, it is necessary to comment briefly on stage 1, stage 2 and stage 3.

Explaining a punishment and instrumental orientation of stage 1, Wolterstorff (1980:82) indicates that “The physical consequences of action determine its goodness or badness, regardless of the human meaning or value of these consequences.” Avoidance of punishment influences children’s reasons for why particular acts are good or bad. In stage 2 of the pre-conventional level, reciprocity as the major criterion of children’s action is “that which instrumentally satisfies one’s own needs and occasionally the needs of others” (Wolterstorff 1980:82). Like the relations of the marketplace, reciprocity is expressed as fair exchange: “I’ll scratch your back if you’ll scratch mine” (Wilcox 1979: 96).

As the child reaches stage 3, the interpersonal concordance or “good boy–nice girl” orientation, s/he gradually considers ‘the golden rule’ and understands “all points of view and reflects on each person’s motives in an effort to reach agreement among all participants” (Richards 1983:156).

The contribution of Kohlberg’s view is that this theory offers some insights for understanding how children think about moral issues. However, in spite of the value of Kohlberg’s hierarchical and systematic moral development theory, practically, some parts are debatable. Like Piaget’s cognitive theory, his theory failed to explain individual differences. In a word, his theory is too narrow and restrictive to apply to children in Western culture (Berger 2000:

404). Also, as DeVries (2000:73), following Coles's opinion, indicates, "young children have a more highly developed and nuanced sense of morality than suggested by Kohlberg."

#### **2.1.4 Faith development (Fowler's understanding)**

Fowler, building upon the work of Piaget in cognitive development, of Erikson in emotional and social development, and of Kohlberg in behavioural and moral development, has developed a theory of how faith develops (Meier, Minirch, Wichwern & Ratcliff 1996: 182). Fowler (1981:16) sees faith as active, as a verb. Faith is a dynamic process rather than static product. To Fowler, "this process involves continual growth through stages that are hierarchical (increasingly complex and qualitative), sequential (appearing one after the other in the life span), invariant (following the same order for all persons), and universal (applying to all cultural and societal setting)" (Pazmiño 1988:192).

Fowler (1981: 117–213), largely in agreement with Piaget's and Erikson's work, has suggested six stages of faith through which human faith may progress. Fowler's six stages of faith development are as follows: intuitive–projective faith (ages 3–6); mythic–literal faith (ages 7–11); synthetic–conventional faith (ages 12–17); individual–reflective (ages 18–30); conjunctive faith (ages 30–40); universalising faith (after 40).

Of Fowler's six stages of faith development, for the purpose of our study, we will focus on the stages of children of up to ages 7–11 which are the



intuitive–projective faith (ages 3–6) and mythic–literal faith (ages 7–11) stages.

Between the ages 3–6 children are strongly influenced by images, stories and symbols, but they are not yet controlled by logical thinking (Fowler 1981:172). Because of this, they are primarily characterised by the fusing of fact and fantasy because these are very confused and mingled together with imagination, facts and emotions. On the other hand, children aged 7–11, in the “mythic–literal faith” stage, find the meaning of life primarily through story and myth, with facts clearly being separated from fantasy and speculation. As Downs (1994:115) appropriately indicates, “it is mythic in the sense that it can now capture life’s meaning in stories, but literal in that it is generally limited to concrete thinking.” At this stage children are able to know about, investigate and test facts with logical thought. Also, children rely on and are impacted upon by the imaginative world. Because of these characteristics, Fowler (1978:50) indicates that at this stage children love “to employ stories or myths, to express his or her sense of an ultimate environment.” Fowler (1981:149) adds that “the new capacity or strength of this stage is the rise of narrative and the emergence of story, drama and myth as ways of finding and giving coherence to experience.”

In the same context, Juengst (1994:49) says:

One of the key developments of this stage is narration. Children make sense out of the world by telling stories about it. It is a prime time for sharing the great stories of the Old and New Testament and for helping children develop their own gifts of storytelling. These stories are crucial in helping



for them sort out the experiences of their lives.

The most important contribution of Fowler for the purpose of our study lies in the fact that he provides a clear reason why image-oriented education and teaching is absolutely essential for the 7–11 age group.

From the above theories of child development, we can now conclude that children are dynamic and multi-dimensional rather than static and monolithic. For the sound growth of children, each development theory must be supplemented with other development theories in the attempt to provide further complete understanding. In this respect, Pazmiño (1988:198–203) suggests integration of the developmental theories.

How then is this integrative view related and applied to the area of faith of children? This will be the main issue of 2.2.

## **2.2. HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR FAITH FORMATION OF CHILDREN**

So far we have explored cognitive development, affective development, behavioural development and faith development of the children, especially focusing on ages 7–11. From these discussions it became clear that children need to be understood in terms of multiple factors, not just one factor. This lesson is closely related to the question of how we invite them into and lead them toward Christian faith. The answer is, in a word, that Christian education should entail a holistic approach in the sense that we should

consider various aspects in which our children are involved. Insofar as we realise that children develop integrally, our Christian education should also consider the children's mind, heart and will holistically.

Unfortunately, Christian education until now has not succeeded in dealing with children as the learners of God's Word integrally, wholly and holistically. An illustrative example is found in the traditional reformed education and teaching, which will be extensively discussed in the next chapter. The problem of traditional reformed education is that it emphasises the cognitive aspect in an exclusive way, while relatively ignoring the affective function in teaching (Roux 1994: 10–15; Egan 1988:29–31; Willhoit & Ryken 1988:223–36; DeVries 2000; Johnson 2001: 309–14).<sup>1</sup>

In this regard Osmer (1990:216) addresses the importance of the affective approach in faith to balance an integral faith life.

The Christian life [faith] is broader than the intellect alone...The religious affections focus on those enduring patterns of emotion that direct human energies in habitual directions. One of the most important tasks facing congregational education today is gaining a deeper understanding of the various ways that the congregation can attend to the formation of the affectional dimensions of the religious life, focusing on the heart as well as the mind.

In the same context DeVries (2000:79) also emphasises the significance of the affective dimensions in forming people's faith, especially children. What he

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<sup>1</sup>This problem in traditional education and teaching of the Bible will be discussed in Chapter 3.

suggests specifically for our study has to do with the place or role of the cognitive aspects of faith. DeVries explains this in the following picture.

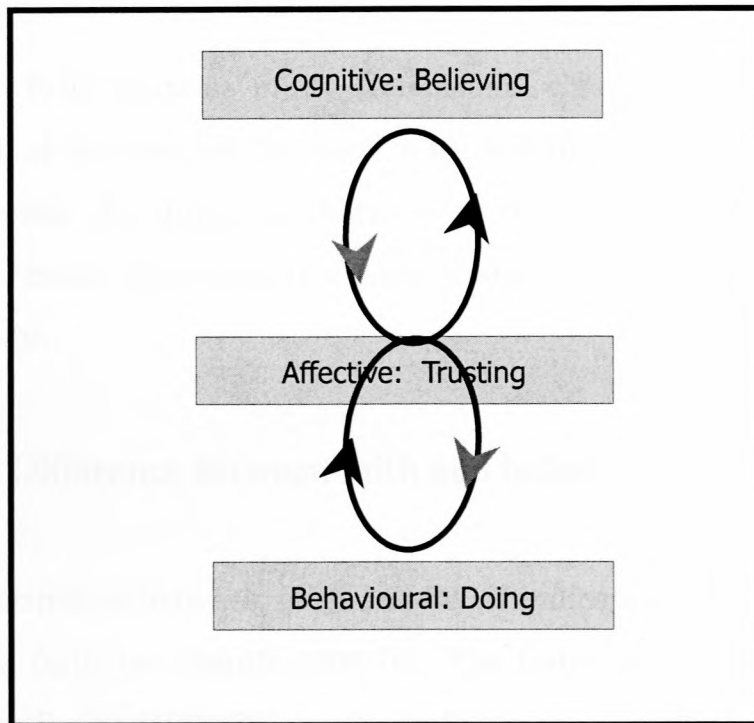


Figure 2. The role of the affective as facilitator between the cognitive and the behavioural: Adapted from DeVries 2000:79.

In this picture the affective dimensions are placed in the centre, where the cognitive aspects and the behavioural aspects meet. More specifically, cognitive aspects can be transmitted into behavioural aspects through the effective functioning of the affective aspects.

On the basis of the reemphasis of the affective dimensions by Osmer and DeVries, our major focus becomes clear. It lies not in an emphasis on the



affective approach at the expense of other factors as another extreme direction, but, as DeVries vividly shows in the above diagram, an emphasis on a holistic approach through understanding the new significance of the affective approach to connect the cognitive and behaviour aspects.

In order to fully examine multi-dimensional characteristics in forming the sound faith of children, in this section we will investigate two issues. Firstly, we will clarify the difference between faith and belief. Secondly, we will reveal the multi-dimensional characteristics of faith primarily based on DeVries' view.

### **2.2.1 The Difference between faith and belief**

Smith's distinction between faith and belief indicates to Christian educators what true faith is (Smith 1998:76). The Latin word for 'belief' is *credo*; according to Smith (1998:76), *credo* combines *cor* or *cordis* [heart] and *do* [put, place, set, or give']. That is, 'belief' originally meant that 'I give my heart to' or 'I set my heart on.' As Park (2001:17) indicates, 'belief' as *credo* was not different from faith and, at first, had to do with 'heart.' However, today, to many people, the meaning of belief is reduced to an act in which the mind plays a predominant role. As Downs (1994:120) aptly indicates, "Concern for doctrinal purity has so consumed us that we have tended to reduce the concept of faith to a creedal statement, which we refer to as a Statement of Faith." Here, faith is identified with intellectual assent.

That is, while the original meaning of *credo* had closely related with the

heart as well as the mind, the contemporary meaning regarding belief has been changed entirely from a person-oriented focus to an idea- or a theory-oriented focus, from including self-commitment to being merely descriptive, from relationship with absolutes to relation to uncertainties (Smith 1998:120).

Criticising the fact that the importance of belief in the Christian life has been both overrated and underrated during the history of Christian education, Osmer (1992:22) indicates two dangerous issues that arise in Christian education when faith is reduced to belief as intellectual assent or systematic creed. Firstly, this belief leads us to put our trust “in a human set of beliefs rather than in God.” Secondly, this belief “tends to narrow faith to one part of a person’s life” (Osmer 1992:22). Ultimately, it might isolate our relationship with God by putting too much emphasis exclusively to ‘holding the correct idea’ about God.

In order to escape from the danger which reduces faith to a cognitive list of beliefs, many scholars like Osmer, Groome, Fowler, DeVries and Dykstra remind us again of the true nature of faith in relation to a holistic view. Among them, Groome is the most important figure in giving an overview of Christian education in a holistic perspective. Groome (1991:18) indicates the dual aspects of faith in the field of Christian education. First, for him, “Faith is never produced by human doing, faith is always the gift of God.” However, at the same time, faith is human responsibility, more specifically, the educational responsibility of the Christian community (Groome 1980:56). Groome (1991:18) explains this: “if this *a priori* gift is to come to explicit and



*a posteriori* expression as Christian faith, then the Christian community must make accessible and nurture people in the specificity of its faith tradition.”

What is important to Groome (1991:18) in arguing for educational responsibility is that “lived Christian faith is a holistic affair that engages the whole of people’s “being”: their bodily, mental, and volitional capacities... Lived Christian faith is the action of agent–subjects who through an interdependent community of Christian faith engage in a threefold dynamic of historical activities: believing, trusting, and doing God’s will.”

- 1). Christian faith has a cognitive/mental dimension. It is a believing activity that reflects conviction and decision.
- 2). Christian faith has an affective/relational dimension. It is a trusting in one’s relationship with God in Jesus that is nurtured and realised in relationship with a Christian faith community and that shapes one’s relationship with all humankind.
- 3). Christian faith has a behavioural/ obedient dimension. It is an activity of “doing God’s will” in the world.

Osmer (1992: 21–38), another major supporter of the holistic view of Christian education, examines four sides of the faith cube for the instruction of adults. From his theory, we can understand faith as belief, relationship, commitment and mystery, which is a totally different view from seeing faith merely in terms of the cognitive (belief).

Following basically Osmer’s theory, DeVries reformulates three binaries in



faith: knowledge and mystery in the cognitive aspect; trust and community in the affective aspect; and word and deed in the behavioural aspect.

In conclusion, faith is not identified with 'belief', if belief is regarded as ideas or theories, belonging in the cognitive dimension. Rather, faith requires a multi-layered holistic understanding, not solely the cognitive, the affective, nor the behavioural. Faith is needed for a synthetic and integral approach. Thus, if we teach faith to children, we must consider 'faith as a response of the whole personality' including mind, heart and behaviour.

### **2.2.2 Three dimensions (axes) of faith**

As mentioned above, DeVries (2000: 13–5), adopting and reformulating the theory of Osmer, indicates that faith has three fundamental concerns in the history of the church: Christianity focuses on 'orthodoxy', 'orthopathy' and 'orthopraxis'. According to S. Johnson (2001:312–313), orthodoxy represents a matter of the head, orthopathy is a matter of the heart, and orthopraxis is concerned with hands or behaviour. As already emphasised, these should be considered as three aspects of an integrated whole rather than as separate factors in isolation from one another. The following diagram briefly illustrates the three dimensions in forming the faith of children.

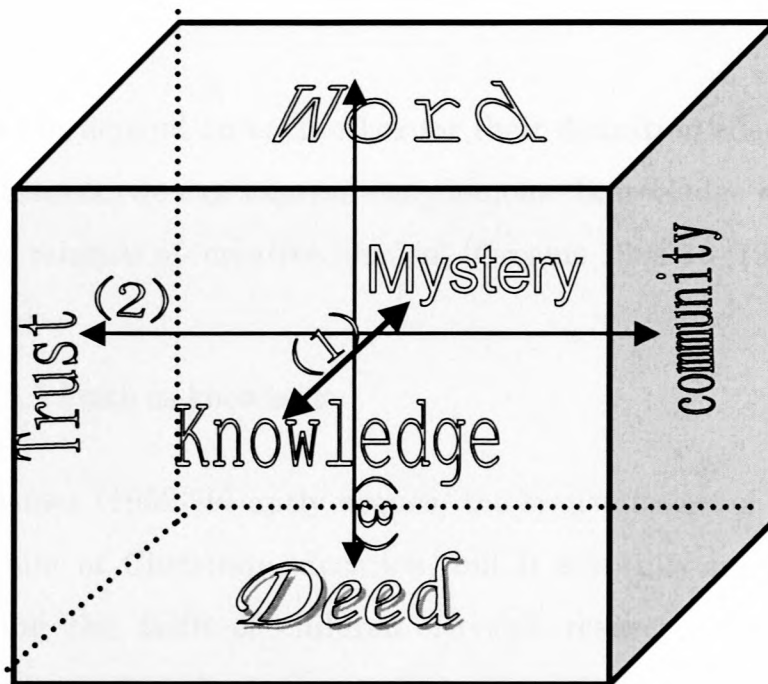


Figure 3. Faith Cube: Adapted from DeVries's diagram (2000:16,23,30)

### 2.2.2.1 Faith as orthodoxy: knowledge and mystery

Faith as orthodoxy primarily focuses on the matter of promoting 'right believing.' Even though today the cognitive factor has gradually been ignored by various educators and theories, we cannot deny the significance of this cognitive aspect of faith in inviting children into and teaching them about the world of the Bible. The Bible emphasises that our faith should grow in knowledge (Co1 19–10; 3:10; 1 Timothy 1:3; 6:3).

In the opinion of DeVries, this cognitive aspect expressed by orthodoxy consists of two elements: knowledge and mystery. Ironically, "orthodoxy embraces two elements that are essentially contrary, that is, elements that belong together but by their very nature exist in tension" (DeVries 2000:17). The terms "contrary" and "tension" indicate that two do not exist on opposite

sides but depend on each other for their definition (Bednar 1996: 46–47). In this respect, we can express two elements (knowledge and mystery) as being in the relation of “creative tension” (Groome 1991:18–19).

### 2.2.2.1.1 Faith as knowledge

As Osmer (1992:39) aptly argues, the transmission of knowledge is not the sole aim of Christian education, but it certainly is a significant factor in forming the faith of children. In this respect, an extreme emphasis of “experience-based” learning as a reaction to a cognitive educational philosophy raises a crucial danger in the sense that the content of what is being taught is treated as less important than the process of thinking and experiencing that children learn to use (Johnson 2001: 315–6; Osmer 1992:40). Like traditional cognitive-oriented teaching, experience-centred teaching separates content and process. In such an exclusive separation, it is impossible for children to understand the Bible meaningfully. Children build and strengthen their beliefs through biblical and theological knowledge.<sup>2</sup> DeVries (2000:19) says that the teaching task of the church “must deal with cognitions, concepts, truth-statements. Faith necessarily includes conceptual knowledge. The church must continue to use, and develop, a language of faith based on the reliable word from God found in his Son and in scripture.”

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<sup>2</sup> Osmer (1992:41) explains the necessity of knowledge by way of his personal experience. He says, “When I watch a college basketball game with my two children, for example, my nine-year-old daughter has difficulty following the play-by-play commentary of the announcers, while my fourteen-year-old son frequently makes evaluative remarks about their comments. My daughter has almost no background knowledge to process the information she is receiving. She does not know what is meant by “travelling” or what a “run and jump” defense refers to. As a basketball player, however, my son already has acquired a sophisticated set of categories with which to watch and analyze a game. He not only can follow the commentators’ descriptions of the game but also can evaluate their remarks.”



### 2.2.2.1.2 Faith as mystery

As another aspect of orthodoxy, our faith also requires mystery, which has been ignored by those who have held the cognitive aspect in high esteem. As DeVries (2000:20) indicates clearly, orthodoxy should admit the incomprehensible. God and his Word often are beyond logical understanding or comprehension. While this does not mean that we cannot know anything about God, this aspect requires that we as creatures should accept that our comprehension is limited in understanding the truth: “How great is God beyond our understanding?” (Job 36:26). In this respect, Osmer (1992:35) says, “Our trust in God is not immediately and directly confirmed by our experience. We trust in spite of what we see and hear.”

For example, when we teach God’s sacrificial love through Jesus, we naturally face the wonder and mystery of His absolute love beyond our comprehension. How can we understand His love toward the sinner expressed on the Cross? As Juengst (1994:92) aptly states, “The daily miracle of God’s love is a wonder, an awesome reality, very like the miracle of creation.” When children meet this mystery, they can experience “the elements of surprise, admiration, triggered by the unexpected, the amazing, the incredible” (Juengst 1994:93).

Thus, our education of children aged between 7–11 years “should balance certainty with mystery, knowledge with the incomprehensible. The church should teach in such a way that believers, especially children, know that knowledge and mystery are not contradictory; they are contraries or corollaries of one another. Both are part of the Christian faith” (DeVries

200:22). Later in Chapter 4 (121): The Function of Imagination, we will again investigate mystery in relation to the role of imagination.

### **2.2.2.2 Faith as orthopathy: trust and community**

In spite of the positive effect of the cognitive and convictional component, orthodoxy alone cannot replace other dimensions of faith. The significance of faith as mystery especially says that the cognitive aspect cannot be separated from faith as orthopathy.

Sound faith requires another factor expressed by faith as orthopathy. Orthopathy means “right feeling” in the Greek. It is very close to the relationship with “values, affections, feelings, and emotions.” DeVries indicates the two elements of orthopathy as trust and community. He clearly explains that “Trust is directed both toward God in an individual relationship, and the Christian lives within a trust building and trustworthy community” (DeVries 2001:23–4).

#### **2.2.2.2.1 Faith as trust**

While knowledge is related to matters of the head in forming the faith of a child, trust is related to matters of the heart (Johnson 2001:312–3). As we have already noted, Erikson (1964:35) asserts that the first months of infancy are very crucial for forming ‘trust’ in the mother. When trust is successfully established through the relationship between them, and children realise that their mother is trustworthy and loving, they will tend to develop a strong tie that makes them secure and outgoing later. Conversely, should children fail



to experience and feel the ‘trust, they later become over–dependent and do not trust those around them’ (Meier, Minirch, Wichern, & Ratcliff 1996:176).

If Erikson’s argument concerning trust and mistrust is correct, we can apply ‘trust’ to the psychological perspectives in understanding our faith. That is, our faith depends on whether we can trust in God and His word or not. Though we cannot deny that trust involves cognitive elements in the sense that it is based on accepting “facts’, nevertheless, it belongs primarily to the affective function in the sense that even “much of what we accept as ‘fact’ is based on a trusting relationship with God through Jesus Christ, who is fully trustworthy...Ultimately, the acceptance of the Bible rests on the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit—a matter of trusting the Spirit of God in your heart” (DeVries 2001:26). Furthermore, the fact that when one person trusts God in faith, this trust cannot be separated from acceptance and loyalty, and love means that trust is more than concepts and facts (Session 1994:30). As Paul confessed, it is the matter of value or treasure (Phil. 3:8; cf. Matt. 6:33; 13:45).

#### **2.2.2.2 Faith as community**

If the affective aspect of faith entails emphasising only the significance of trust, it has a danger in our education of flowing toward the trend of individualism, which many theologians who advocated too strongly affective–oriented teaching and education are often guilty of (Simpson 1999:128–130).<sup>3</sup> Though Christian faith has a personal aspect, this does not

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<sup>3</sup> The phenomenological education method is a representation of these opinions. Simpson provides a



mean that it should be individualistic. Individualism is the most serious opposite of Christian faith (Hauerwas & Willimon 1989:65).

In order to escape this danger, it is very important to know that faith as trust is not an exclusively individual term. Rather, faith as trust, in its essence, implies the community of faith. In this respect, Harris (1989:77) asserts, “one Christian is no Christian; we go to God together or we do not go at all.” Christian faith arises out of and grows in a community. The best image describing God’s community in Jesus is that of “the body of Christ” (1 Cor 12:12; Eph 4:12). What the term “community” clearly expresses in the body metaphor is “that deep relationship with other believers, especially the relationship created by a common faith in Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior” (DeVries 2000:27). In other words, it means that we are called as a relating community on the basis of Jesus Christ. As Foster (1994:68–79) correctly suggests, it should be fulfilled with our commitment, though to build up a relating community is not an easy thing. <sup>4</sup>

In summary, recognising the necessity of understanding faith as both trust and community, our education ministry should help children develop an intimate relationship with God through Jesus Christ and, at the same time, should develop an apt intimacy with God’s people, in which each shares and works with the other (DeVries 2000:29). In this regard, we can conclude that “Orthopathy deals with much more than emotion. Orthopathy teaches values

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brief summary of the phenomenological method in his Th.D. thesis: *Traditioning and reinterpretation: The Quest for a Methodology of Faith-Formation* (1999).

<sup>4</sup> In *Educating Congregations*, Foster (1994:68-79) suggests four methods for building up a relating community: 1) Transforming the vocabulary of Christian community; 2) Sharing the stories of faith; 3) Nurturing interdependent relationships; 4) Practising the life-style of Christian community.

– assisting believers to value the truth, to value their relationship with God, to value their relationship with others, and to value themselves as created and redeemed creatures of the Holy Father” (DeVries 2000:29).

### **2.2.2.3 Faith as orthopraxis: word and deed**

As a third and final element of faith, Orthopraxis, ‘right acting’ or ‘right behaviour’, is related to a behavioural/obedient dimension (Groome 1991:20). While orthodoxy and orthopathy approach the Word as a matter of head and heart, orthopraxis approaches the Word as a matter of the will (Johnson 2001:313). As Groome indicates, faith as orthopraxis demands that Christian education for children should be rooted in and a shaper of people’s historical praxis. In his diagram DeVries divides orthopraxis as word and deed based on James 2:14,17.

#### **2.2.2.3.1 Faith as word**

DeVries (2000:30) explains how the word belongs to the area of orthopraxis as follows: Words are actions in a sense that “we speak to God and to others –to God in words of confession and celebration; to others in words of testimony and invitation.”

#### **2.2.2.3.2 Faith as deed**

According to the apostle James, “Faith without works is as dead as a body without breath” (James 2:26). This states the importance of faith as deed. In the light of James’s teaching, if we define faith, it is deed, a life-altering grace affecting one’s activities.



However, the practice of faith is not easy and requires much discipline (Miles 1988). The difficult disciplines can be summarised by three requirements. First, according to Paul's admonition, in order to show faith with deed, Christians should continue to put off old habits, belonging to the carnal nature. Secondly, in a more positive phase, we should put on our new nature, relying on the Holy Spirit who always renews us on the one hand, and with living actions toward our fellow people on the other hand. Thirdly, we should develop a life of obedience. God does not want us to remain in just cognitive and affective faith; He expects obedience from us beyond them. And obedience requires practical action (Park 2001:54).

Again, DeVries (2000:32–33) divides this action into two forms: an “action” in developing one's character and virtue known as “the fruit of the Spirit” on the basis of Galatians 5:22–23, and an “action” summarised by commands such as those in the Sermon of the Mount. In a word, the former relates to deeds based on character development and the latter relates to deeds based on social justice.

Finally, what we should remind when we focus on the deeds is that Christian deeds and ethics come from basically life-giving love, in other words, the grace of Jesus. In this regard, a Christian's ethic is a Christ-oriented ethic in the sense that Christian ethical life is the result of love (grace) and, as such, it can be a counter ethic to present post-modern principles, which is a deeply grounded self-centred ethic.

In summary, from the study of six aspects of faith, we conclude that these are



not separated entities but an integrated whole and also essential for forming the faith of children; our children require these six elements holistically.

## 2.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have explored the characteristics of child development as described by several educators, with three significant results. The first, regarding cognitive development, shows that the child in the 7–11 age period develops de-centering thought, understanding others' viewpoints, to become an active learner to know the reason as well as result. The second, regarding affective development, shows the children are able to express their emotions in their circumstances. Furthermore, these emotions often work as motivation. These emotions, in the development of behaviour, are also able to act with communal sense and voluntarily.

From these child developmental theories, this chapter moved to consider faith formation in a holistic perspective. From Osmer and DeVries' insights, we have been exploring how these aspects function in the faith formation of children. Our conclusion is that faith has multi-layered dimensions such as knowledge and myth (the cognitive), trust and community (the affective), word and deed (the behavioural). In this regard, we should approach the child with these three dimensions as an integrated whole in mind.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BIBLE AS STORY AND IMAGE FOR 7-11-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

In the previous chapter I investigated the developmental world and faith of 7-11-year-old children. Now I will focus on the nature of the Bible as the source of faith formation of children, before discussing the function of imagination and the storytelling method. Our primary interest in this chapter is not whether biblical truth is authoritative for children, but how its continuing relevance or appropriateness in the changing situation of children can be applied and actualised (Mouton 1997:246). The significance of this question is apparent when we consider the contradictory attitude of traditional Christian theology and education. Many have believed that the Bible is indispensable for children. This does not mean, however, that they can always use the Bible properly. Despite their strong assurance about the authority and necessity of the Bible, Christian teachers have primarily treated the Bible as an inanimate source of statements of a creed, information for dogmatic truth, or legalistic imperatives. Through such an approach the Bible is sometimes rendered ineffective.

According to this view it is believed that the task of preachers and teachers is to make the text relevant in order for the Bible to be meaningful to children. As Dykstra (1999:151) indicates, many teachers and educators think that we are doing something while the Bible itself lies still and dumb before us. In this view, since the Bible is itself lifeless and passive, it is necessary that

interpreters should do something to it (Dykstra 1999:151).

Though no one can deny the necessity of making the Bible relevant in children's education, "it is also crucial that we, first of all, see the Bible itself as a living force and active agent, rather than as a dead relic or historical fossil" (Dykstra 1999:151). But without considering the relevance of the Bible itself, every effort to make the Bible meaningful for our children is useless. Thus, when it is said that the Bible should be a relevant and appropriate book for children, it means that we first affirm the relevance of the Bible itself (Gobbel 1986:7; Greidanus 1988:158). This paper tries to establish the Bible's relevance for children by looking at it as story and image.

For a more concrete study, I will first examine the multidimensional nature of the Bible and the loss of holistic approaches through the adoption of a one-dimensional approach. After this, I will consider the Bible as story and image. Finally, I briefly conclude this chapter with a closing remark on the Bible's (trans)formative power.

### **3.1 THE NEGLECT OF THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL NATURE OF THE BIBLE**

#### **3.1.1 The Bible (text) in a multidimensional approach**

Since the Bible or the text has a complex nature in the articulation of its meaning, we are obliged to approach the biblical texts multidimensionally. As many scholars (Pratt 1990; Lategan 1993; Tate 1991; Jonker 1993:100–115;



1998:1–15) argue, the Bible has primarily involved with three major dimensions: historical, structural and literary, and theological–rhetorical. Based on the three dimensions of the Bible, Lategan succinctly describes three different groups, with their primary emphasis, that have dominated hermeneutical discussion until now.

According to Lategan (1986:3), the historical dimension has primarily to do with “origin and text production”; the structural–literary dimension is closely concerned with “text preservation and mediation” and the final aspect, the theological–rhetorical dimension, is primarily concerned with “reception and interpretation.”

More specifically, the historical dimension of the Bible aims to find the author’s intention with the concern directed to the world behind the text. Since the Bible is bound to historical circumstances, the meaning of the text is formulated in terms of the social, political, cultural and ideological matrix of the author. In a word, the historical dimension makes us approach the text with its intentionality in mind.

The structural–literary dimension aims to understand the text’s thrust, with the focus on the world within the text, or the textual world. With the emergence of new criticism and structuralism and their emphasis on “the auto–semantic nature of the text,” the text itself becomes the focal point where the primary attention is given to various linguistic and literary relationships within the text (Lategan 1986:3; Tate 1991:XVIII). In a word, the structural–literary dimension makes us realise the potentiality of the

text itself.

The theological–rhetorical dimension aims to identify persuasive strategies in the text, with the emphasis on the world in front of the text, or the reader’s world. In contrast to the traditional approach, this theological–rhetorical dimension of the Bible is a conscious effort to make a difference by means of words, not in order merely to express something or to translate one’s thoughts and feelings into words and images, but in order to impress an audience or to transform the thoughts and feelings of the audience through words and images (Lawrie 2002:2; Combrink 1984:30).

This theological–rhetorical dimension provides us with an awareness of how the biblical text functions for the reader as it emphasizes actuality of communication toward the audience. Because of this multidimensional nature of the Bible, it is impossible to read and find the meaning of the text from the vantage point of only one dimension. For sound interpretation and application of the Bible, it is absolutely necessary to understand the mutual interaction of the three approaches.

### **3.1.2 The loss of a holistic view by the adoption of a one–dimensional approach**

In spite of the necessity for adopting a multidimensional approach concerning the nature of the Bible, unfortunately, our children’s education has so far been dominated by a one–dimensional approach. An example is the extreme cognitive educational model based on the historical dimension or



historical criticism, which ultimately loses the holistic approach to education. The supporter of the cognitive model is concerned with the propositional truth of the Bible. According to Lindbeck (1984:16), "The cognitive model, having its ideological roots in the Enlightenment, focuses on the ways in which church doctrines function as informative propositions or truth claims about objective reality." The primary concern of this approach is how to convey information in the biblical text for the purpose of producing a new understanding. In the cognitive model "the Bible could be regarded primarily as a body of knowledge or a collection of facts and information to be transmitted through the teaching activity" (Gobbel 1986:3). The cognitive model tries to approach the Bible in order to extract its main ideas or themes. Eslinger (1995:13) says that the cognitive model approaches biblical texts by way of a "hermeneutic of distillation" in which the Bible was chiefly taught by means of traditional didactic approaches. In one respect their emphasis is right and makes an important contribution to the Christian nurturing and growth of children. It should go without saying that the Bible includes propositional truths for the Christian education of children who cannot exist and flourish without recognising the importance of its propositional truth (Henry 1987: 25-27).

The point that should be emphasised, however, is not that they understand the Bible as propositional truth through the traditional didactic approach, but that they limit the Bible exclusively to the mode of propositional truth. This results in the Bible losing its active and effective power as a relevant book for children.



In this regard Roux (1994:12–15) indicates four things as limitations and problems of extreme didactic approaches that are basically content-oriented. The first danger of extreme didactic approaches is "a stereotyped curriculum." Describing the one-sided trend of Bible teaching in church as well as school, Roux indicates that school and church curricula for Bible education "have stayed more or less the same with fixed contents", not considering a child's religious development. The extreme emphasis on content makes little or no provision for addressing the specific religious needs of the child. The second problem of extreme didactic approaches to the Bible is the "emphasis on historical biblical events." Despite the fact that conveying historical biblical events in itself is not a bad goal, excessive emphasis on this often ignores the fact that "these events need to be put in appropriate perspective and should be complemented by extra-Biblical information to spark and keep the child's interest." The third danger of extreme didactic approaches is an "emphasis on moral issues." In traditional education this is the most common tendency. The serious danger is that it transmits the Bible stories in the extreme form of moralisation, in spite of the fact that the major intention of the authors of the Bible is not to moralise through Bible stories. The final danger is one that is most closely related to this chapter, namely, the excessive emphasis on "cognitive performance." Assuming that children remember the content of the Bible, in other words, they know the Bible, many have focused on extremely cognitive performance (Gobbel 1986: 66). As Roux aptly argues, the main problem that will result from an extreme emphasis on the cognitive aspects is that it "leaves little room for religious experiences, which should be part and parcel of teaching the Bible to children."

According to Roux's criticisms of the above, although understanding the Bible as propositional truth is not wrong, nevertheless the Bible should not be merely a handbook for cognitive development to transmit information (Carson 1996:164). Rather, as Achtemeier (1989:27) indicates, "the Bible's conception of the word of God is that it creates that of which it speaks." The Bible as active, creative power is to bring about true transformation in the lives of those who hear it. Children should never be an exception. In order for the Bible to be a creative power for children as well as adults, the nature of the Bible cannot be reduced to merely cognitive material or propositional truth. It should also include the affective or emotional aspect.

The question to ask now is how can we understand the Bible in a holistic sense? To many scholars today the answer is two-fold. Firstly, a balanced understanding of the nature of the Bible is found in the narrative (story) aspect of the Bible, though this has been ignored until now (Tilley 1985:18–36; Eslinger 1995:3–38; Crites 1971:297–311; Gobbel 1986: 94–96; Bausch 1989: 15–63). By embracing a creative way to rediscover the Bible as God's story or God's drama, children's education can overcome the limitation of the traditional cognitive model.

Secondly, for a balanced understanding of the nature of the Bible, it is necessary to see the Bible as an image (Brueggemann 1978; 1993:3–15; Hart 2000:191–200). As Carson(1996:169–70) says, "In this post-liberal, post-Christian age...The appropriate way to read the Bible is with a developing 'evangelical imagination'... Our way through the Bible with



an 'evangelical imagination' enables us to enter into continuing conversation with better ways of construing reality, ways that are in line with biblical faith." When the Bible is approached as a book of images, it helps our children to participate effectively in the story of the Bible. These will be the main issues discussed in the section below.

## **3.2 THE BIBLE AS GOD'S STORY**

### **3.2.1 The Bible in story form**

The last few years have seen an extraordinary resurgence among scholars, preachers and educators in narrative theology, narrative preaching, narrative education and teaching, and storytelling areas. Under the influence of these movements, many scholars agree that the Bible is largely made up of stories or narratives (Wilder 1991:131–34; Anderson 1979:40; Stone 1995: 255–85; Longman III 1990: 70–71; Gabel and Wheeler 1990:16–17; Lindbeck 1984:120–21; McKim 1985: 125–33; Wilhoit and Ryken 1988:207–22). As Steffen (1994:89) shows in the following diagram, among the different types of literature in the Bible, approximately 75 percent is narrative written in prose style. Extensive portions of narrative styles show that narrative is the most predominant form in the Old Testament and New Testament and, at the same time, that the narrative styles were used as powerful and central tools for communicating and teaching the revelation of God.



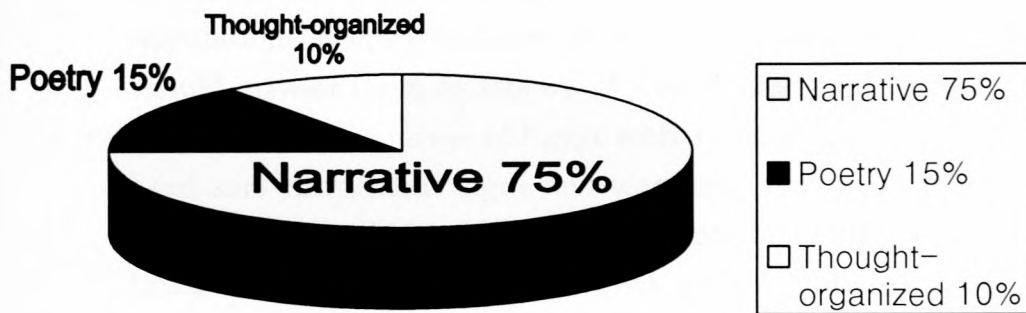


Figure 4. Major Literary Styles of the Bible: From Steffen, 1994, *A Narrative Approach to Communicating the Bible*, CEJ, Vol. XIV, 3: 86

Wright (1991:10) points out that "much of what we call the Bible—the Old and New Testament—is not a rule book; it is narrative". Stroup (1981:145) also notes, "At the centre of Scripture is a set of narratives and these narratives are the frame around which the whole of scripture is constructed."

Like Stroup, Brueggemann (1982:21–22) also persuasively explains that narrative is Israel's primal form of knowing. The primal mode of education in the Torah especially is narrative or story. Brueggemann suggests that when the seeker or child asks the question of the adult: "What do these stones mean?" and demands an explanation," the adult does not directly answer. Even though an explanation is required, they refuse to supply it. Rather "the adult answers characteristically, "Let me tell you a story." We can find an appropriate example in Deuteronomy 6:20, which reads,

In the future, when your children ask you, 'What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?' you should answer them as follows: We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes the Lord sent miraculous signs and wonders—great and terrible—upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land that he promised on oath to our forefathers. The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.

It is an answer through a story. Though the response through story does not always provide sufficient or satisfying answers to the seeker or the child, it is the most characteristic mode of knowledge in educating God's people. Since the Bible came out of such a narrative culture, where the truth was often wrapped in the garment of story telling, it is natural that the Bible mainly transmits the truth in the form of the narrative. For, as Ryken (1990:131) says, "God made people because He loves stories." Therefore Shoemaker (1985: 12–13) agrees that God's people are likely to transmit the biblical truth in the form of storytelling since they came out of the storytelling culture: "When an ancient Hebrew was asked who God was, he started with a story: My father was a wandering Aramean: his children wound up as slaves in Egypt. But God heard their cries and delivered them from Pharaoh's grip." When a Christian is asked about God, she begins: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16).

Furthermore, the influence of narrative governs the content and thought of



the non-narrative portions. In the Old Testament narrative structures and stories often lie beneath the surface of other literary forms. For example, the narrative or story sections are often in the background of didactic Old Testament literature. In agreement with Wright, Freeman (1987:118) asserts that "much Old Testament theology is 'recital' theology, the confessional recital of the redemptive acts of God."

It is much the same with the New Testament. Freeman (1987:118) also indicates that the non-narrative portions of the New Testament were built on the basic narrative pattern and structure:

In the New Testament, the didactic and epistolary literature grew out of reflection on the implications of the story of God in Christ. The other New Testament literary forms were intended, not to obscure the story, but to draw out the implications of it. They dealt with the unravelling implications involved in the story of redemption.

The above discussion clearly demonstrates that the Bible is narrative and at least a book that is formed on the basis of narrative stories. According to Miller(1996:145), the Bible can be explained as follows: "As the memorable story of our childhood all includes a 'once upon a time,' the entire Bible can be summed up in the familiar four-word plea: Tell me a story"(Ryken 1990:131). In the Old Testament, "The time of the beginning' is 'once upon a time,' clearly labeled at the starting point: *B'reshith barah Elohim*..... 'In the beginning God...' *B'reshith barah Elohim*—the primeval once-upon-a-time words (Miller 1996:145). The Gospel narratives also starts with a Greek "once upon a time": "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with



God... and we have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1,14) (Miller 1996:146). The biblical stories begin with the story of the creation of God, via Jesus' salvation story, and finally run through the story of culmination of the world. From this aspect, the Bible has really been called a storybook in the sense that the story is the central, foundational and encompassing pivot of the whole Bible (Wilhoit & Ryken 1988:86).

### **3.2.2 The grand plot of the Bible**

By its story-like nature, the biblical narrative may be distinguished from other prose forms like the essay or the report (Longman III 1987: 69–70). The biblical narrative is a story in which each event is related to another by an explicit or implicit cause-and-effect structure. Many scholars call this the plot. Just as a good story cannot exist without a plot, so the biblical story has a plot which is structured according to a principle of beginning–middle–end. The grand plot of the Bible explains the Bible's central message in terms of the idea that God acts in history.

Bloede (1980:55) says the plot movement of the Bible depicts "God's involvement in the universe, in human history, in inter-personal relations, and in the inner life of the individual." Stories within the grand story, in other words, all biblical plots within meta-narrative, invite the children to see the Bible with wonder and to actively participate in the story of the Bible and ultimately find an answer through God's resolution. The biblical story and stories in the plot help to shape our sense of who we are and what is

going on in our world (Smith 1991:37). In this respect, the Bible is God's story within the plot movement in the sense that the biblical stories tell our children about who God is and who they are.

### **3.2. 2.1 God's overarching story as meta-narrative**

When we say that the Bible relies on a plot movement, we recognise that the Bible has "one overarching story that gives focus, cohesion, meaning to life" (Dawn 1997: 34). The overarching story is called meta-narrative in the sense that all of the stories/narratives of the Bible are connected parts of a great story—a story that begins at the beginning in God's act of creation, has its centre in the Lord Jesus Christ, and culminates in the new heaven and new earth forever more (Carson 1996:193–346; Walker 1996:11–20; Dawn 1997:34–43; Middleton & Walsh 1995:87–107).

The Bible is not primarily a collection of interpreted stories. It is rather a single story which is very long and very complex. The various stories are given, but they should be connected to the overall story—the meta-narrative. As Lindbeck (1984:120–121) asserts, these various stories and genres which are given within the Bible "are embraced in an overarching story that has the specific literary features of realistic narrative as exemplified in diverse ways."

To claim, however, that the Bible is the grand narrative for God's people, especially our children, does not mean that the Bible should be presented as a form of totalisation to our children who live in a postmodern age. Rather, "the Bible, as the normative, canonical, founding Christian story, works



ultimately against totalization" (Middleton & Walsh 1995:87). The Bible is able to do this because of counter-ideological dimensions that the Bible comprises essentially.

Considering the counter-ideological elements of revelation, they argue that these counter-ideological elements "prevent us from becoming fixed on certain ideas, political doctrines, or social systems as earthly solutions to human beings" (Dawn 1997: 37). As an example, Dawn (1997:35) suggests Jesus, who is the centre of meta-narrative as the representative of the counter-element:

Jesus himself is the most obvious counter element, for his submission to suffering demonstrates most graphically that God does not work through the power structures and ideologies of the world. Furthermore, at the cross he exposed and triumphed over all the principalities and powers of politics, economics, and religious institutions.

Certainly, through the above facts, we can say that the recognition of meta-narrative has a dangerous tendency to make the truth of the Bible seem harsh or patriarchal in the mode of totalisation, but nevertheless this meta-narrative of the Bible should be recognised as truth for this era's children, in preserving the counter-ideological aspects of the Bible.

Concerning the absolute necessity of the biblical meta-narrative for children, Dawn (1997: 35) maintains that today's Christianity should, first of all, acknowledge the meta-narrative of the Bible as God's eternal gift. Dawn



(1997: 35) deplores the fact that, because of the postmodern denial of meta-narrative, "our children are growing up in a society that either rejects Christianity outright or blurs it into a pseudo-Christianity for the sake of a false understanding of tolerance." What matters to her, therefore, is not what this era's postmodern thinkers say, but what the Bible testifies. According to Dawn (1997:36), the Bible truly "offers a meta-narrative that is universally available and applicable. Unlike this era's postmodern thinkers who "reject the Christian claim of its meta-narrative's comprehensive inclusiveness, we feel assured that "the triune God has revealed himself potentially to the whole world through a Word entrusted to a faith community that passes it on, incarnated in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ who lived among us, and transmitted through the centuries by the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit" (Dawn 1997:36). It is for these reasons that the biblical meta-narrative should be addressed to our children both with passion and power.

The Revelation of the Bible unites all God's people, especially our children, "because all are equally created by God, because Christ died for all, and because the Spirit has been poured out upon "all flesh"...The Revelation of the Trinity encompasses all human beings threefold" (Dawn 1997:37). We must admit that children never clearly understand God's truth entirely. They have a limit to their understanding of the Bible. Nevertheless, we are assured that, in the biblical meta-narrative, they are old enough to be changed as God's people. The biblical meta-narrative invites our children to enter into God's world and to remember the messages of God's gospel fully fulfilled in Christ, to which the whole Bible testifies (Achtmeier 1989:32).

### **3.2.2.2 The overarching story as an unfolding drama**

The overarching story can also be regarded both as an unfolding drama as well as a meta-narrative. The Bible presents the story (stories) through the experience and speech of living human actors. In this very real sense, it is drama (Ryken 1993:32; Hanson 1986:533; Wright 1991:7-32; Middleton & Walsh 1995:181-83; Carson 1996:193-346; Fackre 1988:56-265; Walker 1996:11-20). Ryken (1993:32) describes this dramatic character of the biblical stories and the overarching story:

The dramatic impulse permeates the Bible. Everywhere we turn we find an abundance of quoted speeches, snatches of dialogue, and stationing of characters in a setting. To read the Bible is to become an implied listener to the spoken voice. Of the four means by which a story can be told --- direct narrative, dramatic narrative, description, and commentary --- dramatic narrative dominates in the stories of the Bible.

When the dramatic story was delivered to Israel, they must have been surprised by the action of God. Also, when the good news through Christ was told to God's people, they were surely stirred by the drama of the event of Jesus. Similarly, today in the recognition of the dramatic narrative, the Bible comes alive in the sense that the grand drama helps recapture the excitement and interest originally associated with biblical revelation. Whereas in terms of an extreme rationalistic form, children can understand the Bible as a book out of our time in which the Bible often seems to be "back there, embalmed in ancient history," in the dramatic narrative, children can



feel that the Bible is for them (Freeman 1987:52). For, as Freeman (1987:51) says, in dramatic narrative, "The abstract becomes concrete. The impersonal becomes personal. Cognitive knowledge becomes affective knowledge. The hearer not only knows something, but feels and does something." In these changes, the Bible is no longer a record of ancient happenings, or writing just explaining the religious structure of a bygone age. Rather, the Bible encourages God's people, especially our children, to participate in an ongoing drama (Hanson 1986:533).

Longman(1987:71) says the Bible is an ongoing drama. The central message of this drama is that God acts in history. In this overall theme, Creation–Fall–Redemption and its consummation are the basic structure of the unfinished drama of the Bible by which the drama drives the readers to move from plot conflict or tension to narrative resolution.

More specifically, the first act of the drama is the creation. This scene begins with the amazing phrase "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In this statement God appears as the Creator and all the people of the world are brothers and sisters to His creation. The creation story proclaims God's activity of making the world by the dynamic word of God (Gen.1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29; 2:18): God spoke and the world came into being. The creation story also announces that "God liked what He had made and called it good" (Shoemaker 1985:16). This says that Creation is the purposeful, good act of God as well as proof of His sovereign power (Wolters 1985:12).

The highlight of the creation story is found in the creation of human beings



as the glorious climactic work of the sixth day. God intended to share his vision with the entire world. The special status of humans is closely related to the special responsibility which is called dominion. God entrusted to human beings as created in His image a special task with reference to creation, namely, that they serve as representatives of God's direct activity. They, as the image of God, are to reflect the creation of the nature of God (Wolters 1985:12–18; Kaiser 1991:75; Grenz 1994:230). Being created in the image of God means that human beings are created as the persons who have "the possibility of fellowship and communication with God, the exercise of responsible dominion and leadership over the creation owned by God" (Kaiser 1991:75). Here, an order is created in which God is the Creator and Sovereign Lord of all and appoints humans to serve as his representatives, to serve as the mirror of the divine character by having dominion and authority.

The second act of the play is the Fall, which is "the first major incursion of plot tension or conflict into the story" (Middleton & Walsh 1995:182). Mankind's fall into sin is a breach of fellowship, a failure to live in true fellowship and harmony with God, each other and the natural environment (Grenz 1994:243). The original peace of the Garden of Eden turns into the wilderness of warfare, the age of discord, division, distrust and disease, the age of anxiety, estrangement and apartheid. What God created, humans turned back into chaos.

Furthermore, alienated from God, human beings become his enemies, and thus stand under the divine condemnation, which is death, eternal separation from God. This is the moment that God's purpose and good plan

totally collapses. Here we see a crisis that faces mankind. This crisis, however, was not just an isolated act of disobedience of Adam and Eve "but an event of catastrophic significance for creation as a whole. Not only the whole human race but the whole of the non-human world too was caught up in the train of Adam's failure...The effect of sin touches all of creation; no created thing is in principle untouched by the corrosive effects of the fall" (Wolters 1985:44). Thus, Act II enables us (the audience) to realise the reason of our own sinfulness and the world's brokenness and failure (Dawn 1997:43).

The third act of the play is redemption. God's drama does not end with man's failure. Death and judgement are not the last words for humans and all of creation. In God's faithfulness to His creation and to us, the drama progresses toward the route of the tension. God did not give up on His creation. He desired to restore His creation. So, Wolters (1985:57) says, "redemption means restoration -- that is, the return to goodness of an originally unscathed creation and not merely the addition of something supracreational" and "this restoration affects the whole of creational life and not merely some limited area within it."

The redemption as restoration is, first of all, found in the promise (Covenant) of God in the Old Testament. God showed His faithfulness through the covenant in which God promised that he would restore his chosen people and with them, all of creation. Thus, the promise made to Abraham is paradigmatic of redemptive history that is to come (Genesis 12:1-3).<sup>5</sup> Here,

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<sup>5</sup> In this respect, the Old Testament is a book of expectation. It is incomplete in itself, awaiting the coming of the One who is featured in the promise of God.



God made a covenant with all the families of the earth as well as Abraham and his descendants.

The most dramatic story of God's faithfulness toward his covenant people, Israel, is through the Exodus, the deliverance of Israel from oppression and slavery in Egypt. What is crucial about the Exodus is that God did not give up on his people, but intervened with sovereign power in order to save them from the yoke of slavery. What is more important for our study is that it "provides the essential background for understanding the historical mission of Jesus -- his life, death and resurrection" (Middleton & Walsh 1995:88). Therefore, without an extended engagement with the exodus narrative, we cannot rightly understand what redemption through Christ is.

God's promise of redemption mirrored in the history of Israel now has reached its climax in Jesus Christ. God's promise, which is presented in the Old Testament, is fulfilled in the person and ministry of Christ. In his book *The Christian Story*, Fackre (1988: 97) explains the person and work of Christ as the centre of His story:

Its (the story of Jesus) central affirmation is that the Person of Jesus Christ is who and what it takes, and the work of Jesus Christ is how and where this deed is accomplished. Here in this decisive chapter is an act of involvement with us which shows the depths and lengths to which God will go in the struggle with sin, evil, and death. The depth is seen in the enfleshment of the Vision—the Incarnation. The length is seen in the life, suffering, death, and victory of the Vision—the Atonement.

Two central questions, 'Who is Jesus?', and 'What does Jesus accomplish?',



provide a decisive answer to solve the plot conflict at its deepest level. For Jesus Christ, who is the centre of God's dramatic story, is the final and the fullest revelation for his people and all of creation. In this respect, the drama of the Bible is called "the Christian story" and "the gospel story"<sup>6</sup> (Walker 1996:12).

The story of Jesus, on the one hand, becomes "the Christian story" as the climax of Israel's expectation in which it is related to the story of Israel. On the other hand, it also becomes "the Christian story" as the foundation of the church through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. The story of Christ has to do with the story of the church or the narrative of the people of God. As Wright (1991:25) says, the story of Jesus reforms our God-view and our world-view and reconstitutes us as the church. The story of Jesus must be told as the new covenant story for new covenant people. Without the story of Jesus Christ, "the church is always in danger of getting too like the world."

The early chapters of Acts clearly manifests that the story of the church, based on the story of Christ, has to do with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, the coming of the power of God on the day of Pentecost. It is the Holy Spirit who forms the Church and empowers mission and who enables the church to become the church afresh in each generation. Fackre (1988:195) says, "In and through this continuing Work of Christ goes on the work of salvation."

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<sup>6</sup> In his book *Telling the Story*, Walker (1996:12), in agreement with Brueggemann, defines the biblical story (drama) as the gospel as story: "Walter Brueggemann has recently reminded us, in a useful *aide memoire*, that the noun 'gospel' in the Bible, *euangelion*, is not merely a rhetorical declaration of glad tidings but a message of great import. This message he says is linked to the Hebrew verb, *bissar*, 'tell the news'. The gospel, therefore, is not only the central message of the Christian faith: it is both the story and its telling. It is only by telling the story that the message becomes gospel."

The fourth and final act of the play is consummation. Now the biblical drama moves to its final climax (final resolution). It deals with the consummation of God's plan. The final act shows that God's plan will surely be fulfilled in the way or direction God originally intended. Fackre (1988: 195) explains the meaning of this final climax:

This end is one characterized by both meanings of the word end—*telos* and *finis*. The story has a purpose and it has a conclusion. And there is a point of convergence of these two: a finale toward which history moves and at which its purpose will be fulfilled, a meeting point of Vision and Reality. The Christian story is one that records the movement from invitation through alienation and connection to intersection and convergence. There is no responsible reading of this narrative's last things without seriously taking the Omega point beyond the *finis* of our personal existence and the *telos* manifest within history or existence choice.

Within a clear purpose (*telos*) and a clear conclusion (*finis*), as already mentioned, God's story is not merely a story of past deeds, but will be an ongoing drama of redemption. The Holy Spirit works in people to enter God's drama (story) and become part of it until the last point of the history.

That is the whole structure of the biblical story as the grand drama; it spans all of the past, present and future. It is God's redemptive history. It is the story of his people. It also can be the story of our children. In summary, Dawn (1997: 44) explains this grand story as God's great gift for God's people, especially our children:

It offers our children and the people of the world around us a story into



which they can place themselves and find forgiveness for their past, purpose for their present, and hope for their future. It forms us into a people who truly know ourselves, offers us reconciliation with both God and our neighbors, and fills us with new life created by the Holy Spirit at work in us.

### **3.2.3 Stories within the grand story**

From the above discussion, we arrive at the conclusion that individual narrative stories in the Bible are part of the bigger plot and if Christians do not acknowledge this, the identity of Christianity cannot be sustained in the right direction. Where the identity of Christianity is weakened or lost, the Bible is no longer the relevant book for the spiritual growth of children. For this reason, it is necessary that "we offer to our children the meta-narrative of the Church, which compassionately demonstrates that Jesus is the Truth, an objective Truth who can be known" (Dawn 1997:44-45). Our children should learn that Jesus Christ is the main focus of the meta-narrative in our fractured postmodern times. This, however, does not mean that individual stories of the Bible should be ignored or sacrificed to the meta-narrative. Rather, any individual story should be considered not only as a story in its own context, but also as the context or part of the grand story ( Jung 1995:128-29; Greidanus 1999:xii; 227-77).

Although it is absolutely necessary to recognise a grand narrative unit of the Bible in which the truth, Jesus Christ, is offered as the heart of Scripture, nevertheless, each story of the Bible should be viewed within its own horizons. If we treat the meta-narrative without considering each story, we



may miss a unique message in which each story can speak to people, especially children. For an individual story "has its own plot and therefore has its own integrity, structure and message" (Jung 1995:128).

According to scholars, the basic elements of every story within the master story are plot, character, and setting (Longman III 1987:71–75; Wilhoit and Ryken 1988:207–10; Powell 1995:244–48). In their book, *Truth is Stranger Than It Used to Be*, Middleton and Walsh (1995:64) clearly explain plot, character and setting in relation to the worldview of Christians. According to them, the first main element in a story is the plot, which consists mainly of conflict and resolution. Nearly every biblical story is built on a conflict or a collision between two forces. By the end of the story, the conflict is resolved (Mathewson 1997:52). Broadly speaking, the plots unfold like this: 1) background 2) crisis 3) resolution and 4) conclusion. This is simply how stories are told. It shows that one way of understanding a story effectively is to identify the central plot conflict and then see how that conflict moves toward resolution as the story progresses (Longman 1987:71). This plot, say Middleton and Walsh (1995:64), "makes narratives (individual stories) perfect vehicles for exploring the worldview questions 'What's wrong?' and 'What's the remedy?' Whereas the introduction of plot conflict formally corresponds to the problem of evil, the movement towards resolution corresponds to redemption."

The second element is character. Character is closely related to the plot in the sense "that it is the characters who generate the actions that make up the plot" (Longman 1987:72). Characters in an individual story are divided

into a protagonist (central character), antagonist (force arrayed against the central character) and foil (character who heightens the central character by providing a contrast or parallel) (Mathewson 1997:53; Ryken 1987:72). The significance of the manner in which characters are presented in each story lies in the fact that it becomes a key for determining the effect that each story is expected to have on its readers (Powell 1995:245). In this respect, characters "might be seen to correspond to the question 'Who are we?' " (Middleton & Walsh 1995:64).

The third element is setting. Setting is also not separate from plot and characters. Longman (1987:74) says, "the setting of a story is the space in which the characters perform the actions that constitute the plot." Simply speaking, the function of setting is that it imparts reality to the story. An even more important aspect, however, lies in the fact that it creates "the atmosphere or mood of a narrative and contributes to the story's meaning and structure" (Longman III 1987:74). To Middleton and Walsh (1995:64), setting is connected with the question 'Where are we?'

In conclusion, it should be recognised that each story has its own message, even though it is connected with a master story. Also, each story consists of a plot, characters and setting as basic ingredients of the individual story and these are correlated with the four worldview questions by which the identity of God's people is formed.



### 3.2.4. The participation in biblical story with wonder

The question that remains in our discussion is why the Bible as a whole document is written as a grand story (drama) and, at the same time, the majority of the biblical text consists of stories within this grand meta-narrative. The major reason, as Longman says, is that "the authors of the Bible intend to communicate God's message to an audience in the most effective way"(Longman III 1987: 69). Especially, when we consider that children who respond to mythic-literal concepts can understand faith through narration or storytelling, we can say the Bible itself is a relevant book for children aged 7-11 years (Juengst 1994:49; Jeong 1999:241; Csanyi 1982:520-23).

More specifically, for children at this stage the relevance of the Bible as a grand story or stories is, first of all, found in the presence of wonder stimulated by the plot structure, and the conflict-resolution structure. The conflict-resolution structure of the Bible invites children to participate in the biblical story with wonder or mystery. Especially the conflict at the beginning of the plot structure offers a way in which children can participate in the biblical story through ambiguous stimulus and intriguing existential need. Just as famous literary novels or stories hold the interest of children in the process of the conflict and their resolution, so the Bible story stimulates children by suggesting an ambiguous stimulus. Though, at first glance, ambiguity appears as vagueness, ambiguity is not synonymous with vagueness.



Davies (1982: 644) says that a vague stimulus is likely to be given random or entirely subjective interpretations by various observers by which anarchy happens. To Davies(1982:650), "Anarchy is definitely uncreative, because if nothing has meaning or is predictable, then one is driven to despair."

To Davies, rather, ambiguity is "creative ambiguity and created in the conflict-resolution structure. It encourages children to find the meaning of the Biblical story. Even though the children cannot fully comprehend the Biblical story, an ambiguous stimulus plays a role to create inner motivation so that they are journeying toward clear meaning with wonder and excitement" (Davies 1982:651). In his *The Creative Word*, Brueggemann (1982:16) asserts that the Bible, especially the Old Testament Torah, evokes ambiguity or curiosity. Through this ambiguity or curiosity, the authors of the Bible really intended that children should be involved in the mystery of the story.

Likewise, the basic interest of the Bible as story is "how to evoke the child's wonder." It is quite different from the extreme catechetical tradition in which children memorise the right answer and parrot it, while ignoring the power or meaning of wonder (Brueggemann 1982:18). Such teaching, focusing only on reason or knowledge, is necessary, but is not sufficient in transmitting Christian faith to children (Proffitt 1998:104). Children need wonder. Wonder helps children to understand the biblical truth in the most relevant way (Davies 1982:650-56).

The relevance of the Bible as a grand story or stories is also found in the fact

that the conflict goes on towards resolution. Though the plot structure in each story varies, a typical structure is said to move from conflict, through a stage of unresolved tension, and towards resolution in its own story, as suggested by Aristotle (Ryken 1987: 62; Pratt 1993:184–90).

In his book *He Gave Us Stories*, Pratt (1993:186) says, "this threefold structure takes different forms, but it appears in most episodes." Longman (1987:92), agreeing on the tripartite design of the Bible story, also says that plot in each story is "thrust forward by conflict. The conflict generates interest in its resolution. The beginning of a story, with its introduction of conflict, thus pushes us through the middle toward the end, when the conflict is resolved." Longman (1987:92) portrays this with the following visual diagram.

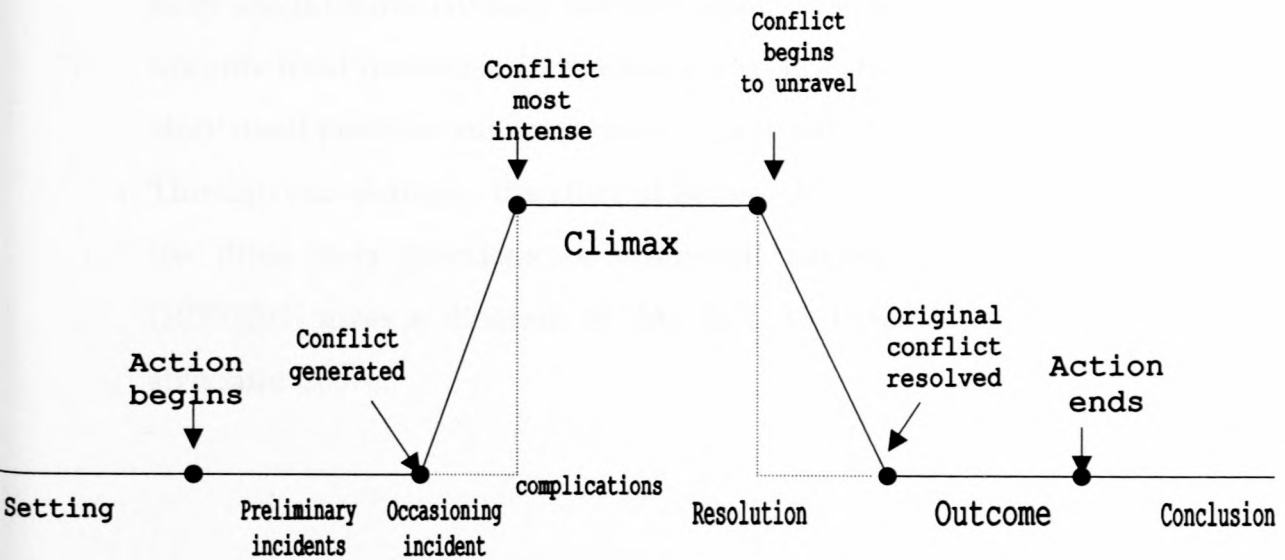


Figure 5. The Structure of Biblical Narrative: From Longman(1987:92) *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*

As Middleton and Walsh indicated, in the plot movement flowing from conflict to resolution, the biblical story offers a remedy or answer concerning a problem or need of children, which is created with ambiguity and wonder. In this process of needing a solution, the children can experience the Bible as the most appropriate book for their life situation, although they may need the help of creative Bible teaching. Since the matter of how to teach the Bible creatively and relevantly is not the topic of this chapter, what is suggested here is that the biblical story is sufficiently relevant to children in that it can help them find a clear solution to ambiguity. Furthermore, since each story is related to a grand story, it proceeds ultimately toward final resolution in Jesus Christ. As already indicated, God's story in the whole picture is centred in Christ. In Him, our problems, in a profoundly true sense, have a solution. Without Christ there is no redemption, no meaning in life. As a result, each story should move not only toward resolution within its own context, but also towards final resolution in the whole of God's story. In this process, the Bible story itself provides sure answers that will satisfy the needs of our children. Through one example, the story of Genesis 22:1–19, we will try to clarify how the Bible story functions as a relevant narrative for children. Greidanus (1999:297) gives a diagram of Gen 22:1–19 based on Longman's basic plot structure above.



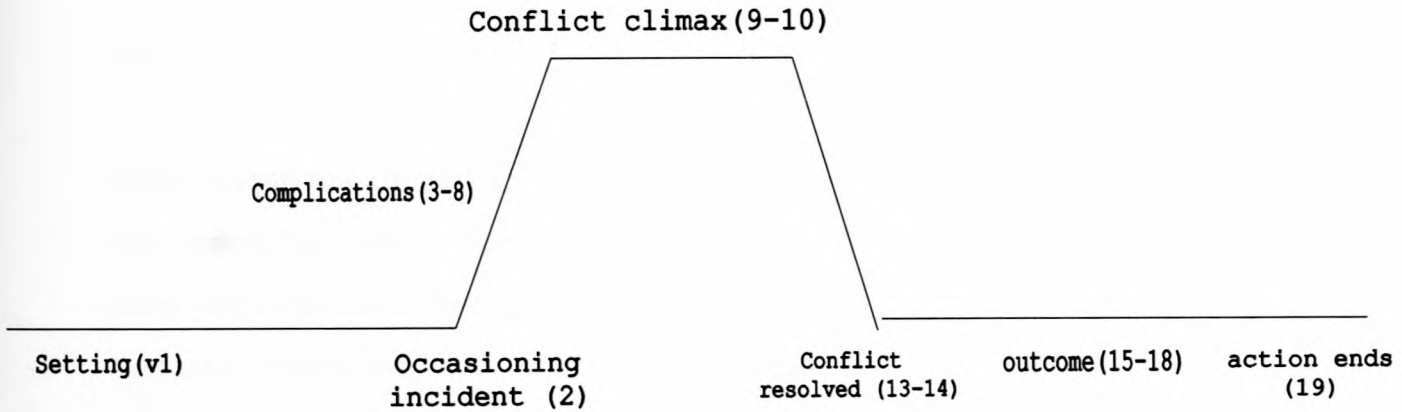


Figure 6. Interpreting the Text in Its Own Historical Setting: From Greidanus (1999:297) Preaching Christ from the Old Testament

In this diagram the initial step is the problem or conflict section. The story's problem is generated by God's command, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains..." (vv. 1-2). This seemingly absurd command creates wonder or ambiguity in the minds of children who read or listen to this story. Children can ask, 'How could God ask Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac?' 'Or why would God command Abraham to offer Isaac?' A deeper question is "What's wrong?" If God gave this command in order to test Abraham, what was wrong with Abraham? Why should God have tested Abraham? This is closely related to the matter of trust. God wants to know whether Abraham truly believes in Him or not. It shows the existential need to listen to this message. This may be the lack of trust. Though children can find the existential need in the text through the technique of effective Bible teaching, which will be dealt with later, it also cannot be denied that the story presents the concept to children. In relation to this, children can ask, 'Did Abraham obey or disobey God's absurd – and

even terrible – command?

These questions created by the conflict can evoke various possible answers. The possibility exists that the children can actually understand the Bible story through their feelings, their curiosity, and their imagination in the process of which they become active participants in the story of Gen. 22:1–19.

The story of Gen. 22:1–19, which began with a problem or conflict, now grows into the middle section (the body of the story) bridging the gap between the beginning and the end. Tension rises in the middle. Children can maintain their curiosity or interest by following the unresolved tensions (Pratt 1993:197–200).<sup>7</sup> The unsolved conflict "reaches a climax when Abraham builds an altar, puts the wood on it, binds Issac, puts him on the altar, reaches for the knife, and is ready to kill his son" (vv. 9–10).

The resolution begins with the intervention of the angel of God (11–12). The conflict is resolved. God does not want Abraham to offer his son as a burnt offering, but desires to see the total truth of Abraham and Israel. The Bible says, "Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son" (v.12). This verse says what God finds. In the process where conflict is solved, children arrive at finding what God desires them to see through this story. It is what God previously found in Abraham– total obedience and trust.

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<sup>7</sup> Pratt (1993:199) divides this story into four steps: step one: problem (22:1-3), step two: rising action (22:4-8), step three: falling action (22:9-18), and step four: resolution (22:19). In my opinion, the strong point of this flow lies in the fact that story tension is clearly evident through the rising action and falling action of steps two and three.

Furthermore, the conflict or problem is finally resolved when Abraham sacrificed the ram instead of Isaac. Abraham believed that God would provide, and He (God) did (vv.13–14). Now ambiguity turns into clear meaning for the children. The story of Gen. 22:1–19 itself gives an answer to the initial problem. But this story goes beyond itself in the fact that God provided a ram to take the place of Isaac. As we can assume, from this resolution flows an ultimate resolution which will be fulfilled in Christ. This exemplifies how an individual story is connected with the plot of the grand story. At the personal level the story encourages the children so that they, on the one hand, can resolve their conflict in this story and, on the other hand, realise that their need can be resolved or fulfilled in the person and work of Christ.

In conclusion, the Bible as the biblical story or stories is a relevant book in the sense that it creates wonder and ambiguity. At the same time, it is a relevant book in that, through the plot structure of conflict and resolution, each individual story amazingly reaches towards a grand plot fulfilled in Christ. Thus, we can view the Bible as having a forward movement that encourages the participation of children.



### 3.3 THE BIBLE AS GOD'S METAPHORS OR IMAGES

#### 3.3.1 The relation between word and images

In the above chapters we proposed that the Bible is God's storybook which can be offered as the most appropriate and effective truth for children. Of course, this does not mean that the propositional, didactic aspect of the Bible is treated as a trivial thing; rather, it means that, when we approach the Bible with a holistic perspective, the relevance of the Bible for children becomes alive.

Another aspect of holistic understanding of the nature of the Bible is to see the Bible as an imaginative book which renders it appealing and relevant to children. The presupposition is also the same in the sense that a metaphor-sensitive understanding of the Bible should be intertwined with the propositional approaches of the Bible.

The Bible is full of images and symbols. Since it encompasses various genres such as history, hymns, wisdom literature, prophetic oracles, poetry, letters, and so forth, the Bible includes greatly varied modes of expression and uses diverse sorts of images (Wilson-Kastner 1989:32). Glodo (1984:160) briefly sketches the entire scripture as an image book:

The larger portion of the Pentateuch has to do with symbols and images. Added to these explicit instances of image should be the image-like concreteness of Pentateuch narratives. This recognition of image in the Bible also must be extended to the extensive poetry of the Old Testament, not to mention the shocking images of both New Testament apocalyptic

literature and displays of the prophets with metaphorical intent. Furthermore, the doctrine of general revelation is founded upon the image nature of revelation. God established in His design and calling the world into being metaphors through which He in turn revealed Himself. He didn't simply, as we do, look around for convenient analogies, but built the analogies into creation. There is a profound image-orientation to both general and special revelation.

As such, the major reason that the authors of the Bible use various images and symbols is in order to explain transcendent reality and God to the audience that is living in perceived reality. Images and symbols become the most effective tools by which one can "look beyond the order which our own senses have constructed 'for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God' (Heb. 11:10)" (Glodo 1984:152). That is, the fact that the Bible is an imaginative book says that God's word or story was told in such a way that the audience of the Bible could understand divine reality or truth (Fowler 1991:56; Stewart 1987:190).

In spite of the significant image-character of the Bible and the significant image-role in the Bible's construction of reality, however, the status of the image within traditional Christian circles has been ignored as an unimportant thing (Hart 2000:192). Traditional Christian circles have too often been preoccupied with idea, information and proposition, neglecting the place of imagination. If we explain their tendencies in relation to brain physiology, specifically the left brain/right brain split, the traditional position emphasises left brain functions. Peace (1993:76) explains the left brain functions: "This is where logic resides, where abstract thinking takes place;



where information is processed in a linear, sequential fashion."

The decisive problem of this position is not the preference for propositions. Rather, as already indicated, it lies in the extreme direction by which images within the Bible do not function in their proper place. Glodo (1984:154) indicates this fact well: "It seems that our preference for proposition has made us image-and literature-illiterate. We understand words and sentences, but not imagery and literature. The result is a confusion between truth and precision." That is to say, the danger of this position is that one treats the Bible as word without image or symbol.

The one extreme leads to another. This kind of reaction can be seen in postmodern theology. One of the most distinctive factors of postmodernism lies in its appetite for image. Of course, "this appetite has been at the expense of a staple diet of rational thought" (Glodo 1984:152). In the view of modernists, postmodernism has been centred too much on multiple images, artistry, and the aesthetic and affective domain, without properly considering propositional truth. In this view, the right brain function is excessively emphasised. Peace (1993:76) explains its activity:

The right hemisphere makes a rather decisive contribution to such activities as the visual arts, crafts, singing, and dance, and is the centre most involved in intuition, visualization, fantasy, reverie, and metaphorical thinking.

The problem with this radical postmodern view also lies not in its emphasis on image, but in its exclusion of the word. Henry (1987:19) criticises the



danger of this metaphor-sensitive trend:

A reflection of the revolt against reason, a reliance on 'symbolic truth,' and imagination... too much ignores intellectual analysis to maintain an assured connection of confessional premises with objective reality and valid truth...nor fully serviceable to the need for an intellectual compelling argument with modernity.

Between the two different directions, our position in understanding the nature of the Bible should be a *both/and* approach, not an *either/or* position. Since the aim of this chapter testifies to the Bible as an imaginative book for children who live in the postmodern age in an image-driven culture, we should ask how we can portray the Bible as an imaginative book without ignoring, as Henry expresses it, "intelligible ideas in conceptual-verbal form" (Henry 1987:12). Considering the theory of right-left brain, our question also is how we can engage appropriately imaginative right brain activity in understanding the Bible, while still honouring left-brain activity. For the Bible cannot really be grasped if imaginative right brain function is ruled out, by using left brain functions exclusively (Peace 1993:76). Thus, Glodo says, "Biblical interpretation...should neither be a choice of word over symbol nor of symbol over word, but rather the proper relation of the two" (Glodo 1984:148).

For Glodo, an ideal model of a *both/and* approach is found in Christ. Jesus Christ is the word of God (John 1:1). At the same time, he is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). Glodo clearly shows this in the diagram below.

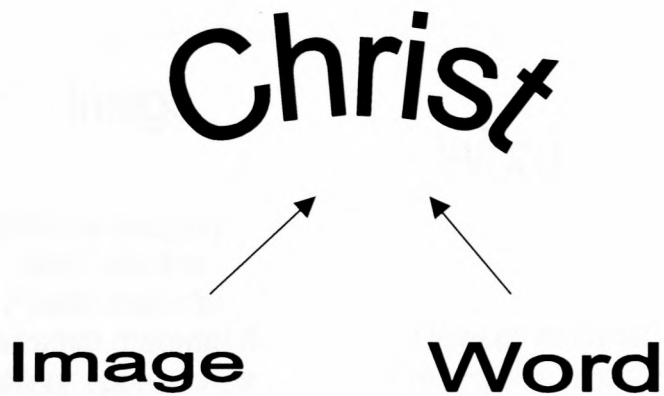


Figure 7. Image/Word Reconciled in Christ: From Glodo (1984:161) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*.

As we can understand from this picture, truth is comprised of words and image, embodied in Christ. Glodo (1984:161) explains:

One might be perplexed in reading John 14:6. "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me.'" We can understand how a person could speak the truth but how is it a person could be truth? The key is in understanding truth not simply in terms of proposition (1 Cor. 5:8; 1 John 1:16)... In Christ image and word are reconciled.

More important for our study is the image and word relation in the Bible itself. For a clearer understanding, Glodo suggests another diagram.

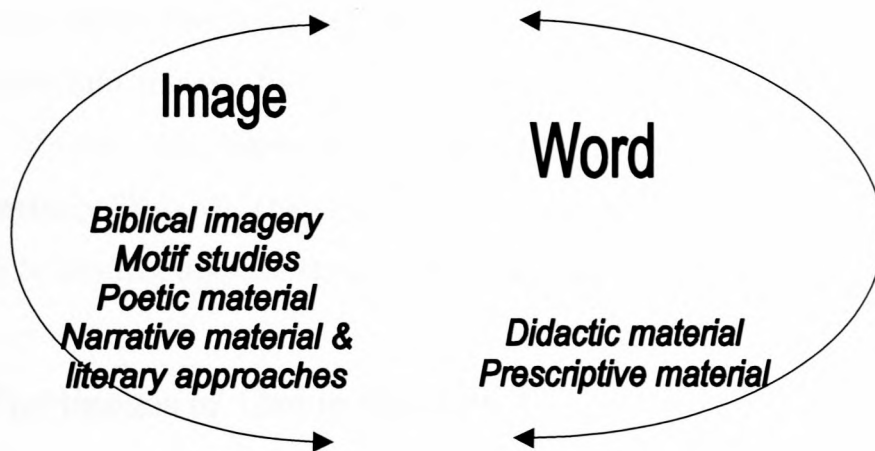


Figure 8. Image/Word Dialogue within the Bible: From Glodo (1984:162). The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement

It can be seen in this diagram that image and word are mutually important, where word informs image and vice versa. The word (or the story) needs the image for its concreteness and its richness. The image also cannot exist without the word (or the story) since, apart from the story, the image becomes ambiguous and opaque (Eslinger 1995:86). In other words, "The "word" (i.e. propositional, didactic) forms of Scripture must be enriched and vivified by the "image" forms as well as the latter being controlled and organized by the former" (Glodo 1984:162).

In summary, this mutual relation of the word and image reminds us of what the function of the image is. In short, the function of the image is to express and embody truth. Without an understanding of the Bible as an image book, the truth of the Bible loses its appropriateness and richness for children's



education. Jesus' teaching and word are full of good examples of the use of metaphors and images for expressing the truth. He depicts himself with an image, "I am the light of the world." He also describes his people imaginatively "You are the salt of the earth." As such, "The Bible repeatedly appeals to the intelligence through the imagination" (Ryken 1990:392).

### 3.3.2 The images of God in the centre

Since the Bible has diverse images or metaphors, and our aim is not to deal with all the images in the Bible, this paper will focus on the images of God in the centre of the Bible (Fowler 1991:56–87)<sup>8</sup>. As an example of a major image concerning God, we study God as covenant King. With this chosen metaphor of God, the chapter depicts the God–human relationship and the final fulfilment in Jesus as God or images of God in the New Testament (Longman III 1998:55–136).

#### 3.3.2.1 God and images of God as the organic unity of the Bible

In order to understand the metaphors for God as major images in the Bible, we must first ask the question, is there a unified theme in the Bible? This

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<sup>8</sup> In his book, *Weaving the New Creation: Stages of Faith and the Public Church*, Fowler (1991:56-87) considers metaphors about God as the centre of the biblical metaphors and which he, adapting the Sallie McFague's constructive theological contribution, focuses on the metaphors of the triune God: God the mother (parent), God the lover (Christ), and God the friend (Spirit).

Although I agree that he puts images of God at the centre of the biblical imagery, the way to depict God's images is different in a sense that shows how God's images in the Old Testament becomes The Christ-as-God images in the New Testament through the view of historical-redemptive progress. The main idea of this chapter is indebted to Longman's arguments in his book, *Making Sense of the Old Testament* (1998).

issue is controversial in biblical theology. Many scholars have tried to find a single centre to biblical revelation through motifs such as covenant or the promise of God, and the history of redemption. Despite their positive contributions, increasingly, biblical scholars choose an perspective that allows for many different avenues of approach "since the argument for a single center, founders on the inability to describe all of biblical revelation. In other words, the message of the Bible is so rich that its unity cannot be reduced to a single category, unless it becomes so broad as to be useless" (Longman III & Reid 1995:14). For example, those who accept the covenant or the promise of God as the centre of the Bible face a difficulty in placing wisdom literature under that rubric.

Now, the harmony of both positions is suggested by "a multiperspective approach" which is proposed by Poythress in his book, *Symphonic Theology* (1987). According to his approach, while one should honour the rich and subtle nature of the Bible, nevertheless, a major question should be asked, "What is the message of the Bible?" How can a unified theme be presented without destroying the diversity of the Bible? This is the same question that was asked in the above chapter, "The Bible as God's Story."

The obvious answer is that the Bible is about God (Anderson 1979:43-47; Achtemeier 1989:32-37; Longman 1998:59; Longman & Reid 1995:15; Terrien 1978). The Bible, however, is not about God in the abstract, but about God in the images. As Longman (1998:59) says:

The Bible does not contain philosophical essays of the nature of God. We do not find the language of systematic theology or credal formations. It is not



that these are wrong or unhelpful, but that we do not find them in the Bible. We do not encounter words like hypostasis, Trinity, aseity, and apatheia. Rather, God is presented in the concreteness of vivid similes and metaphors. We read that God is a king, a teacher, a warrior, a shepherd, a partner, a spouse.

As we explore the Scripture for imagery about God, we, in our discussion, presuppose two things from the perspective of biblical theology. The first thing is that the Bible's metaphors for God are relational metaphors that emphasise different aspects of that relationship (Fowler 1991:56; Wilson–Kastner 1989:41; Louw 2000:49–72). These relational metaphors state that "God as God has been experienced in relation to creation and humankind—and never God as God might be known apart from the divine self-disclosure in relation to creation and history" (Fowler 1991:56).

For example, God's sensitive and compassionate care for his creatures is presented by "the shepherd–metaphor" (Ps 23). God's compassion and love in relation to human suffering lie behind "the servant–metaphor" (Is.42:3;6). God's wisdom, which is related to people to creation and daily life, is shown in "the wise fool metaphor" (Pr. 8–9). God's comfort for his people is communicated through "the paraklesis–metaphor" (Is 40:1). God's power over his people is suggested by the covenant king metaphor (Gen. 15; 17) and "the Divine warrior–metaphor" (Exo. 15:1–3). God's presence in relation to his people is given in "the Immanuel metaphor" (Louw 2000:49–72; Longmann III 1998:60–101; Wilson–Kastner 1989:32–43). Through these metaphors of the divine–human relationship the Bible reaches out to its readers in



language that is not coldly abstract but warmly personal.

The second presupposition is that God's relationship with his people is not so much described as it is narrated through the redemptive history. The historical development of biblical revelation clearly testifies that God's images in the Old Testament reached their climax in the image of Jesus as God in the New Testament (Holmgren 1999:139–160). For Jesus Christ is "the image of the invisible God who reveals in his person, office, and work God the Father as the fountain of every good offered freely to sinful humanity" (Calvin, in Zachman 1990:46). Jesus, thus, is the unique and normative image of God who has come to restore his people (John 1:14, 18; Col. 15–16; Heb. 1:3) (Wilson–Kastner 1989:43).

In the next section we will examine a relational image of God (for example, The Covenant king) that binds the Old Testament and the New Testament together, based on Longmann's argumentation (1998:60). Though it is our presupposition that God reveals himself progressively to his people through time, and, in this presupposition, the Bible is established as a vivid image book within the salvation history of God's people, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to give a full account of these motifs. The aim of this chapter is to present a brief outline of the Bible as a book of images.

### **3.3.2.2 The image of God as covenant king**

The Bible's imagery of covenant plays a central role in describing the relation of God and His people. In this image God reveals himself as covenant king

who keeps his promise according to his faithfulness, and in spite of the unfaithfulness of his people (Robertson 1980; Kaiser 1991; Martens 1981). The first hint of the covenant image is found in Genesis 2, where God established a unique relationship with Adam and Eve. This original relationship between God and human is called the "covenant of works" or the "covenant of creation" (Robertson 1980:67; Ryken, Wilhoit, & Longman 1998:177). According to Robertson (1980:67), the major distinction of this covenant of creation relates to the broader responsibilities of man to his Creator which are especially manifested by the command of probation (Gen. 2:16–17).

Begun as a hint in Genesis 2, the covenant motif is developed into four important covenants in the Old Testament: the covenant with Noah, the covenant with Abraham, the covenant with Moses and the covenant with David. In the covenant with Noah the language is much more explicitly covenantal than the covenant of creation (Gen. 6:18; 9:8–16). The general aspect of this covenant is that it is God's unconditional covenant with the entire creation, including nature as well as people (Gen. 9:17).

When comparing with previous covenants, the Abrahamic covenant is noteworthy for the fact that "While these are true covenants, the covenant of redemption and grace that governs the Bible begins with Abraham" (Ryken, Wilhoit, & Longmann 1998:177). Also, in the Abrahamic covenant the major image patterns of the covenant become firmly established (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:18–19; 17:1–4). The pattern of this covenant was repeated in his descendants, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (Gen. 26:1–15; 28:13–15; 48–50)



(Newman 1997:246).

In the Mosaic covenant God's image as covenant king is the richest. The Mosaic covenant, as Childs (in Newman 1997:246) says, "is the one by which and through which all others should be understood." One of the most important developments of the Mosaic covenant is seeing the biblical covenant in the suzerainty treaties of the ancient Near East, which provides a new image in understanding a metaphorical relationship between God and his people. The Sinaiatic covenant of Exodus 19–20 comes from the picture of the vassal treaties in ancient Near East, but there is a difference between Near Eastern political treaties and the biblical covenant. Longman (1998:63) describes the difference as follow:

What we have in a vassal treaty is the imposition of the will of a powerful king upon that of a lesser king. That the balance of power is so one-sided in a vassal treaty makes it a better pattern for the biblical covenants. For in the biblical covenants the powerful king Yahweh enters into relationship with his creature, his vassals. By the way, this is the heart of the metaphor of the covenant: Yahweh the king is bound by treaty to his people.

The centre of the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7:9–16) lies in the coming of the kingdom by which this covenant is carried over from the OT to the NT. Because of its nature, the Davidic covenant is ultimately called the messianic covenant in the expectation of what God will do for the human race in the redemptive work of the Christ (Robertson 1980:229–69; Kaiser 1991:143–64). In the messianic promise or prophecy of 2 Sam 7:9–16, "we are introduced to God's plan to make a 'new' covenant with his people (see esp. Jer. 31:31–34 and Ezek. 34:25–32). The new covenant will be written directly upon the



heart... is an essential image to the concept of new covenant" (Ryken, Wilhoit & Longman 1998:178).

Now, God's image as covenant king in the Old Testament is demonstrated in the death of Jesus. That is, God's covenantal faithfulness is fulfilled in the redemptive work of Jesus. In the New Testament the covenantal imagery mainly appears in the book of Hebrews. There, the dominant image pattern is expressed by the terminology of "new" (Heb. 8:8, 13; 12:24; 9:15) and "better" (Heb. 7:22; 8:6). The covenant imagery of Hebrews is related to the sacrifice of Jesus. Also, in Lk. 22:20, the covenant is declared to be "new." As Hebrews is linked to the sacrifice of Jesus, so Lk 22:20 is related to the blood of Jesus. The new covenant expressed in Luke 22:20 has a clear relationship with Jeremiah 31:31–33<sup>9</sup> (Holmgren 1999:96–104). Though this word "new" implies that Jesus' covenant supersedes God's previous covenants, what we should remember is that it does not mean a complete break with the old. Rather, as Robertson (1980:272) says, it means that Jesus fulfils the Old covenants, instead of abrogating them. In this respect, Robertson (1980:272) defines this new covenant as the covenant of consummation: "it brings to focal realization the essence of the various covenants experienced by Israel throughout their history (1980:272). The diagram below shows how previous

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<sup>9</sup> Longman (1998:69-70) says, "According to Jeremiah, the new covenant when compared to the old covenant is internal, immediate, and intimate. These differences are not differences in kind so much as in degree. It is perhaps more precise to say that the new covenant is more internal, immediate, and intimate than the old. Jeremiah 31 attributes to the new covenant "a unique feature in its power to transform its participants from within their hearts." Furthermore, there is no need for a teacher in the new covenant. Now Christians know by experience that the new covenant does not imply that we know everything or that everything concerning God and his Word is clear to us. It also does not mean that teachers and ministers should seek employment elsewhere. What it does mean is that human mediators of the covenant relationship are no longer needed. In the Old Testament, Moses, David, and various other leaders were the immediate recipients of the covenant relationship; and they mediated it to the people. According to the New Testament, there is only one mediator: he is not merely human, but Jesus is Christ, the Son of God (1 Tim.2:5)."

covenants are all consummated in Christ.

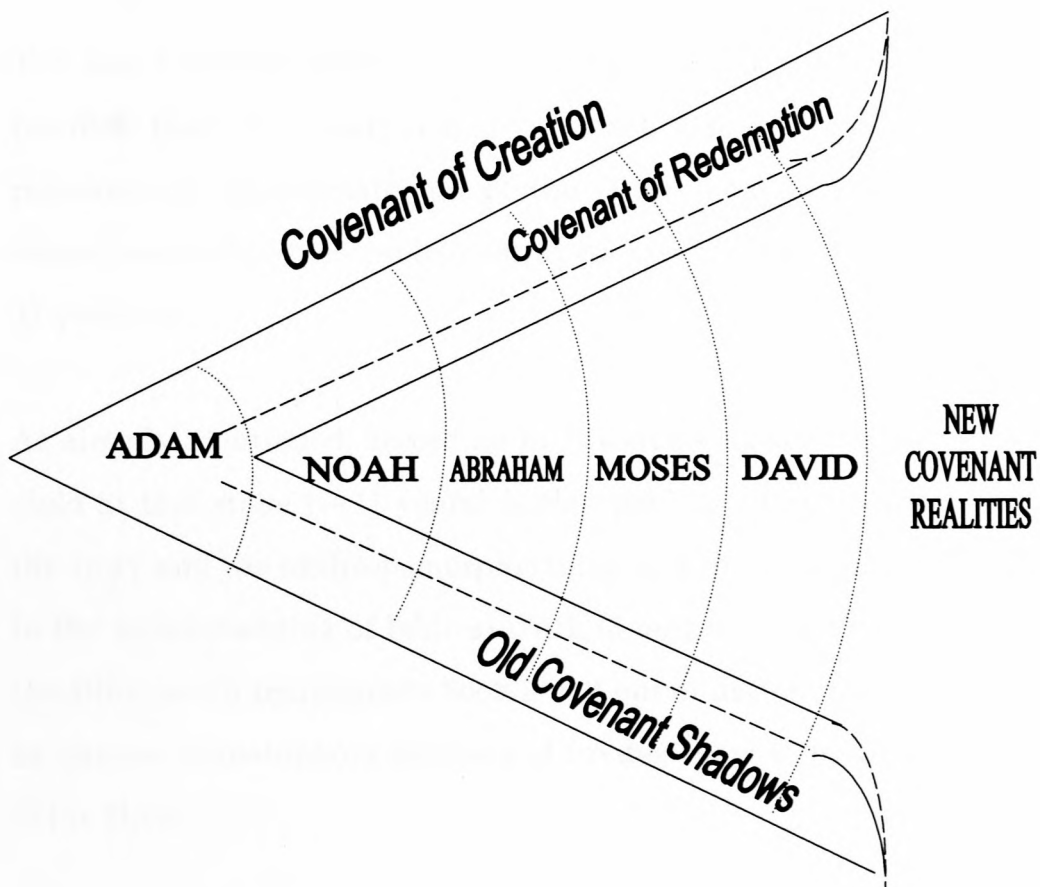


Figure 9. The Christ of the Covenants: From Robertson(1980:62) The Christ of the Covenants

In conclusion, the image of the covenant king of the Old Testament is completed in the image of the covenant king of the New Testament, for the New Testament God is the same as the God of the Old Testament.

### **3.3.2.3 Involvement through the biblical images**

The fact that the Bible appears not in the abstract but in various images testifies that it already has a relevant aspect by its very nature. The relevance or appropriateness of the Bible itself is particularly important when considering the developmental stage of children who are between 7 and 11 years old.

As already mentioned, according to Fowler's stages of faith development, the child at this stage (7–11 years) is classified as 'mythic–literal'. At this stage the story and the anthropomorphic images of the story play an important role in the understanding of biblical truth (Juengst 1994:49). If this is true, then the Bible as an imaginative book is not out of date to them. Rather, the Bible as images or metaphors incites and invites them to be involved in the world of the Bible.

The function of imagination is to embody a world. The sinful images embody the world against God where children live and act by imitating the value systems of the sinful world. Conversely, the biblical imagination encourages them to participate in the world of the Scriptural images. As Johnson (1998:166) says, this world is the world of God: "The world constructed by Scripture also provides an opening to new perceptions of the here and now, and provides options for disposing of this in ways not otherwise imaginable. By imagining the world as always and essentially related to God, Scripture reveals the world and at the same time reveals God." By entering into the imaginative world of Scripture, the children of God find out who they are,



why they exist and what their hope for the future is, "for it is only within that world that we can learn of the God who creates us from nothing, interacts with us at every moment, knows us utterly, and saves us by granting us a share in God's own life through the death and resurrection of Jesus" (Johnson 1998:172). Thus, to live within this imaginative world of the Bible is to constitute an alternative reality among false images. Green (1989:90) even says, "salvation must therefore take the form of something that can release the imagination from its bondage to false images.

Likewise, when we say that the biblical images or metaphors connect us (especially children aged between 7 and 11) with God's alternative world, what is important to realise is that children can be involved in the biblical world by the feeling and seeing created by the metaphoric process. That is to say, in the function of communicating feeling and seeing through metaphors, the Bible invites children to apprehend its own relevance. First, we should consider the function of feeling. In his book *Faith and the Play of Imagination*, Bryant (1989:204–205) explains the role of feeling in the light of Paul Ricoeur's thought concerning metaphor and feeling. According to Bryant, in contrast to traditional thinking on this topic, feeling is not seen simply as a matter of "personal emotions, such as inner experience of joy or fear." Rather the crucial role of feeling is closely tied to our way of belonging to and participating in the world of biblical metaphors. In other words, "feelings are not just interior experiences; they shape the way we are intimately connected to persons and things around us" (Bryant 1989:204). Bryant (1989:204–5) explains the role of feelings further:

Now, when we understand feelings as the shape of our involvement in the

world, it becomes apparent that they disclose possible ways of living in the world. In this sense of the word, feelings are not our subjective, private possessions. Rather, they have to do with the way in which we are related to the world and the way in which the world is related to us. Thus, the forms through which we understand the world, and which carry the feelings that intimately connect us to the world, are able to disclose possible ways of participating in the world.

As an example of such a function and capability of metaphors, the images of the covenant King and his Kingdom have this power. These symbols, first of all, testify that on the basis of his covenant faithfulness, God has fulfilled and will fulfil his divine vision in the world. It is an assurance that God's sovereign dominion will ultimately be victorious, in spite of many obstacles. Yet this fact also invites children to become involved in the world that corresponds to God's action and ultimate victory. And this participation is beyond just intellectual and rational involvement. It includes affective involvement. The image of covenant and His kingdom transmits a number of feelings. These feelings disclose a possible way to become involved in God's gracious kingdom.

Also, the Bible as God's image book invites our children to apprehend its relevance by seeing through images. Images are closely connected with seeing as well as feeling. Traditionally, many evangelists (such as Henry) object to seeing the Bible as symbolic truth for, he thinks, this approach ignores intellectual analysis and the argument of the Bible (Henry 1987:16). Furthermore, Postman (1985:9) warns that through recognising the practice of visualisation leading to the constructing of an alternative world, the second commandment could be violated. To them, hearing is regarded as a



unique way of receiving revelation. Of course, we should recognise that there is a dangerous side to the visual. But, nevertheless, the function and capability of seeing through images should not be ignored. To ignore the positive visual track in the Bible can be another extreme way of pressing the entirety of the Bible and its diverse nature into an intellectual, rationalistic frame. Schuringa (1995:95) writes about the necessity of seeing as well as hearing: "both hearing and seeing constitute the full historicity and totality of the event of revelation. There can be no doubt as to the primacy of hearing...but seeing is also a kind of hearing: that is to say, it, too, is a receiving of revelation. Like hearing, it can and should lead to faith."

As Schuringa aptly indicates, seeing as an essential factor in transmitting biblical truth enables our children to become involved in the world of the Bible. Through the function and capability of seeing, children imagine the world of God richly and vividly. In his book, *The World of the Imagination*, Brian (1991:15) emphasizes the excellence of sight in relation to other senses: "In our tradition, touch is the sense of instinctive, hands-on, *in-medias-res* practice and for the warmth of physical contact, while hearing is the sense for pointed communication, the sense through which a personal divinity compels attention: 'Hear, O Israel!' Sight, on the other hand, is the sense which furnishes figures for objective knowledge: Thus the Greek word for 'I know' is literally 'I have seen' (*eidon*), and we too say 'I see.' Sight is valued as the sense which gives the distance and scope necessary to cognitive contemplation." In this regards sight "is the most perfect and delightful of the senses, most various, comprehensive, delicate, least easily tired or satiated, and most able to reach its object at the greatest distance"(Brian



1991:16).

### **3.4 THE BIBLE AS TRANSFORMATIONAL POWER**

Up to this point we have examined the Bible as story and image. The Bible as God's story has a plot through which the child participates in the biblical truth with wonder and mystery. Also, the Bible is an imaginative book which provides feeling and seeing so that the child can become involved in God's word effectively. In a word, where the Bible as plot-structured story evokes the wonder or curiosity of children, and the Bible as God's image evokes the feeling and seeing of children in a creative way, it plays a role as a (trans)formative power for the faith formation of children. As already mentioned, in order for the Bible to have this creative/ transformative power for the faith formation of children, two conditions should be sufficiently satisfied: one is to uphold the Bible's integrity and the other is to consider the developmental stage of the children. If one factor is diminished, the relevance or appropriateness of the Bible also collapses. Only in the balance of both does the Bible have transformative potential (Mouton 1997: 245-57).

To understand the Bible as both story and image is the best way to unite them. As opposed to an extreme cognitive understanding of the Bible, the Bible as stories and metaphors has two primary functions. One is to "identify different dispensations and preferred or non-preferred positions, attitudes, and actions." Another is, in relation to rhetorical strategies, to "effect the shifting of position" (Mouton 1997:250). Based on these functions, the text discloses an alternative world, a radically new view on reality and value, and

an innovative way of living in the world (Johnson 1998:172).

In other words, it can be said that the Bible as story and image has a referential function and power. Mouton (1997:250) continues to say, “the referential or transformative power of a text lies in its ability to suggest, to open up, to facilitate, to mediate, to make possible, to produce a 'world in front of it,' a 'proposed world', which readers may adopt or inhabit, an alternative point of view with which they can identify. In this way, a text discloses a possible new way of looking at things.”

Likewise, story and metaphor allow us to see the nature of the Bible in a new and relevant way when we compare this method with the cognitive–propositional approach to the Bible. Now we should consider another issue by posing another question: can the narrative and imaginative portrayals of biblical truth be effectively communicated to children who belong to the ‘mythic–literal’ stage of 7–11 age group. As already argued, the answer is definitely yes, for children at this stage can sensitively understand the biblical truth through images and storytelling. The nature and form of the Bible as story and image incites, stimulates children in the mythic–literal stage so that they can participate in God's world. In this respect, the Bible itself has relevant content for children.

From the above discussion, if we conclude that story and image are appropriate to the nature of the Bible itself and to the mythic–literal developmental stage, a question that remains is: how does the Bible work in the faith formation of children? Faith–formation occurs when the word is

actualised or re-conceptualised in the ongoing encounter with the situation and story of the children. Defining God's people as citizens of the Kingdom of God, Groome (1980:193) emphasises how the (trans)formation of God's people is accomplished. It is through an ongoing communication process between God's Story and Vision and our stories and visions. Groome (1980:193) says:

In the community encounter between our stories and the Story, between our own visions and the Vision, we can come to "know God" in an experiential/reflective manner. It will be a praxis way of knowing that arises from our own praxis, from the praxis of our community of pilgrims in time, and from the praxis of God in history.

A more detailed discussion of this issue will follow in Chapter 5.



## CHAPTER IV

### IMAGINATION AS THE BASIS OF FAITH FORMATION FOR THE CHILD (AGE 7 TO 11)

In a previous chapter we investigated the Bible as the Story of God and the metaphor of God. This understanding of the Bible, when compared with the traditional understanding of the Bible, leads us to re-consider the importance of imagination in understanding and transmitting biblical truths for the faith formation of children. With the resurgence of the concept of imagination in theology, we gradually realise how imagination impacts on the life of children, draws pictures in their hearts and helps them to enter into the biblical truths. In this chapter our primary aim is to study the function of imagination in the development of faith in the 7–11-year-old child.

For the purpose of this chapter I will first trace the historical roots of imagination in the epistemological (intellectual) and phenomenological school of thought in which Paul Ricoeur is considered as the most important figure. Next, I will mention two significant concepts (or definitions) of Imagination: Imagination as integration (“Einbildungskraft”) and Imagination as Point of Contact (“Anknüpfungspunkt”) of Revelation. After this, I will examine the educational theories of three distinguished scholars, James Loder, Craig Dykstra and Maria Harris, who wrote with great insight about imagination in faith formation. In exploring their theories on imagination, this chapter will focus primarily on Loder’s theory of faith transformation, Dykstra’s theory of ‘vision and character’, and Maria Harris’ theory of Christian curriculum education. From their theories we can obtain major

insight into how people (especially children) can be transformed with the help of imagination. Finally, I will propose three ways of functions of imagination for children 7–11 years old: holistic, incarnational and alternative.

## **4.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF IMAGINATION**

Before examining the importance of imagination in Christian education by looking closely at the theories of three educators, we will investigate how the concept of imagination has developed through the long history of this concept. Since it is not our purpose to examine the entire history of imagination, here I will deal briefly with the topic with the focus on the intellectualist's view of the nature of imagination and Paul Ricoeur's view, which falls within the phenomenological understanding of the nature of imagination in a broad perspective.

### **4.1.1 Imagination in the intellectualistic view**

In the ancient Greek world of Plato, imagination was the lowest form of human intelligence, while reason was treated as having the highest value in knowing the truth. Plato believed that there are two distinguishable worlds: one is the pure form of reality and the other is a material world based on a dualistic trend. He highlighted the pure reality as superior, relatively ignoring the material world.

Owing to such a dualistic understanding of human nature concerning reason (pure reality) and body (material world), Plato distrusted the imagination. For him, imagination was an inferior notion which merely mimics the sphere of pure reason (Green 1989:14; Egan, 1992: 14).

In contrast to Plato, Aristotle, in his treatment of *phantasia*, valued the human imagination and asserted that imagination is placed as a mental intermediate between rational experience and sensation rather than “as an idolatrous imitation of a divine demiurge” (Kearney 1988:106). With imagination the human being is able to remember ‘patterns of sense-images.’ And with mental images people connect their sensation of the world with their reason (Egan 1992:15). However, like Plato, Aristotle treated imagination as producing copies of reality or the mimetic quality of art which is surrendered under reason (Green 1989:15; Happel 1988:502).

During the Enlightenment, for Descartes, who is considered as "the founder of modern philosophy", reason is the crucial and most reliable faculty, while the body and senses are deceptive. In Descartes's mind-body dichotomy, imagination is regarded as no more than 'a quasi-material residue of sensory experience ' (Green 1989:19; Kearney 1988: 161).

By contrast, Kant's concept of imagination is strongly distinguished from the previous views based on a dichotomy between the mind and the body. According to Kant, imagination does not play an inferior and passive role to reason (Kant [1790] 1952:314). Rather, for him, imagination can help us to access transcendent thinking (Kearney 1988:167–71; Bryant 1989:66–69).



Kant attempted to explain this as the difference between reproductive imagination and productive imagination. The reproductive imagination, explaining the process in terms of the objective, limits the act of imagination in phenomenal reality in terms of what we experience. On the other hand, the productive imagination, explaining the process in terms of the subjective, emphasises noumenal reality beyond what we experience ( Bryant 1989:65–83; Lategan 1996:216). While the radical rationalism of scholars before Kant stressed the value of the reproductive imagination, Kant proposes an interactive connection between both. As many scholars (Happel 1988:503; Lategan 1996:216; Kearney 1988:168–69) agree, Kant’s recognition of a ‘pure productive imagination’ is one of the greatest benefits of his theory. However, despite his positive contribution, as Lategan indicates, Kant also does not fully succeed in restoring a productive role to imagination (Lategan 1996: 216). Kant’s theory does still not overcome the limitation of the dichotomy between two realities and worlds in the sense that Kant’s imagination still depends on the laws of nature found only by reason and, at the same time, he assumes that noumenal reality exists independently from us (Park 2001:62–63; Shiraishi 2000:78).

#### **4.1.2 Imagination in the phenomenological view: Paul Ricoeur**

In order to overcome the limitations of the intellectualistic view of the nature of imagination, which is commonly referred to as the dualistic trend, it is crucial to describe Paul Ricoeur’s view of the imagination. Among various issues to be studied, our focus in this section is limited to how Ricoeur holds

together a creative tension between the theories of the reproductive imagination and theories of the productive imagination, subjective and objective or ordinary reality and a new, supernatural reality which has so far been treated by the presupposition of dualism. I will first discuss the influence of Phenomenology in Paul Ricoeur's thought. Next, I will discuss how Ricoeur develops his theory of the imagination from the contribution of phenomenology under the following headings: imagination in the linguistic importance and imagination as metaphorical process.

#### **4.1.2.1 The influence of phenomenology**

Though it is not appropriate to regard Ricoeur's view as a wholly phenomenological view of the nature of imagination, nevertheless, one cannot deny that Ricoeur's views concerning imagination or metaphor are influenced by it (Gross 1992:130–31). What is the phenomenological view of imagination when compared with the intellectualistic view? A clear answer is given by Lategan. He (1996:216) aptly indicates that the advance of phenomenology "was to restore imagination to respectability by showing that the image is not *a thing in* consciousness, but *an act of* consciousness."

As already seen, the limitation of the intellectualistic view lies in the subjective/ objective dichotomy in which they isolate mind from body and search for universal laws and *a priori* principles that govern human beings and look down on imagination as the subjective equivocal work of a human being (Shiraishi 2000: 64). On the other hand, phenomenologists "reintroduced the question of the relationship between consciousness and

world so that it become possible to develop a new appreciation for imagination” (Lategan 1996:216).

From the restrictions of the traditional position concerning imagination, Husserl, a German phenomenologist, understands imagination in its teleological overtones. To Husserl, the image is “an intentional structure and not a part of human thought which can be isolated and analysed on its own” (Lategan 1996:216). In other words “the image is not a thing at all– neither internal nor external to consciousness. It is a relation – an act of consciousness directed to an object beyond consciousness” (Lategan 1996:217). Imagination is no longer merely an image–cope within the mind. In this distinction between perception and imagination, rather, the power of imagination enables us to move from ‘what is not’ or ‘what can be’ (the world of possible) to ‘what is actual (the actual world)’ (Lategan 1996:218). Husserl’s new argument that imagination leads us to participate in a new world became the central idea in forming the notion of redescription in Ricoeur’s thought.

Despite the fact that Ricoeur was deeply influenced by Husserl, an issue still remaining is how to overcome the potential danger of “transcendent subjectivity” opened by Husserl’s argument. If Husserl’s notion of imagination does not avoid “transcendent subjectivity’, it will be another extreme trend against the intellectualist’s view where the tensional relation between ordinary reality and a new, transcendent reality is again broken down (Kennedy 1993:75).



The major concern of Ricoeur is how imagination plays the role of re-describing the new reality, on the one hand, and of returning to ordinary reality, on the other hand. Ricoeur attempts to solve this problem by adopting a linguistic importance, which is called 'poetic imagination' and by considering imagination as metaphorical process.

#### **4.1.2.2 Imagination in linguistic importance**

One of the primary distinctions of Ricoeur's thought is his turn to linguistics (Ricoeur 1995:35). Shiraichi (2000:123) says that exploring imagination as a dimension of language and moving from visual imagination to linguistic imagination is the central point of Ricoeur's contribution. The shift from vision to language, according to Ricoeur, is closely related to textual interpretation. Ricoeur (1995:35) argues that, since religious experience and belief are mainly expressed and articulated through various discourses, "the most appropriate place to interpret it on its own terms is to inquire into its linguistic expression".

For our study this shift is important in overcoming the limitations of the phenomenologist's view to imagination, on the one hand, and in suggesting the referential and relational nature of imagination on the other hand. With regard to the limitations of the phenomenologist's view of imagination, Lategan (1996:219) rightly argues that, while the phenomenologist's view is only interpreted in terms of seeing and description, Ricoeur interpretes not only in terms of seeing and description, but also in terms of understanding and speaking (discourse). Whereas the phenomenologist's view describes the

world of imagery at the expense of the perceptual world, in Ricoeur's view the contribution of poetic imagination lies in simultaneously juxtaposing two different worlds so that new meaning is produced. The result, Lategan (1996: 220) states, is that the poetic imagination of Ricoeur becomes a way to harmonise two worlds or realities:

Ricoeur therefore distinguishes between two rival theories of imagination—theories of the reproductive imagination, explaining the process in terms of the object, and theories of the product imagination, explaining our imaginative activity in terms of the subject. If the image is mistaken for the real, this leads to confusion and ends in the lack of critical consciousness. If the image is only understood as the absence of the real, the innovative tension is lost. Both aspects must be held together.

Another important aspect of poetic imagination lies in its referential function for the text (Mouton 1997:250; Lategan 1996: 223–29). Ricoeur (1976: 89–95; 1997:216–56; cf. Thiselton 1992:352–72) says the referential function for the text of the poetic imagination lies in “its ability to suggest, to open up, to facilitate, to mediate, to make possible, to produce a ‘world in front of,’ a proposed world’ which readers may adopt or inhabit, an alternative point of view with which they can identify.” To Ricoeur, a function of poetic language is searching for new possibilities. As structuralists argue, language is not a closed system.

In this respect, Ricoeur criticises the limitations of structuralism such as its inflexible method which cannot explain something existing beyond the structures. In structuralism, there is, consequently, no change of the structure because of strict formulations. Criticising such a trend, Ricoeur

attempts to seek the possibility of new meaning through innovative uses of language (Ricoeur 1977:7).

If it follows from the above that poetic language or imagination holds new possibilities, another question which is raised is: how can specific literary artefacts present these new possibilities? To answer this question, it is crucial to study the function of metaphor under the title: “imagination as metaphorical process” (Riegert 1990:65–78).<sup>10</sup>

#### **4.1.2.3 Imagination as metaphorical process**

Metaphor in poetic language presents new possibilities through its semantic shock or *retentissement* or reverberation (Ricoeur 1991:130). This statement shows how different Ricoeur’s understanding of metaphor is from that of others like Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian. As Riegert (1990:67) rightly states, to commentators before Ricoeur metaphor was regarded as “a trope, that is, a figure of speech among other figures of speech (such as simile, synecdoche, metonymy); thus it is mainly ornamental, though perhaps with some explanatory worth.” Here, “each word in isolation has meaning” (Riegert 1990:67).

Contrary to these opinions, to Ricoeur the metaphor is neither ornamental nor exists/functions merely at the level of word. As Riegert (1990:68) clearly states, to Ricoeur, “Metaphor is not ‘a simple transfer of words’ but ‘a

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<sup>10</sup> I adapt this title from Riegert’s book, “Imaginative Shock”.



commerce between thoughts,' that is, a transaction between contexts. By means of the tension or interaction between two entities (this is that; Sally is an angel; God is love), metaphor creates new information because it redescribes reality."

From the above discussion, we now come to the activity or function of metaphor as the conclusion of Ricoeur's huge study: "metaphor is the rhetorical process by which discourse unleashes the power that certain fictions have to redescribe reality" (Ricoeur 1977:7).

What then is the role of imagination in Ricoeur's theory? To answer the question, Kennedy states, "Ricoeur, by combining a semantic theory of metaphor with a psychological theory of imagination and feeling, explains how metaphor works....metaphors with truth value are partly constituted by images and feelings...the kind of theory of metaphor...cannot achieve its own goal without including imagining and feeling."

Kennedy (1993:74–75) continues to describe the role of imagination in three steps:

- 1.The first role of imagination is "the seeing" which effects the shift in logical distance. This is the stage of an imaginative leap.
- 2.The second role of imagination is the "pictorial" aspect of metaphor. This is a picture of the semantic innovation.
3. The third step is "the moment of suspension or the moment of negativity brought by the image in the metaphorical process" (Riegert 1990:151). This step makes possible a remaking of reality through a suspension of the

everyday, ordinary world and through an invasion of the extraordinary world. As a result, in this step imagination leads us to a new possibility or new reality beyond the restrictions of what our ordinary experience and language might imagine. Here, what we should be aware of once again is that the possibility or redescription of an extraordinary world beyond the ordinary world does not mean to escape from the present world. Rather, it means that metaphor through imagination “re-describes ordinary reality in order to disclose a new, an extraordinary possibility for our lives”.

## **4.2 THE IMPORTANT CONCEPTS OF IMAGINATION FOR EDUCATION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH**

### **4.2.1 Imagination as integration (“*einbildungskraft*”)**

In Park (1986:113) Samuel Coleridge, a poet and theologian in the Romantic age, was influenced by Kant’s term for imagination, *Einbildungskraft* : *Kraft* denotes ‘power’, *Bildung*, ‘shaping’, and *ein*, ‘one.’ It means ‘the power of shaping into one’. For Coleridge imagination can unify reason and ‘eternal truth’ so that “reason grasps the infinite, unseen ideal.”

According to Fowler, this term is also used for explaining faith in which we look forward to seeing the ‘ultimate environment’ with imagination:

Faith forms a way of seeing our everyday life in relation to holistic images of what we may call the ultimate environment. ... We seek to fit our actions into,... larger patterns of action and meaning. Faith, in its triadic joining of

us into communities of shared trusts and loyalties, gives form and content to our imaging of an ultimate environment (Fowler 1981:24).

For Fowler, imagination as integration can unify our daily life and the ultimate environment. Like Fowler, Harris (1983:366) uses this term to indicate “creating a whole, a form.” She insists that through imagination we can find and include ‘uncertainty, doubt, and mystery’, called ‘negative capability’, into the whole of knowing. In other words, it can be described as ‘embodied knowing’ in which we shape form to what we need to learn to integrate mind and body, including sensations and feeling. This subject will be revisited later in a discussion of Harris’ theory.

In a similar vein Dykstra (1981:76) defines imagination as “an integrating process that provides the link in the individual between the body, the mind, and the emotions” And in Dykstra’s theory imagination is ‘seeing’ or ‘lenses’ between the self and the environment. If we have ‘wrong’ or ‘distorted’ lenses we can hardly see. If imagination is distorted by the lack of ability to see, we cannot realise what we see and what is wrong to us. Interestingly Dykstra (1981:44–45) presents these distorted lenses as ‘sin’, i.e. using a theological concept. With these wrong lenses we cannot enter into the significance, meaning, and mystery of human life and reality. It blocks our whole sight or unity with others or our ability to see the Divine. Therefore he regards imagination as ‘the foundation of ordinary perception.’

In summary, imagination as *Einbildungskraft* means ‘integration,’ ‘unification,’ between the body and the mind, between reason and sensation, between knowing and mystery, between people and a ultimate environment



and between people and the Divine.

#### 4.2.2 Imagination as point of contact (“Anknüpfungspunkt”) of revelation

*Anknüpfungspunkt* of revelation means ‘the link between divine revelation and human experience’, with reference to the historical debate between Karl Barth and Emil Brunner about this theological dilemma<sup>11</sup>: how does a human being know God? (Green 1989:34). In confronting this issue, Green (1989:40) proposes that ‘imagination’ is ‘the anthropological point of contact for divine revelation.’ In other words, imagination is the basic human ability and experience in daily life. However, Green unlike Brunner distinguishes that imagination is itself not ‘pure’ and ‘truth’; rather, it begins from the neutral position regarding value, but it can be good or bad. As we turn to ‘revelation’, imagination can become a factory of idols if it departs from God; however, if it is only held by God it can be a tool to make the learners know Him truly.

Thus, Green combines two insights into the compromise: imagination is not ‘the faculty or the ground of revelation but simply its locus’ (1989:43). Green (1989:40) then resolves the dilemma through imagination within ‘both-and’

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<sup>11</sup> Green (1989:34) explains the theological dilemma as follows: “In order to explain what it means to say that human beings receive divine revelation, the theologian must be able to describe to theological outsiders as well as insiders—what happens to human nature in the encounter and cannot thereby avoid saying how or where the divine Word becomes humanly effective. Here is the undeniable force of Brunner’s insistence on the *Anknüpfungspunkt*. Yet, if the theologian offers an anthropological account of the point of contact, one that does not presuppose revelation—and here is the undeniable force of Barth’s objection—the event apparently has its ground in a human possibility rather than in the free grace of God.”

rather than 'either-or'.

Describing the point of divine-human contact in terms of imagination allows theology to do justice to both aspects of revelation: (1) as a divine act of grace, reducible to no human ability, attribute, or need and (2) as a human act of faith, comparable in significant respects to other forms of human experience.

Imagination as *Anknüpfungspunkt* is very significant for the theological dimension as well as the educational dimension. Recognising that, without the divine act of grace, it is impossible for us to have faith, states that, at the same time, a human act of faith is also essential to Christian education (1987:36). That is, 'imagination can be a *channel* of God's grace.' And this comes also from human language during teaching and communication with others (Park 2001:215).

Therefore on the basis of imagination as *Anknüpfungspunkt*, Green (1989:112) finally identifies imagination as 'faithful imagination': "the divine-human point of contact can... be described as the faithful imagination, the human power to imagine, conformed to the image of God".

## 4.3 IMAGINATION IN FAITH FORMATION

### 4.3.1 Imagination in faith transformation: Loder's theory

#### 4.3.1.1 Characteristics of imagination

Due to the fact that Loder's theory is influenced by various disciplines such as theology, psychology, and philosophy, it is not easy to identify where it comes from specifically. In particular, he is influenced by multidimensional thinking in psychology (psychoanalytic tradition: Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson; the structuralist tradition: Jean Piaget, Kohlberg, Carol Gillian; the analytical tradition: Carl G. Jung, Ann Ulannov) and theology (Søren Kierkegaard, W. Pannenberg, Karl Barth, Michael Polanyi) (Loder 1998:20).

On the basis of these theories Loder crystallizes the concept of faith as "convictional knowing." According to Loder, if we have convictional knowing, it can create changes and impact profoundly and lastingly on the very heart of what we believe. Consequently, this 'convictional knowing' will bring 'transformation' as a result. At this moment it is imagination that establishes the ground of transformation. When Loder explores the analysis of the transforming moment, he realizes the function of imagination defined as integrity. Thus in this section we will investigate the function of imagination in Loder's theory.

##### 4.3.1.1.1 Imagination as synthesis between objective and subjective factors

According to Loder (1981:23), 'convictional knowing' proceeds toward neither objective nor subjective factors, rather toward imagination as a synthesising



power. In order to confirm his theory Loder begins with Michel Polanyi's 'personal knowledge.' Loder (1998: xii) says:

Michael Polanyi has shown that all knowledge, even in the physical sciences, is personal knowledge, so it is doubly ironic when the subject under investigation is a person or persons and the subject must be depersonalized and objectified as a way to get at some "truth" about them and their behavior. However, such studies are not irrelevant, not are generalizations about human behavior useless or inherently false because of their depersonalizing methodology. Rather, such studies and observations need to be brought into a larger frame of reference to serve understandings of human nature that are grounded in the uniqueness, purposiveness, and meaningfulness of human existence.

Like Polanyi, Loder believes that absolutely objective knowledge is impossible, because it is 'already' involved with the mutual indwelling of subject and object (Loder 1981:24). Instead of isolating knowledge into two parts, object and subject, Loder (1981:25) suggests, we must realise that knowledge "moves forward by imaginative leaps and bounds." For instance, the syllogistic reasoning in the inductive or deductive method, generally considered as the scientific method, also depends on an 'imaginative leap' in order to "make new associations" and "keep knowledge alive and open to change" (Loder 1981:26).

Through the concept of 'convictional knowledge' with 'the imaginative leap' Loder provides a significant insight for Christian education which attempts to overcome the dualism between the subject and object, the mind (cognitive) and the heart (affective), faith and reason.

#### 4.3.1.1.2 Imagination as 'a bipolar relational unity'

The 'imaginative leap' has opened another crucial issue for 'convictional knowing'. 'Convictional knowing' is associated not only with human science, but also with the divine. Thus Loder, seeking for an epistemological common ground between theology and science, asserts that the relationship between the two viewpoints of human science knowledge and the theological perspective is "a bipolar-relational unity"(Loder 1998:13). He defines a bipolar-relational unity as "the surprising convergence of two incompatible frames of reference to compose an original and meaningful unity" (Loder 1992:309).

For understanding 'a bipolar-relational unity,' the function of the 'imaginative leap' is vital to link the divine dimension and the human dimension. For instance, as we believe in Jesus Christ who is both divine and human, we imagine and see there is 'indissoluble differentiation', 'inseparable unity', and 'indestructible order' (Loder 1998:33). Likewise, Loder understands that the divine dimension and the human dimension should be considered at the same time "allowing the objectivity of the revelation to deal transformatively with the objectivity of the sciences" (Loder 1998:33). Therefore, an imaginative leap in convictional knowing to establish "the intimacy of the self with its Source" and "the breakdown of the eternal distance between them, the establishment of the internal dialogue, the illumination of Christ, the shared joy of Christ and the thrust into the people and culture of Christ, together constitute the shape of that

intimacy“ (Loder 1981:123).

#### **4.3.1.2 A Paradigm for faith transformation**

As we have explored imagination as ‘synthetics” between objective and subjective factors’ or ‘ a bipolar–relational unity between the divine and the human dimension’, it ultimately leads to ‘convictional knowledge.’ In this regard, Loder (1981:6) attempts to express a paradigm of faith transformation as ‘convictional experience of faith’ that is shaped by our relationship with the Holy (God) and commitment to Him. Therefore in this part we will examine Loder’s five steps in this logic of transformation: ‘conflict’, ‘interlude for scanning’, ‘a constructive act of the imagination’, ‘release and openness’, and ‘interpretation’.

##### **1) Conflict**

Loder speaks of conflict as the beginning of realising the problem. Interestingly, Loder adopts this concept of conflict from many scholars, e.g. Jean Piaget and Leon Festinger, who presented their understanding of it in cognitive development. The concept of conflict in Loder is very similar to ‘dissonance or disequilibrium’ as shown in the figure 10.



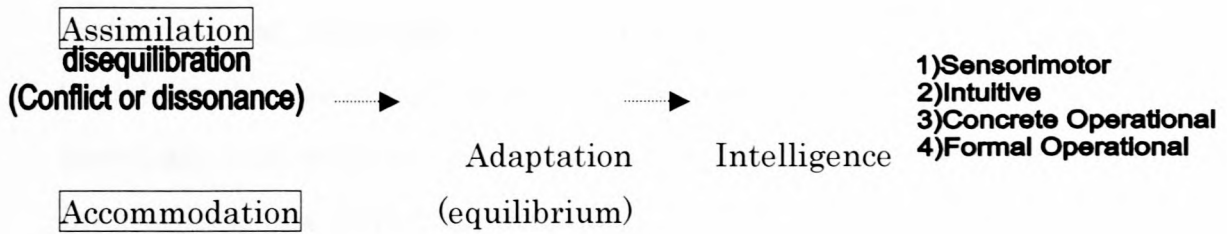


Figure 10. The concept of conflict in Loder's theory: From Loder (1998:100)

The scholars mentioned above think that conflict or disequilibrium is not merely troublesome, as we generally hold, but rather it is essential for the development of schematisation of thought. However, Loder goes far beyond the conflict they describe. He understands that conflict is vital for the deep movement of the human spirit<sup>12</sup>, in other words, the ongoing transformation of human life. For Loder the deepest learning is begun in conflicted, scrambled disequilibrium, even though the fact that we are in restless conflict or in a state of incoherence, does not always guarantee convictional knowing. Therefore what is important is that conflict is not the end or the purpose of transformation, but a significant opportunity and meaningful step towards 'convictional knowing.'

## 2) Interlude for Scanning

<sup>12</sup> For Loder(1981:100), conflicts are in four dimensions: the lived world, the self, the void and the holy. "The conflicts resonates through the self into the lived 'world' and back again, threatening ultimate void; and yet it is truly conflictual – that is, not yet over whelming, because the possibility of new being— however marginal – stubbornly persists, offering the hope of transformation in the midst of an otherwise hopeless situation."

If the first stage, conflict, raises problems, but at the same time provides motivation or challenge for 'convictional knowing.' The second stage, 'interlude for scanning', provides "the familiar psychological process of searching out possible solutions" where the aim of this stage lies in internalising the conflicted situation with empathy for the problem and its parts (Loder 1981:32). It is the step of intense searching, of expectant waiting, of creative hunches and the incessant turning of every stone of possibility. For this reason, Loder understands this stage as entailing time to investigate, analyse and understand the conflict and to search for an available solution. Says Loder (1981:32):

Scanning is not only a search for answers outside the problem; it is also scanning and differentiating the terms of the problem and playing possible solutions against various interpretations of the ruptured situation.

Therefore for Loder, the scanning moment seems a 'pause' or 'hesitation' in the conflict, yet it functions as a major moment for "the formation of the knowing event that leads into the fuller or more comprehensive implications of the conflict and accordingly searches out a solution in the most universal terms" (Loder 1981:32).

### 3) Constructive Act of Imagination

In the third step, Loder (1998: 13) understands the function of imagination in terms of 'a bipolar relational unity' in the sense that imagination plays a role in integrating the theological dimension (Holy Spirit) and the scientific

dimension (human spirit), God's grace and human nature, and the divine side and the human side. Quoting Arthur Koestler's term, Loder uses 'bisociation' as a handy way to reveal the constructive act of imagination. According to Loder (1981:32), bisociation is "the surprising convergence of two incompatible frames of reference to compose an original and meaningful unity." In this aspect, imagination not only contains the elements of the conflict, but it also provides a solution to the conflict in a simpler, more manageable form (Batson 1974:307). For this reason, Park (2001:180–81) asserts that the logic of 'bisociation, which is another expression of the constructive act of imagination, is a foundation on which Loder's understanding of the 'imaginative leap' and 'convictional knowing are based. Unlike 'ordinary knowing', 'convictional knowing' can be accomplished through an 'imaginative leap.' More precisely speaking, through the imaginative leap, we can move from 'ordinary knowing', based on the objective truth of the revelation in Christ to 'convictional knowing', based on the subjective truth of the revelation in Christ (Loder 1981:24). At this moment, our Christian education proceeds from knowing about God to knowing God.

#### 4) Release and Openness

In the fourth step there are two ways involved: one is "by a *release* of the energy bound up in sustaining the conflict" and the other is "by an *opening* of the knower to him—or herself and the contextual situation" (1981:33). In the 'release of the energy' a sense of "Aha!" becomes a signal of the fact that the problem or conflict is over (1981:33). It is the unconscious response indicating



that a resolution or a conclusion has been reached (1981:33).

However, it is not enough to claim the resolution of the conflict by means of an unconscious response. We have to realize this within our consciousness. Loder (1981:33) says that “the opening of the knower to his or her context is the response of consciousness to being freed from an engrossing conflict and for a measure of self-transcendence.”

As a result of these two ways, if the knower has acquired the experience of conflict resolution, or creating the new construct, through the experience the knower now might be able to also open and expand more richly and deeply than before the original conflict (Loder 1981:34).

##### 5) Interpretation

Finally, in this last process the knower interprets the ‘imaginative solution’ that s/he has obtained as a new insight and realized meaning for the experienced context. Loder (1981:34–38) describes this step with two concepts: ‘congruence (working backward)’ and ‘correspondence (working forward).’ ‘Congruence’ is connecting the imaginative construct into the original conditions but ‘correspondence’ will examine the imaginative construct with ‘a consensual view of the world.’ In this step the transforming event must be interpreted back into the past and forward into the future.

### **4.3.2 Imagination as vision and character: Dykstra's theory**

Craig Dykstra, influenced by Loder, has also contributed towards relating human moral experience to the transformation of faith in Christian theology. In his book *Vision and Character* he presents his ultimate goal as “education for the moral life in the Christian community” (Dykstra 1981:4). For this purpose he distinguishes ‘visional ethics’, which defines “the way one sees reality and responds to it in the light of that vision”, from ‘juridical ethics’ which is based on “making judgements about the rightness or wrongness of particular acts as a judge in a law court might do” (Dykstra 1981:2).

If we say the latter judgement is made from the rational and cognitive dimension, the former is made from the holistic dimension of human character. Dykstra (1981:59) states: “...for visional ethics action follows vision; and vision depends on character – a person thinking, reasoning, believing, feeling, willing, and acting as a whole”. As the term ‘vision’ indicates ‘seeing’, he puts ‘visional ethics’ at the root of the possibility and potential of imagination to change. For more details, we will examine the function of imagination and the paradigm for ‘vision ethics’ in the morality of Christian life.

#### **4.3.2.1 Characteristics of imagination in moral development**

To understand Dykstra's theory we need to know that morality is not ‘a bag of virtues’, or merely collection of ‘traits’ within the cognitive, but it is the character as integration (Dykstra 1981:50). He starts with criticism of Kohlberg's moral theory: “Virtue is knowledge, the psychological structure of

morality is cognitive, and the testing technique involves eliciting and analysing people's cognitive judgments and patterns of reasoning". He asserts that Kohlberg's influence creates a gap between moral life and religious life that is separated far from each other. This means that the definition of morality covers only the cognitive dimension, such as justice. In Kohlberg's understanding, moral life seems to be no longer linked with worship, prayer, confessing sins, biblical interpretation, fellowship, etc. (Dykstra 1981:3; Johnson 1993: 1-4).

However, Dykstra is confident that even justice cannot stand independently from God's justice. Human justice "depends on both God's action and a responding transformation of our whole selves in relation to God" (Dykstra 1981:13). That is the reason, Dykstra (1981:19) believes, that imagination as 'vision ethics' is an alternative for Christian moral life.

By virtue of imaginal thought, we come to see things from a different perspective, and perhaps to see into things more deeply. In situations where we are significantly self-involved, this may be the only way to see, interpret, understand, choose, and act realistically.

Following Dykstra's theory, Johnson also presents the significance of imagination in the moral. Without moral imagination moral principles will be trivial, so as not to apply to, and even be a hindrance to, morally constructive action. Conversely, without principles or some form of grounding, the moral imagination will be "arbitrary, irresponsible, and harmful" (Johnson 1993: x).

As far as morality is concerned, Johnson states that there are a couple of



things that reflect a mistaken view of imagination in Western culture: First of all, morality seems like “a system of universal moral laws or rules that come from the essence of reason.” Secondly, imagination is like “a subjective, free-flowing, creative process not governed by any rules or constrained by any rationally defined concepts.” Therefore imagination is treated as “an enemy of morality” (Johnson 1993:2).

Imagination is not an ‘enemy of morality’; rather, it enables us to have a meaningful and mutual relationship with the world and is also itself a view of morality. Says Johnson (1993:187):

We need to imagine how various actions open to us might alter our self-identity, modify our commitments, change our relationships, and affect the lives of others. We need to explore imaginatively what it might mean, in terms of possibilities for enhanced meaning and relationships, for us to perform this or that action. We need the ability to imagine and to enact transformations in our moral understanding, our character, and our behavior ... Ideally, moral imagination would provide the means for understanding (of self, others, institutions, cultures), for reflective criticism, and for modest transformation, which together are the basis for moral growth.

While Johnson explains imagination in relation to morality, Dykstra asserts that imagination has the power to change our viewpoint, solve moral problems, and transform our characters. In the following section we will examine the paradigm of ‘the dynamics of imagination.’

#### **4.3.2.2 A paradigm of 'the dynamics of imagination'**

Dykstra does not settle on specific and hierarchical stages of moral development, as does Kohlberg's theory. The reason why Dykstra does not follow Kohlberg's theory is that the critical experience or significance in life appears at different times, not only at a certain stage. For Dykstra, Kohlberg's strong argument that moral growth is supposed to move in hierarchical stages is not always true. In the perspective of Dykstra, often later moral thought is not always better than earlier thought. Dykstra (1981:65) says:

...the lapses, vacillations, and even prolonged regressions that are common to our moral striving. ..We have moments of clear vision and corresponding appropriate action. But, following on these, we then also experience times of great moral darkness in which we can neither see what is going on nor have any strength to respond. The quality of our moral lives does not necessarily improve in a linear progressive fashion.

We have moral reverses, and what is later is not always better.

Therefore he presents "vision ethics" with dynamic imagination over against developmental stages like structuralism, or 'juridical ethics' that is based on objective social science. For him imagination is a key word for changing our thought. The imagination causes us to process meaningful 'understanding, interpretation, and perception.' And the role of imagination is to provide "the link in the individual between the body, the mind, and emotions (Dykstra 1981:121).

A change in moral life and character follows after a change in the imagination. Dykstra (1981:69–75; 81–83) gives us an example, the story of Mrs. Turpin.

	The Process of Discovery	Summary : The Story of Mrs. Turpin
Step 1	<p>Conscious struggle with a conflict</p> <p>One senses that something is wrong, that is must be resolved.</p>	<p>“Mrs. Turpin built a scale in her mind of the classes of people... She imagined that if Jesus had given her a choice between being an attractive society woman or a good woman who might be poor or fat or ugly, she would certainly have chosen to be good.”</p>
Step 2	<p><b>An interlude in the struggle</b></p> <p>There comes a time when conscious struggle has gone as far as it can and the conflict must be given up to other resources</p> <p>If new patterns of seeing and feeling are to be allowed to emerge, old patterns that have coalesced in</p>	<p>Suddenly a girl who was sitting next to and had heard the conversation of Mrs Turpin, hits her and whispers low but clear, “Go back to hell where you came from, you old warthog”</p> <p>After the incident Mrs. Turpin was shocked and upset at what she took to be a criticism of herself.</p> <p>Mrs. Turpin is challenged to reflect</p>



	consciousness have to be relaxed.	upon herself by a girl's unexpected curse.  A final surge of fury shook her and Mrs. Turpin roared, "Who do you think you are?"
Step 3	<b>The emergence of new insight</b>  The insight or discovery comes in the form of a new patterning of the imagination Whatever the form of the insight, it is a creative reorganization of the imagination in which all of the elements of the conflict are related in a new gestalt.	She realized her scale is wrong before God's order. She sees or imagines that "binging up the end of the procession was a tribe of people... like herself..." while those who she thought ungracious people in her mind before, such as the poor, the black, etc., were in the first group of a vast horde of souls rumbling toward heaven.

According to the movement of discovery, Dykstra(1981:78) interpreted Mrs. Turpin's attitude as follows:

Mrs. Turpin is captive to an evil [distorted] imagination of the heart. So long as she remains in this condition, moral progress for her is impossible. Her imagination absorbs everything into her own self, and she has no leverage from within by which to be moved. ..Something from the outside must break the veil of deceit that has over many years come to be built up in her. In order for her to make any progress, her imagination has to be transformed .

As in the transformation of Mrs. Turpins' imagination, the function of imagination can enable one to see 'real existence.' This is the power of transformation of the imagination. Consequently, "if our imaginations are really to bring us in closer touch with reality, they must be informed by adequate and truthful images" (Dykstra 1981:87).

### 4.3.3 Imagination as 'incarnation': Maria Harris

Maria Harris (1983:365) contends the traditional and dominant understanding of knowing as follows:

Knowledge is quantified; or is equivalent to the definite, the objective, the verifiable; or is what gives us control. Knowledge equals, in most circles, information, facts, concepts, technical skill, 'know-how'.

Harris thinks that, if somewhere she appreciates information or facts-oriented knowledge, nevertheless in this traditional education we have lost something more precious related to our need to have faith. First of all, it dichotomised knowledge into the cognitive and the affective and also it focuses on the physical and material world (Harris 1983:365). As a result, we have lost integrity of knowing.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> According to Harris (1989:170), there are five basic assumptions of the current religious educational curriculum: "1) The basic curriculum work - sometimes the only work - is that of teaching, or didache; 2) curriculum is equivalent to academic resources and printed materials; 3) curriculum is coextensive with the curriculum of schooling rather than the wider curriculum of education; 4) knowing and learning and understanding are measurable, quantitative realities products rather than processes; 5) education comes to an end and is itself some thing that human beings designated as learners go to a place to get... rather than cultivated as lifelong involvement."

Traditional knowledge relies totally on didactic teaching, leading learners just to academic resources and material, and narrowing down education only to the curriculum of schooling (Harris 1989: 170). Furthermore, this tendency of traditional education leads to the loss of imagination. Quoting William Blake's words, Harris (1983:365) says, "entering into the reason power," we have "forsaken imagination".

If Blake is right, this traditional teaching in which imagination is absent is incomplete. For without imagination, which allows that knowledge dwells in mystery and also 'uncertainty and doubt', it is impossible to lead children to the way of sound faith. Through imagination we "disengage ourselves from what is partial and limited and incomplete, and move toward a larger unity, a more inclusive totality" (Harris 1983:364; 66). This is why she uses the term "imagination" most significantly and frequently wherever she mentions Christian education.

There are some aspects of the imagination which Harris defines as "artistic, non-discursive, non-technical, metaphorical, poetic knowing" and incarnational imagination (Harris 1983:368; 1987:9). Among those aspects we will focus on the characteristic of imagination as 'incarnation.' For, in her opinion, imagination as incarnation becomes the most crucial notion in understanding the whole of her educational thought.



#### 4.3.3.1 Imagination as the incarnational metaphor

Like Ricoeur, Harris believes that language has empowered us to enter “the deep and profound dimensions lying beneath its surface.” Says Harris (1987:19):

If the function of language is to give form to our experience of the world, then the use of religious language to speak of imagination can help us understand the mysterious, the numinous, and the mystical elements residing at the heart of the world, including the world of teaching .

In connection with the function of language, Harris develops religious imagination. First of all, adapting Wheelwright’s concepts of imagination, Harris (1987:19–22) develops her own terms for the imagination such as “contemplative, ascetic, creative, and sacramental imagination” in religious education. ‘Contemplative imagination’ fully recognises the other as “a Thou” and purifying the mind to see this. ‘Ascetic imagination’ is connected with discipleship for the teacher as well as the student to support each other with reverence. ‘Creative imagination’ entails respect for human beings and their potential capability to be creators. ‘Sacramental imagination’ means that teaching itself can address our lives and enable us to be holy.

However, in her book, *Teaching and Religious Imagination*, Harris (1987:42) prefers ‘imagination as incarnation’ borrowing the theological term ‘incarnation’ as a metaphor to explain religious teaching. Teaching, for Harris, as “a work of religious imagination” identifies as “the incarnation, embodiment, giving–form–to, giving–flesh–to subject matter”... “to the people

who are participation subjects in existence, whose ontological vocation it is to be and to become subjects; and, perhaps, even to the Mystery whose identity as the Being of Being supports all of existence” (Harris 1987:33;42).

For ‘giving–flesh–to subject matter’, imagination cannot stand alone. Harris (1987:46) proposes that there are certain forms that bear “the possibility of bringing the imagination to the religious act of teaching” such as verbal forms, earth forms, embodied forms, forms for discovery, and artistic forms.<sup>14</sup>

Imagination as incarnation indicates two specific concerns. Firstly, in ‘embodied forms’ imagination evokes a holistic or multi–dimensional approach, including both the physical and the psychic. That is, “knowledge happens with ‘sensory absorption’ as the physical acts, e.g. touching, tasting, imitation, hearing, or dramatizing, and ‘contemplation of the sensory’ by the observer as the psychic involvement” (Harris 1987:55). For Harris, imagination is not limited to any specific visual imagination or other singular

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<sup>14</sup> Firstly, verbal forms remind us that the words are metaphors rather than abstract concepts. Says Harris, “When one begins to stress imagination or intuition, the notion is subtly conveyed that this is better or more valuable than presenting concepts or ideas or thoughts in abstract forms” (1987:47).

Secondly, earth forms include the nature of the world itself as well as our human body using our sense (1987:50). For Harris earth forms are basic symbols because in human daily life these, i.e. water, earth, fire, etc., are essential part of creation (1987:54).

Thirdly, embodied forms indicate that these make us obtain the religious act of teaching within ‘physical and psychic interchange’. Harris has confidence on this embodied forms, saying “no subject matter exists that is not amenable to being learned in and through bodily involvement” (1987:56).

Fourthly, forms for discovery is “the purpose of the form, not merely an accident or by-product of the learning process. As we imagine “the design of situation”, we may reveal some new and clear in sights on that (1987:57).

Finally, artistic forms are indeed deeply rooted in human existence. Harris appreciates Mary Anderson Tully, a Union professor, for educational guidance. In particular Harris owes to her point of view that, because the question of art closely links to ‘the concreteness of daily life’, art is regarded as “a corrective and balance to the other-abstract and highly conceptualised - things students are doing” (1987:138).

sense; rather it is multi-dimensional.

Secondly, imagination as incarnation emphasizes an artistic model. Harris (1987:170) argues that teaching is artistic work; accordingly, teaching could avoid “clear-cut, specific objectives’, but allow “conceptions that are general, visions that are vague, aspirations that are fleeting.” For this purpose, teaching must be open-ended and the role of the teacher is like that of an artist. In the next section a paradigm of incarnation in teaching will be presented in more detail.

To summarise, Harris explains imagination using the metaphor of ‘incarnation’ in teaching. Within imagination a teacher can lead the student to incarnate the subject matter and to create new forms like an artist. At last the student might experience and know God and His world with ‘incarnational’ imagination.

#### **4.3.3.2 A paradigm for incarnation in teaching**

The effect of imagination is deeply related to the teaching purposes and the role of teachers in Harris’s theory. The teaching role for Harris is primarily like “the work of creating possibility” by ‘fashioning’ our existence (Harris 1987:4). She believes that the teacher’s vocation is “to incarnate subject matter toward revelation and power, and thus to take part in the re-creation of the universe.” Therefore, for her teaching is not a kind of technical skill but rather it is bringing to life any work of art with “religious imagination” (Harris 1987:25).



As I mentioned earlier, Harris' religious imagination is seen as "artistic educational work." She (1987:20) describes the importance of imagination: people were challenged not "by direct appeals to the will" but by imagination leading them into "hoping and acting". Agreeing with Harris, Egan (1992:1) states that the teacher needs flexibility of mind to present "a subject in a new and engaging way, a way that enables students to understand it better and also to take pleasure from the learning".

In this chapter we have examined the fact that imagination provides a new paradigm for faith formation. Like Loder, Harris explains the role of imagination and adapts it to Christian education. Harris deals with this to ensure effective teaching in Christian education.

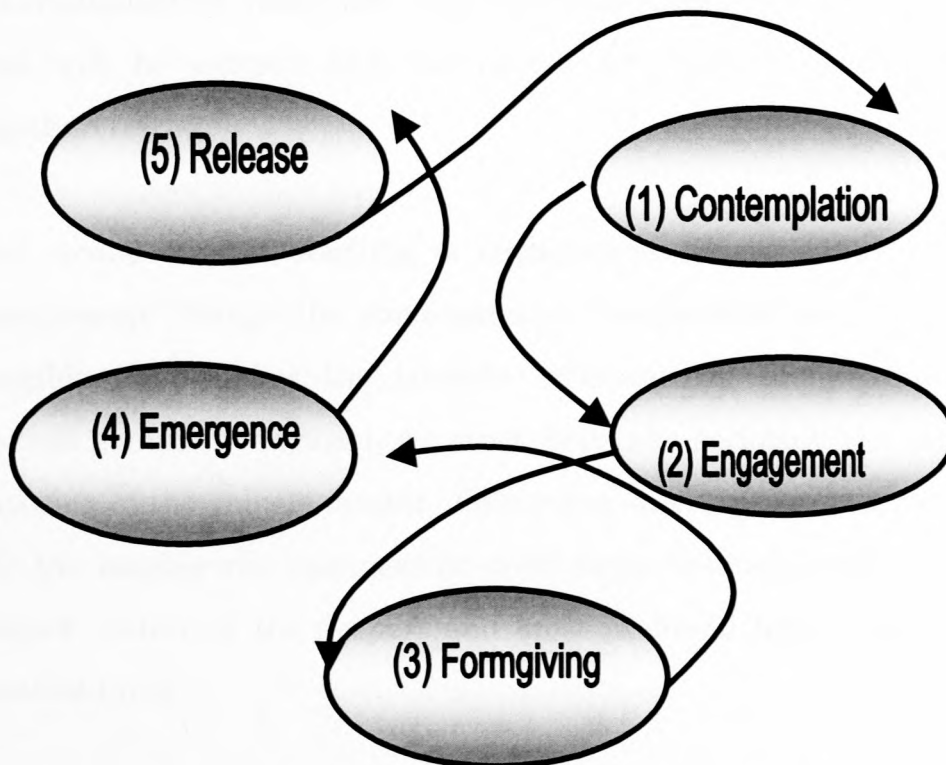


Figure 11. Harris' paradigm for teaching: From Harris (1987:26)

Harris gives these forms as 'paths of religious imagination' for effective teaching. She identifies five moments or steps: contemplation, engagement, form-giving, emergence and release. In the contemplation step, we could first discover, or be made aware through seeing "what is there" (Harris 1987:26). Harris believes that the seeing is more than physical action. It is the key to teaching.

The first moment in teaching, contemplation, is the stopping, the taking time, the wide-awake quality necessary to "take in" the personhood(s) involved. What you see is what you get (Harris 1987: 28). She observes that the contemplation connects with the imagining process in the mind's eye: pre-visualisation, imagining and seeing the place in the mind's eye is a tactic that will be entered and the people who will be entering that place together(1987:29).

The second step of teaching is engagement. Harris (1987:30) trusts that engagement "brings the contemplative imagination to bear on something tangible, and makes the creative (compositive) imagination active". To become genuinely engaged, we must first take seriously the nature and the meaning of the subject matter. Otherwise, dilettantism is almost inevitable. For the teacher the engagement must begin through involvement with the subject matter at the deepest and most profound level: the subject matter must be loved.

Form-giving: In this step imagination is the most important among the five

moments of teaching. The teaching has finished transferring information and data, but is continuing to create forms through imagination. Of all the moments in teaching, perhaps none is more dependent on the exercise of the imagination than is form-giving; indeed, teaching in a form-giving way is possible only if the teacher imagines that it is possible; if the teacher imagines that this is what teaching is. If the teacher believes that teaching means merely to transferring ideas, facts and concepts to be memorised, s/he is certain to fail (Harris 1987: 35). Thus, teaching with imagination becomes the foundation or background to our lives, communicating, for instance, “love, identity, death, intention, destiny, courage, and hope” (Harris 1987: 35).

**Emergence:** According to Harris (1987:37) this moment of emergence is “the herald of new life”. It cannot be controlled or planned as scheduled. This means teachers need time, God’s planning, and patience to await transformation toward the subject matter. As Paul says, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow” (1Cor. 3:6). Even though teachers do teach and expend effort on learners, they must know that emergence “happens silently, and one does violence to keep pulling up the plant to see if the roots are growing” (Harris 187:28). Surely this moment is only following “divine time” for a divine purpose. Emergence may best be characterised as awesome, since although its coming can never be controlled or predicted, it’s happening is unmistakable, irrevocable, and not unlike birth. Emergence is the herald of new life (Harris 1987: 37).

**Release:** According to Harris (1987:39), this last step, release, is the time to learn humility or emptiness, saying “It is no longer mine, it is now yours.”



Namely, release is similar to “the absence of desire and the fulfilment of desire at the same time”. During the process of teaching, which comprises contemplation, engagement, form-giving, emergence, and the final step, release, teachers must allow students to grow independently and strongly and step into the world.

#### **4.4 THE FUNCTION OF IMAGINATION FOR THE CHILD'S FAITH FORMATION**

Here I suggest the function of imagination under three subtitles: (i) holistic imagination, helping toward a balanced faith development of children, (ii) incarnational imagination, connecting eternal truth in present situation of children, and (iii) alternative imagination, shaping the new biblical world for the present world of children.

##### **4.4.1 Holistic imagination: Helping toward the balanced faith development of children**

As already explored in Chapter 2, for sound faith formation children need input in multiple domains, cognitive, affective and behavioural. In the same, context, the primary function of imagination is to help children so that they can grow holistically. Imagination primarily appeals to the affective aspect such as feeling, emotion, and symbol: Nevertheless, what I emphasise in this thesis is not an extreme move toward the affective aspect at the expense of

the other two aspects. Rather, the function of imagination as a primarily affective element plays a role between the cognitive and the behavioural domain (DeVries 2000:14). In this thesis imagination is regarded as bridging the cognitive element in the sense that it leads us to an assured knowledge. On the other hand, it has to do with the behavioural element, not leading children by coercive, forceful commands, but leading them to participatory, experiential encounters.

With regard to the relation between the cognitive and affective aspects, my emphasis is that the way of imaginative education does not object to the way of cognitive knowledge. Rather what the approach based on imagination is critical of is a one-sided cognitive approach which loses the holistic approach (Prins 1997:16–18). As already mentioned several times, this is one of the serious problems contemporary church education has to confront.

The cognitive performance is widely taken as responsible for delivering the knowledge of the Bible to the child. Those who take a radical cognitive stand simply believe that to know about certain details of the Bible is the same as having faith (Gobbel 1986:66). Since this position seriously damages the area of right feeling (affective domain) and right practice (behavioural domain), it often leads our children to become uninterested and bored, and finding the teaching irrelevant (Prins 1997:17).

As opposed to this, the imaginative way of giving knowledge can overcome the restriction of a one-sided cognitive direction. Where the realm of feeling, intuition, symbol, experience, and tensional mystery is focused, children

arrive at an assured knowledge in a new and fresh way (DeVries 2000:14).

The following example may clarify this. Gordon (1974:28) shows how our affective factor can influence the cognitive factor by means of illustration regarding the relationship between being angry and a propositional fact. He reveals the interesting fact that there is a significant interrelationship between anger (or being 'annoyed, ashamed, delighted, disappointed, disgusted, embarrassed, furious, glad, grateful, horrified, indignant, pleased, resentful, sad, sorry, unhappy, upset, etc.) and thinking of the proposition as true. He states that "if S is angry (etc.) about the fact that p, then S believes that p" (Gordon 1974:28).

For instance, a 7-year-old boy is very angry with his younger brother who spoils his picture by spilling icecream on it. Then he believes the proposition that his younger brother did in fact do this is true. Let's take other example: An 11-year-old girl is very depressed about the fact that she has not succeeded in doing her project; therefore she believes that the proposition that she has not succeeded in doing her project is true. As those examples prove, the affective element (ex. Emotion) is a strong force to connect proposition and fact (Shiraishi 2000:185).

As Riegert (1990: 350) states, the way of imaginative meaning, if it is used correctly, does not neglect the cognitive aspect for the purpose of sustaining the emotional aspect.

Defining imagination as 'metaphorical' or 'aesthetic' knowing, Harris



(1981:60) argues that imagination can be a bridge between the rational and emotional domain.

With regard to the relation between imagination and behaviour, I primarily focus on Ricoeur's understanding of humanity in a wholeness. i.e. a mind-body unity, a rational-affective unity, a voluntary-involuntary unity (Ricoeur 1977:10). For Ricoeur the final destination of imagination is people's action. Without action and behaviour, the planned project in our mind and the intention cannot be completed. In a word, where there is an absence of action, we cannot find true meaning for our existence (Shiraishi 2000:109). So Ricoeur (1991:178) states the function of imagination in action as follows: "There is... a progression starting from the simple schematisation of my projects, leading through the figurability of my desires, and ending in the imaginative variations of 'I can.' This progression points toward the idea of imagination as the general function of developing practical possibilities."

In his fine article Lategan (1996:221) argues that a primary theory regarding imagination lies in the recognition of 'the social imagination and the return to reality':

We have stressed that Ricoeur's detour via symbol, dream, metaphor and narrative has as ultimate goal the return to reality. As the final stage of poetic imagination, the hermeneutical circle via the reception of the reader, returns to action. The claim that our telling of stories and our discovering of alternative words exercise a formative influence on our modes of action and behaviour in society, is a momentous one.

In summary, imagination invites our children to the way of holistic growth,

where they can mature as people of God in a balanced way. In this holistic imagination, the intellect, the affective and the behavioural domains are integrated, not separated entities. In the same context, Park (2001:285) says, “thinking cannot be separate from feeling, feeling cannot be separate from doing, and thinking cannot be separate from doing.” That is, imagination is able to appeal to the whole person.

#### **4.4.2 Incarnational imagination: Incorporating God’s revelation in the present situation of children**

In his book, *Imagining God*, Green (1987:42) explains imagination as having a close relation with incarnational theology, even though he uses the slightly different term: ‘a point of locus’. Following Green’s idea and combining it with the Reformed understanding of ‘the incarnation,’ Park (2001:233), in his Ph.D. thesis, *Curriculum model of Christian education for faith as knowing God*, proposes incarnational imagination as the ideal model of religious education, especially children’s education. In order to understand ‘incarnational imagination’ more clearly, thus, we should briefly mention Green’s understanding of imagination and Reformed theology’s understanding of incarnation.

First, for Green the understanding of imagination is closely related to the primary issue of Christian education: how can we know God, who is transcendent beyond human understanding? For Green, knowing God happens within the encounter between God and human through the medium

of imagination, which is given by God. So Green (1987:112) states that imagination “depends wholly on the initiative of divine grace and appears, nevertheless, in the wholly human form of imagination.” Here imagination connects revelation as God’s self-disclosure and human being’s faithfulness as a channel of God’s work. The task of education, thus, is to present God’s revealed word in the most vividly imaginative way possible to the present congregation (children) (Green 1987:150; Long 1993: 182).

Because of this, imagination inevitably proceeds to the significance of incarnation. Once again, we can ask another crucial question: how can we (educators) help learners know God? For the answer we should now examine the issue of incarnation in more concrete terms, for “the incarnation is God’s chosen way to help people [i.e. *learners* here] know God” (Park 2001:224). As stated above, it is very important to define the Reformed notion of incarnation. Reformed theologians believe that God disclosed Himself through the incarnation, so that the learners may know God vividly. And its firm foundation is the incarnation of Jesus Christ as true God and true man. This is different from process theology, which regards the incarnation metaphorically, weakening the uniqueness of Jesus’ incarnation (Moore 1991:92–108).

Based on the unique incarnation of Jesus, this dissertation examines four characteristics of incarnation. Park (2001:230–33) gives four distinctive features from John 1:14, which is the most important passage describing Jesus’ incarnation. These are the personal, communal, imaginative and participatory dimensions. The first characteristic of incarnation is personal.



When John testifies that the Word becomes flesh (1:14), it means that Jesus Christ become a person so that we can know Jesus Christ personally (Park 2001:230). A personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the most appropriate way to develop the faith formation of children.

The second characteristic of incarnation is communal. The phrase 'lived among us,' in John 1:14, shows the communal aspect of Jesus' incarnation (Park 2001:230). The incarnation is a personal event, but it is not an individualistic event. Rather, it is a communal event. Since the purpose of 'Jesus' life is to create the community or church, the faith formation of children should be communal. In this respect, the child's education aims to incorporate the child into the body of Christ. In a word, it serves to enhance community (Louw 1996:121).

The third characteristic of incarnation is the imaginative. As we see in John 1:14 once again, the phrase, 'we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son' implies that the incarnation has an imaginative feature (Park 2001:231). Jesus as God's image shows God in an imaginative way to his disciples. As Green already indicated, the disciples could know God through faithful imagination. In the same way, where children actively conceive images of God, they can grow in faith (cf. Louw 1996:114–39).

The fourth characteristic of incarnation is the participatory. In 'the Word became flesh and lived among us' we find the participatory feature of incarnation (Park 2001:232). Through being flesh, God participated in human history and community. Such a participatory aspect of incarnation

requires the commitment and action of children in faith formation (cf. Lategan 1996: 221).

From the above discussion, what we find is that Park's emphasis is not just that incarnation has four characteristics, but also that the faith formation of the learners (children) is based on personal, communal, imaginative and participatory dimensions.

In summary, incarnational imagination is a compound of both incarnation and imagination where the divine factor and the human fact meet. Thus, the function of incarnational imagination is 'the point of contact' in corroborating God's revelation (word) to the situation of our children, where children respond to God's word in a personal, communal, imaginative and participatory way (Park 2001:232).

#### **4.4.3 Alternative imagination: Shaping the biblical world for the present world of children**

The final function of imagination in this chapter is expressed as an alternative imagination by which children can experience and participate in the alternative world that the Scriptures describe. This fact once again reminds us of Ricoeur's argument and definition of metaphors or imagination in relation to text. Ricoeur's major challenge lies in the fact that he emphasises metaphor as an appropriate medium for understanding the function of texts, including biblical texts. He has done the most to show us that every reality "lives" through text. According to Ricoeur (1978:7),

“metaphor as the rhetorical process redescribes reality in a certain form and shape.” In a world where there is more than one text, that is, a world of plurality, a given text may describe, but if another text intrudes, it is possible for that text to redescribe reality” (Ricoeur 1975:127). The importance of Ricoeur's theory on the basis of this proposal is that we should recognise that there are no “textless” worlds. This fact implies that the biblical texts as counter-texts redescribe reality. This new reality offers us a new world or new possibilities.

Under the influence of Paul Ricoeur, Riegert argues that metaphor or imagination is not “a simple transfer of words” but “a commerce between thoughts, that is, a transaction between contexts” (Ricoeur, 1978: 80; Riegert, 1990:68) By means of the tension or interaction between two entities, metaphor or imagination creates new information because it redescribes reality (Ricoeur 1978:6; Riegert, 1990:68). According to Riegert (1990:69), “moreover, the metaphor (or, rather, the cluster of metaphors) had enormous heuristic power, that is, the power to lead the hearers into a self-discovery of reality.”

If Ricoeur and Riegert are right, the function of imagination is “describing the world as it is portrayed within the text” (Na 2000:131). But this is not all. Another function of imagination is “provoking the listeners to redescribe their own worlds from the standpoint of the description in the text” (Na 2000:131).

To summarise, the function of imagination is not only to create a transcendent, alternative world, but also change “our way of looking at our



world” (Ricoeur 1973: 111). As Brueggemann (1991:4) emphasises, here we (teachers and learners), through imagination by God’s spirit, “could break our stubbornness and permit us to receive the world of God’s new righteousness”. Therefore obedience, which is to tighten our will, depends on what happens in the heart of imagination. Brueggemann (1991:4) says, “If we wish to have transformed obedience (i.e., more faithful, responsive listening), then we must be summoned to an alternative imagination, in order that we may imagine the world and ourselves differently.”

## 4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the significance and function of imagination in forming the faith of 7–11-year-old children. The intellectualistic view, before Kant, degraded imagination as no more than “a quasi-material residue of sensory experience” (Kearney, 1988: 161). However Kant regards the imagination as a synthesising process to create knowing. In the phenomenological view, Ricoeur develops the concept of imagination in linguistic terms and sees imagination as a metaphorical process. His primary concern lies in integrating the productive and reproductive notion of imagination. In order to overcome the dualistic tendencies of both, he emphasises the referential function of imagination or metaphor that redescribes a transcendent, different world (reality). What is important is that the redescription of new reality does not lead to separation from the

present world, but rather propels us to live in the present world in a totally new perspective.

In this chapter two major concepts of imagination were imagination as integration and imagination as an anthropological point of contact. Imagination as integration refers to an integrating process to include the whole of knowledge necessary for faith formation or development of the learner. Imagination as the point of contact, which is a major point of Green's, is "the link between divine revelation and human experience." Imagination is the locus to bridge the two dimensions of theology and education: one is a divine side and the other is a human side (Green 1987:42).

To specify the place and role of imagination in forming the faith of the child, I mentioned three educational theories: those of Loder, Dykstra and Harris. For Loder, the imagination will inevitably entail 'convictional knowing.' Loder describes faith transformation in five steps: conflict, interlude for scanning, constructive act of imagination, release and openness, and interpretation. Dykstra states that morality is not only concerned with justice, but needs the relationship with God. For the maturity of spiritual life the imagination plays a crucial role in promoting change. Harris argues that teaching in imagination is "the work of creating possibility by which we are able to alter and shape our existence" (Harris 1987:4). This teaching in imagination has the following steps: Contemplation, engagement, form-giving, emergence and release. Though these scholars are not the only ones who articulate the centrality of imagination in their educational theory, their theories give us clues about how we can connect imagination to the education and teaching of children for faith formation. With their insights,

the final chapter as storytelling method can be completed.

On the basis of the above discussions, I finally proposed the function of imagination for faith formation of the child under the following subtitles: holistic imagination, incarnational imagination and alternative (counter-) imagination. The function of holistic imagination is helping to ensure a balanced development of faith in children. The function of incarnational imagination is incorporating God's revelation to the present situation of children. And the function of alternative imagination is shaping a biblical world so that children can live in the vision of the kingdom of God.



## CHAPTER V

### STORYTELLING METHOD AS EFFECTIVE IMAGE-ORIENTED TEACHING FORM

In the previous chapters it was shown that we cannot form the faith of children by presenting them with a fragment of knowledge, as for instance, in the intellectual approach. Rather, for a balanced faith, children need multifaceted disciplines because the intellectual approach suffices only to transmit abstract knowledge about the Bible.

Children will not grow soundly in the faith if our Christian education is merely a presentation of facts and rational discourses. For this to happen, their imaginations must be evoked and empowered through our church education (Marlow 1995:94; Brueggemann 1989).

For healthy spiritual growth in children, the final issue to be studied is focused on an effective life-changing Bible-teaching method, which is appropriate for the developmental stage of the learners as well as from the standpoint of theological integrity (Krych 1988:56). We are convinced that children 7–11 years of age can be better introduced to Christian faith when an effective teaching method is used with developed, experienced, concrete and imagined forms.

Therefore, the appropriate questions for us to ask are: What is the most effective method to enable children to imagine God and His world described

in the Bible? How can we communicate these experienced, concrete and imagined forms to children? As many scholars and educators (Barrett 1960; Wilhoit & Ryken 1988:123-80; Brueggemann 1989; Bausch 1989; Mason 1996; O'Connell 1998:116-27; Tilley 1985: 39-53) agree, storytelling can provide the best answer to these questions.

For more specific arguments, I begin by describing the importance of storytelling and stating the two controversial purposes of storytelling in the experiential-expressionist perspective and cultural-linguistic perspective. Then this thesis examines the function of storytelling in so far as it appeals to the thinking, emotions and will of children. Also, the function of storytelling finally lies in forming the identity of God's people. After this, I will investigate storytelling as a journey and outline the imaginative teaching approach. Finally, I will suggest the concrete storytelling steps for the effective teaching of children.

## 5.1 THE SIGNIFICANCE AND PURPOSE OF STORYTELLING

### 5.1.1. The significance of storytelling

With the re-emergence of story theology or narrative theology<sup>15</sup>, many educators and theologians admit the power of story as a teaching and learning tool for Christian education (Robertson 1990:33; Tilley 1985:18–38). Especially, as Collins and Cooper (1997:2) indicate, in children's education story and storytelling play a crucial role as an essential forms of effective teaching.

In her book, *Teaching the Gospel Today*, Krych (1988:56) also states that the most effective way of teaching the Bible to children aged 7–11 years is via “the tool of transformationally-structured narrative.” Quoting the result of Gardner's study, Krych (1988:75–76) continually argues the significance of the storytelling method in forming the faith of children, especially in the mythic-literal stage:

Gardner has done extensive therapeutic work with children, successfully using a mutual story-telling technique with clients from six years of age onwards. He shows that through narrative children can appropriate new learning and behavior patterns which might be difficult to communicate in other ways. He also shows that children are capable of structuring their own narratives and of showing their appropriation.

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<sup>15</sup> According to Fackre (1983:341), “Narrative theology is discourse about God in the setting of story.” As a literary form, a narrative or story requires a story and a storytelling which “is an account of events and participants moving over time and space, a recital with beginning and ending patterned by the narrator's principle of selection.”



The child then makes up a story from scratch and ends by telling the “moral” of the story, the latter often significantly revealing the fundamental psychodynamics of the story. The therapist then attempts to develop the story; he uses the characters, setting and initial situation in the child’s story but provides a more appropriate resolution of the conflicts. In teaching the gospel, you can use stories based on the existential questions of children that also introduce the healing message of the Gospel. As lessons proceed, you can expect that the children will become more skilled at communicating through narrative.

In the same context, Juengst (1994:48) argues that through storytelling the children can understand the Christian faith most effectively, for one of the key developments of this age is narration.

### **5.1.2 Two controversial views on the purpose of storytelling**

Despite a common emphasis on the importance of storytelling or story theology for effective education, scholars use the term storytelling with different meanings. Since it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss all the different definitions, here we limit our concern to a crucial question: should we understand storytelling as an art form for simply giving pleasure to the learners or as an art form for conveying an alternative truth?

Quoting George Lindbeck’s arguments, Johnson (2001:315) indicates that the experiential–expressionist perspective emphasizes the storytelling method as a new rhetorical skill for capturing the interest of the learners. To them (the

experiential-expressionists), storytelling entails being offered as an alternative way to propositional, didactic and cognitive-oriented education. They believe that storytelling – which replaces the older logical forms of pious narratives, exciting stories and anecdotes – can be a successful way of bringing the Gospel into touch with life and moving people's hearts. This perspective primarily focuses on the pleasurable experience of the learners.

Although the turn to storytelling has brought significant gains in the area of education, there has also been a crucial loss, which contemporary educators ought to consider seriously (Reynolds 1981:71–72). The loss is that, since they like to use storytelling as a tool for creating new experiences, according to Nelson (1989:203–30), this position strongly supports the trend towards individualism that has emerged in Western culture. In this way the storytelling method may lose the formative power of the Christian community through retelling God's story.

On the other hand, those who support cultural-linguistic theory, according to Lindbeck's classification, also emphasize the importance of retelling the Christian story from a different point of view. To them the story is more than we had thought. As Lindbeck (1984:34) asserts, to be a Christian is to become involved and to learn the story of Israel and Jesus. Westerhoff (1976:34) also asserts that "at the heart of our Christian faith is a story." So "at the heart of Christian education must be this same story...Unless the story is known, understood, owned, and lived, we and our children will not have Christian faith."

Furthermore, for them, the importance of story is found in its function as an alternative story in forming community (Johnson 2001:315–16). Criticizing the education and methodology of experiential–expressionists based on individualism, educators like Ellis Nelson, John H. Westerhoff, and Charles R. Foster<sup>16</sup> emphasize the communal characteristic of Christian education in which retelling the Christian story is very important in forming and transforming God’s people. It is quite a different kind of emphasis from that of the experiential–expressionist approach. With regard to the latter, they are concerned that the story of the Gospel is reduced to a matter of individual feeling, or experiential event, in a narrow sphere.

To them the story of the Bible is crucial in forming God’s people in the sense that it is an alternative story beyond the various stories of this world and its cultures. In order for the story of Jesus to be an effective way of forming God’s people, the major emphasis should be on content based, on theological reflection rather than on form or technique for cultural adaptation (Johnson 2001:315–18). In this respect, they judge that it is a danger that our education has been too preoccupied with the matter of form and methods, giving little attention to the question of theological content.

Despite the appropriate criticism of the dangers of the experiential–expressionist perspective, the potential weakness of the cultural–linguistic position is to ignore relatively the technique of storytelling

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<sup>16</sup> In his book, *How Faith Matures*, Nelson (1989:203–230) proposes ‘the congregational edification.’ Also, in his book *Will Our Children Have Faith?* Westerhoff III (1976:50) suggests a ‘community of faith-enculturation paradigm’. Finally, in his book *Educating Congregation*, Foster (1994) regards a congregation as a teaching and learning community which is located at the centre of educational ministry.



as a creative method for the active participation of the learners. Though I find their arguments valuable and I am in sympathy with many of their assertions, nevertheless, I feel that as Christian educators cannot abandon the benefit of an effective life-changing Bible-teaching method or form (Marlow 1995: 92).

The potential dangers of the above two opinions can be summarized as follows: while the former can uphold methodology at the expense of the nature of the truth, the latter may over-emphasize the nature of an alternative story without considering effective methods.

In order to overcome the limitations of both, I here choose the *both/and* approach.' The storytelling method as an art form should include the harmony or combination of both positions rather than the choice of one position at the expense of the other. In my opinion, when storytelling embraces the truth and the right methodology simultaneously, it can be a transforming message for contemporary children.

In this regard Salmon (1988:37) aptly indicates two purposes of stories or storytelling as an art form in view of the *both/and* approach: "the immediate object is pleasure, and the ultimate object is truth." These two purposes should be preserved as the natural result of good storytelling. More specifically, Salmon (1988:37-38) explains this as follows:

There is something pleasurable about a good story. Television programmers have discovered that if you want people to sit in front of a picture tube for hours on end, you must tell them stories. Television is a

storytelling medium. Movies, prime-time dramatic series, soap operas, situation comedies, game shows, sports, the news, even commercials—all are basically stories. They are interesting, entertaining, involving, pleasurable. But good stories do not merely entertain. Like all genuine art, good stories convey truth. They convey truth because they provide us with a picture of reality.

In summary, storytelling is an art form that functions as a tool to create entertainment for the learners. However, it is more than entertainment. It is also an art form as a tool that conveys an alternative story. As Muller (2002:209–10) explains, “it is the retelling of alternative stories: loaded with alternative paradigms and alternative visions of alternative worlds.”

### **5.1.2.1 Storytelling and the characteristics of a good story<sup>17</sup>**

Following on the above discussion, we need to examine more specifically the two purposes of storytelling under the following headings: storytelling and the characteristics of a good story and good storytelling as the way to recreate the biblical world. Here we should first state that storytelling should incorporate the qualities (forms) of a good story so that the learners actively participate in teaching.

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<sup>17</sup> In agreement with Kieran Egan's view, I define stories as narrative units (1988:24). Egan (1988:24) argues, “That they are units is important. They are distinguishable from other kinds of narratives in that they have particular, clear beginnings and ends. The most basic story begins 'Once upon a time' and concludes 'they lived happily ever after.' 'Once upon a time' begins something and 'ever after' does not refer to anything in particular except that what began is now ended. 'Once upon a time' creates an expectation of a particular kind. We are told that at some particular time and place something happened. This something will involve a conflict or problem of some kind, which the rest of the story will be taken up resolving.”

As the above approach suggests, it is very important to remember that telling an alternative story (content) is not separate from an effective teaching method (form). Rather, as Salmon (1988: 40) states, “good story form makes good story content enjoyable, even revelatory.” If, as we argued in Chapter 3, the Bible is God’s story as meta–narrative which spans the whole of the past, present and future and, at the same time, invites God’s people in this story to scrutinize how the Bible has expressed the content, then this cannot be regarded as a secondary issue.

Recognizing that story or narrative is the dominant form in the Bible as a whole, Wilhoit and Ryken (1988:200) argue that we cannot understand the content of the story without first interacting with the form of the story.

Because of the inseparability of teaching content and teaching form, to teach the Bible in the storytelling method we need to examine the characteristics of a good story. As many people have indicated, storytelling is more than merely using funny tales and exciting anecdotes in teaching. Rather, storytelling in this context means to teach the texts of the Bible based on the qualifications of a good story. Salmon (1988:39–40) enumerates the qualities of a good story:

A single, clearly defined theme;

A single perspective from which the story develops;

A well–formed plot which moves from calm to conflict to resolution;

Use of realistic, graphic detail;

An appeal to the senses whenever possible;

A few major characters; lesser characters described only as necessary to the action;

A reliance on direct speech; feelings and motives mentioned only when



essential for the point:

A judicious use of repetition, with end stress; that is, the most important thing is described last.

Though there are several qualities of good stories, as mentioned above, for the purpose of this paper I shall mention only three features of a good story which stimulate children so that they become actively involved in the story of the Bible.

First, storytelling is a method which retells the biblical stories with a clear theme and purpose. Storytelling needs a clear theme that can be expressed in a sentence. Without it, it is impossible to tell God's stories to the learners effectively. As Galli & Larson (1994:49) say, a good story requires "an angle (*a theme*), a topic universal enough to concern most listeners and particular enough to spark curiosity."

Also, good storytelling needs a purpose. According to Galli and Larson (1994:49), the angle (*a theme*) says what the storytelling is about. The purpose says what storytelling should do, more particularly, what the learner will do as a result of the teaching through storytelling.

With the same meaning but in different terms, Long (1989:86) names an angle as a "focus statement" and a purpose as a "function statement." While the former is finding the unifying theme of the chosen text, the latter is promoting change in the listeners. According to McNabb & Mabry (1990:109–22), children learn better when the focus and goal are more concrete. Conversely, when storytelling loses a focus statement and a

function statement, it runs the risk of wandering aimlessly, which means the interest of the children will become dispersed.

However, setting up the theme and the goal obviously does not account for everything that may happen in this journey of storytelling. With them (theme and goal), we as storytellers should remember the two other factors of good story.

Secondly, therefore, storytelling should satisfy the theme and goal of the message in tension or suspense. Using suspense is essential in a good storytelling method. In his book, *Empowered Communicator*, Miller (1994:109) explains the necessity for tension, comparing storytelling with fishing:

Catching the big one always involves the matter of tension. Sport reels have a tension mechanism that produces drags on the line which makes fishing a matter of “catching” and “releasing.” The hooked fish is given a quasi-controlled freedom. He is always allowed periodic flights of escape even as he is pulled in until he succumbs in fatigue to these “flights.” The fisherman is a master of tension. Slowly he draws the fish in, alternating tension and release. Alas, the poor fish is snuggling longitudinally in his creel. Lying silver-bodied with all his fatigued brothers and sisters, the fish realizes, at last, he was at the mercy of a skillful sportsman. He had met a technician, schooled in the principle of tension and release.

The fact that good storytelling should function in the tension-release mode makes clear that a story is not a report which links together a series of past events. Unlike a report, good storytelling should “introduce tension, increases the tension, and then release it at just right moment” (Salmon 1988:40). If

storytelling loses that tension, there is little motivation that makes children participate in that storytelling.

How, then, is this tension introduced and sustained? Salmon (1988:41) suggests:

It does not take much to arouse people's interest initially. Something like, "Several months ago I was on my way..." and with those few words of introduction, the listeners are on their way, too. Something is about to be told them that they do not already know.

This is one example of initiating suspense. But in order to sustain curiosity continually, this initial suspense should be extended and developed through more information. In this process the danger is of losing the unifying focus of the entire story because of side issues. In order to avoid this danger, tension must be developed in tandem with a unifying theme and clear goal.

Thirdly, a good storytelling method should be a journey toward the resolution of ambiguity. Traditional deductive-propositional teaching destroys the enjoyment of journeying in order to arrive at the answers. Here the teacher offers the right answer that all learners should follow. In this method the teacher is the expert and the learners are those who learn from the teacher alone (Wilhoit & Ryken 1988:142).

Against this position, a good storytelling method follows a plot structure in which one moves from an analysis of the problem to its resolution. In this process the climax will provide an unexpected surprise to the hearers. It is no



longer the one-man show of the teacher. Rather, through active involvement of learners in the process from conflict to resolution, there can be a shared experience between the storyteller and the children. Children can experience pleasure and excitement when the conflict is resolved (Krych 1988:75–97; cf. Loder 1981; Eshringer & Monroe 1984).

In summary, storytelling is based on the form of a good story. Specifically speaking, I define storytelling method as basically plot movement that holds suspense with a clear theme and focus. In this respect, the storytelling method outlined here is selective storytelling in the sense that a storyteller can deal selectively with a part of the proposed text according to the form of good story, rather than mentioning literally all the details of the proposed text or story.

### **5.1.2.2 Storytelling as a way of recreating the biblical world**

As already mentioned, the aim of storytelling is not just to excite the interest of children with the creative story form. Rather, it is closely related to recreating the biblical world as an alternative world. Story theology's question for Christian education is: how can our teaching incorporate God's world presented by the canonical story into the children's life story? As mentioned above, the answer is found in a retelling and a reliving of the biblical story through a good storytelling method. What we firmly believe in this process is the power of the Gospel itself beyond the storyteller's dramatic ability or the learner's interpretative ability (Moore 1991: 161–62).

Shoemaker (1985:161) clearly indicates the power of the biblical story: "The

Bible calls us to enter a new world even as we live in this old one, to strike a covenant, to make God's story our story, and to enter the Kingdom of God. It invites us to a new way of seeing, knowing, and behaving". In a similar context, Moore (1991:143), quoting McFague', states the power of the story: "we do not interpret the parable (or *story*), but the parable interprets us.' To say this is to recognise that stories have power... Because they (stories) have the power to transform us, we need to choose stories that are creative, redemptive, and liberative."

To explain the meanings of stories about the biblical world, it is important to know the major nature of the biblical world. Shoemaker (1985:162) defines the biblical world as follows:

The biblical world is the sphere of life in which God is active. Life in the biblical world is combination of the presence and activity of God on the one hand and the faith and obedience of God's people on the other... The biblical world is the world of history and meaning in which God is active in His creative, "righteousing" and reconciling power. For people of faith the biblical world is a way of experiencing reality in the truest and fullest possible way.

According to his argument, the biblical world exists in the mutual relation between God and His people. As God, in the past, invited his people into his world, today God has created a world for those who hear God's story with the ear of faith. In this respect, when we say that the crucial aim of the storytelling is to recreate the biblical world as an alternative world, we mean that story theology is related to three kinds of story: canonical story, life story and community story (Stone 1995:262). Following Fackre's grouping of

narrative theology, Stone states that, in order to recreate the biblical world, storytelling should move “beyond the canonical, or biblical story to include the believer’s personal life story within the context of the Christian community.” To Stone, the serious duty of Christian education is to relate past traditions to contemporary Christian experience.

This can only be fulfilled when the biblical world always remains both central and, at the same time, connected to the hearer’s world, biblically and relevantly. Thus, retelling the biblical story requires “a shared story”, which combines the biblical story and person’s story through the community story.

In this respect, the storytelling method of this chapter can describe text-oriented teaching beyond the limitations of the preacher-directed teaching and the hearer-directed teaching. And, as already emphasized, the purpose of this text-oriented teaching is to recreate the biblical world “because this is the only healing, saving world in which to live. This biblical world has created us and called us and even now empowers us” (Shoemaker 1985:165). Storytelling keeps this world vivid and accessible to the children.

## **5.2 THE FUNCTION OF STORYTELLING**

From the above discussion, we turn now to the function of storytelling, which is to stimulate the children to think, feel and experience God’s story and, as a result of these holistic functions, to build up the identity of God’s people. As the following figure shows, the wheel of the story, which is composed of thinking, feeling, experiencing and identity, moves along on imagination as



the road. And this rotating wheel of story or storytelling is moving toward faith as knowing God. More specifically, this thesis will explain each factor under the following headings: thinking in the story, the emotional appeal of the story, experience of the story, and forming the identity of the God's people.

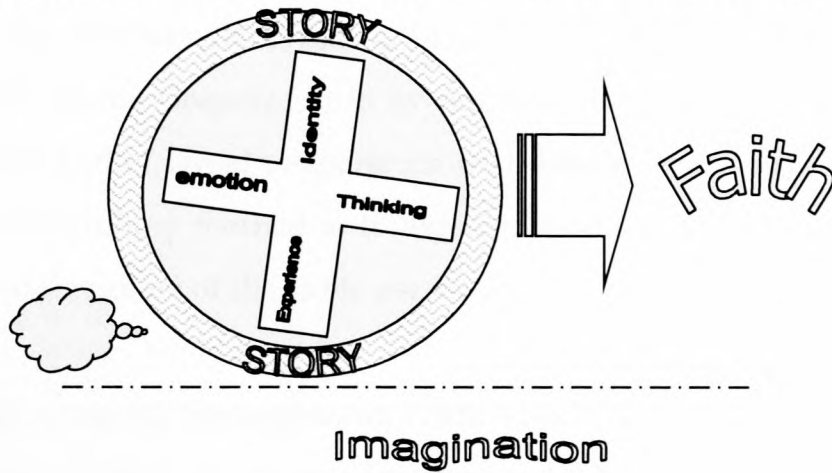


Figure 12. A Wheel of God's Story in Moving toward Faith

### 5.2.1 Thinking in the story

Storytelling invites children to think about reality differently. According to Jensen (1983:60), “thinking in story” is distinguished from “thinking in idea” in the way that children approach the reality of the gospel. Traditionally, in thinking just in idea, our teaching “became overly abstract, conceptual and systematic.” Consequently, “it separates thought and life, belief and practice, words and their embodiment, making it more difficult, if not impossible, for us to believe in our hearts what we confess with our lips” (Bausch 1989:17, from McFague 1982). A representative example is the radical dogmatic way of teaching in which “secondary process thinking” as commentary on the

original event replaces the original story. The crucial danger of this approach is that it prevents the way that “the raw event was first transmitted: by the myth, metaphor, and story” (Bausch 1989:17).

On the contrary, storytelling invites us to become actively involved in the reality of the Gospel’s world by retelling the original event as an expression of God and of Israel’s experience with him in every day. Here, the benefit of the storytelling method is to expound God as the great daily reality as the original readers of the Bible perceived Him (Bausch 1989:19).

In this respect, Brueggemann (1982:21–27) understands that storytelling is a different way of knowledge transmission from an idea-centred way. Storytelling or retelling a story helps children to think of God’s stories differently (Bausch, 1989:17). It does not just communicate historical facts. Rather, it helps the child to engage actively in a past reality in two ways: by helping the child to remember who God is and what He has done for His people and by helping the child to make the right choice.

#### **5.2.1.1 Story helps the child to remember**

In the Israelite community memory or memorising had a very important theological meaning. As Jung (1995:150), in the light of Stoker’s work, states, remembrance in the Israelite community plays a significant role “to actualise the tradition, linking the present with the redemptive history of the past...Israel’s remembrance became a technical term to express the process by which later generations made relevant the great redemptive acts which were related in her tradition. Memory was a key process in the

internalisation of the tradition.” Because of the great importance of memory, the fact that the Bible uses a story or storytelling as the most common teaching form is not a coincidence. In general, storytelling is an effective way for children to remember God’s word (Markquart 1985:140).

The concreteness of story increases the memory of children. A criterion of good teaching lies in the concreteness of truth. It keeps the Christian Gospel from becoming an abstract notion. According to Brueggemann, story in the Bible, at least in the Torah, is “about particular persons in particular times and places” (Brueggemann 1989:23). It rejects universalising truth. Jesus also told parables as stories with specific social contexts or reflected tangible images. For instance, the sower (Mt. 13:2–23; Mk 4:3–25; Lk. 8:5–18), the good Samaritan (Lk. 1:25–37), the lost sheep (Mt. 18:10–14; Lk 15:4–7), the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11–32), the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19–31), the faithful servant (Mt. 24:45–51), etc. Through these stories Jesus' narratives become “descriptive, concrete, and full of pictures” (Thielen 1995:45). His teaching is concerned with the issue of concrete life, avoiding abstract notions.

As a result, what the above facts confirm is that children remember better when the teaching is done at the concrete level. The child can better imagine a father’s love when s/he is told, and feel within, the story of the prodigal son, rather than when given a definition of love. Thus, in being presented with a perceptible and tangible existence or a specific something that can be “perceived by the senses”, the children will understand better and memorise more easily.



### **5.2.1.2 Moral thoughts –helping the child make the right choice**

Unlike the under-6-year-olds, 7-11-year-olds live in a larger world than they did before, one that now includes family, school, peer groups, Sunday-school, etc. Because of his or her enlarging society, the child faces various situations that require him or her to make decisions more often. The child should be taught to make the right choice, experience how to do so, and learn critical and creative thinking skills in various ways. One of the sound challenges comes out of a good story.

As we saw in Chapter 2, the 7-11-year-old child develops the following characters connecting with the stories:

Children [aged 7-9] will start to understand that Bible stories are more than just stories—these stories help them know how to live.

Children [aged 10-11] need to begin to discern between cultural “truths” and God’s truth, and they need to understand why scripture is the standard.

With storytelling children are exploring and observing the people who obeyed God’s word or met Jesus, who changed their lives even though they lost their own possessions or properties. Through these examples or models children might learn and think about “why” and “how” they depend on God’s will as they solve the problems facing them. As Trent (2000:122; 130) indicates, at this “age of reason,” they (7-11-year-olds) are willing to make the right choice, and in this ‘transition period,’ they need to incorporate and

establish God's value into their lives.

How does storytelling work towards this goal? The story of Joseph provides an example. This story of Joseph shows that he unwillingly moved from home to Egypt, suffered his loneliness, and was incarcerated although innocent. The story did not show what Joseph's prayers were directly, but it clearly delineated the intimacy of the relationship between God and him in summary: "The Lord was with him [Joseph]" (Gen. 39:2-3, 39:21,23). At the moment of temptation or testing he made the right choices. At last he was put in charge of the whole land of Egypt and yet he did not take revenge on his own brothers, but forgave them from the bottom of his heart.

As the child is told this story, s/he will see or observe the character, Joseph, as he deals with a dilemma, struggle or success in his life. Retelling Joseph's story will help the child to understand probation and how we gain the right direction before God.

### **5.2.2 The emotional appeal of the story**

In comparison with the traditional methods of education, the most dramatic change of story-oriented education and teaching is closely related to affective responses (Egan 1988:29). Traditionally, some people think that it is undesirable to be prompted to action by the emotions. For them emotions are so volatile and individual that it is difficult to trust them. Acting entirely on emotion is thought to be disgraceful and uncivilised. Because of this tendency, Christian children's education has neglected to provide for the emotional

lives of the children. Education has been governed by a largely logical and narrowly rational school of thinking that has dealt with the affective meaning as relatively trivial or marginal.

However, with the development of story theology, people have begun to criticize the one-sided appeal to children's learning capacities and are trying to reinstate the significance of this neglected aspect of children's thinking. Craddock(1985:206) asserts that emotional or affective impact is desirable and significant in order to touch the heart. Corbett (1990:86) says, concerning emotional impact, that:

There is nothing necessarily reprehensible about being moved to action through our emotions; in fact, it is perfectly normal. Since it is our will ultimately that moves us to action and since the emotions have a powerful influence on the will, many of our actions are prompted by the stimulus of our emotions.

For example, Luke 24:13–35 explains the important function of emotion in retelling God's story. Walking on the road from Emmaus to Jerusalem, Jesus tells his own story. Inspired by the narrative (story) of Jesus, the two disciples ask each other "Were not our hearts burning within us while he [Jesus] talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32). This emotional appeal enabled them to act spontaneously as described in the following verse, "They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem" (Luke 24:33).

As this example testifies, we can be sure that story can motivate emotion and



that the involvement of the heart may be a decisive causative factor in whether action takes place (Gorman 2001: 44).

### **5.2.3 Experience of the story**

Up to this point we have investigated the claim that storytelling appeals to the cognitive and affective aspects in children. But this is not everything. It should also make its ultimate appeal to the behavioural aspect. The Christian message is not intended merely to debate a theological issue such as repentance, but to induce people to repent; not merely to discuss love, but to enable them to participate in the love of Christ. The storyteller should not be satisfied with merely presenting God's word in logical and intellectual ways which can be clearly understood. Nor is it his or her major duty to ensure emotional equilibrium in children. The ultimate purpose of storytelling is toward changing lives by way of cognitive and affective responses. In a word, it is to help the children "embody the truth, give flesh and blood to it, and live it out in the concrete situation" (Horne 1983:25). To borrow Jensen's expression, the Christian message in story should be "a happening-reality" (Jensen 1983:62). Where God's word can effectively be imagined and pictured vividly, our storytelling functions as an experiential event for children.

### **5.2.4 Forming the identity of God's people**

That the ultimate purpose of storytelling enables the text to be an experiential event in the life of children is closely related to forming the identity of God's people. As Brueggemann (1982:25) notes, it is a deplorable

fact that, when a storytelling is directed to an experiential event of God's word, it is often treated as a merely individualistic or subjective approach. This response is based on secular Western culture and is not a biblical notion.

Rather, according to Brueggemann (1982:25), when we say that stories in Israel are experiential, this does not mean an emphasis on individualistic trends, but means "the public experience of Israel's story which encompasses each new generation." These experiential stories from generation to generation build social and spiritual common ground. Based on the common narrative experience, Israel firmly forms its identity as the people of God. Brueggemann (1982:29) continues to say:

The narrative thrust of Israel's primal educational material is to make available to the learner a new identity.

Likewise, the storytelling method functions as the most effective form for the articulation of the Christian community's identity by retelling the story of the Bible, which is the glue that binds its members together (Stroup 1973:132-33). More specifically, Groome explains what the identity of God's people is and how people participate in the process. Groome (1980:193), in his book, *Christian Religious Education*, defines the identity of God's people as being citizens of the kingdom of God since the story and vision of the Bible is the story and vision of God's kingdom. Also, he emphasises how the identity of God's people is accomplished. It is through the dialectic relationship between God's Story and Vision and our stories and visions. He says that "within the community, and in a context of intentional religious education, the educator has the responsibility of ensuring that the Story is

encountered and its Vision proposed. In the community encounter between our stories and the Story, between our own visions and the Vision, we can come to 'know God' in an experiential/ reflective manner. It will be a praxis way of knowing that arises from our own praxis, from the praxis of our community of pilgrims in time, and from the praxis of God in history"(Groome 1998:193).

### **5.3 STORYTELLING AS JOURNEY AND IMAGINATIVE TEACHING APPROACH**

Before the specific procedure of the storytelling method is outlined, it is necessary to know that storytelling is a kind of journey in which at least four partners need to keep company for an effective trip and which also requires an imaginative approach to the Bible. Here we can see how much the storytelling method differs when compared with traditional teaching methods like propositional–authoritative preaching and idea–centred teaching methods.

#### **5.3.1 The partners for the story journey**

In this chapter I present storytelling as a journey (Groome 1980:14–17)<sup>18</sup>. In

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<sup>18</sup> From the imagery of a pilgrim people in the Hebrew Bible, Groome (1980:14) defines God's people as a pilgrim people.



order to complete this journey effectively, it is very necessary to know the four partners of storytelling: the text, the teacher, the learner and the better world. I shall briefly examine these four partners of storytelling in the following section. I will discuss these aspects by drawing on Groome's work.

### **5.3.1.1 The text**

The text is the most important factor in this journey. It plays the role of guidebook for the pilgrims. Without this, we cannot journey toward any destination.

Emphasizing the shared praxis approach to Christian education, Groome calls the text the Christian Story and Vision. To Groome (1980:207–17), the text provides an alternative Christian Story and Vision for an individual's story and vision which invites "critical reflection" on the theme introduced in movement one: naming present action. In his theory, while the individual's story and vision are the conflict part based on the experience of the learners, the Christian community Story and Vision form the resolution part solving this problem based on the creative imagination (Habermas 1971:301).

Here, the term Story means "the whole faith tradition of our people, however that is expressed or embodied" (Groome 1980: 192). The events and works of Jesus' life are the centre of this Story. Also, the term Vision means "the Vision of the Kingdom. This Vision is our response to and God's promise in the Story, and the Story is the unfolding of the Vision" (Groome 1980:193).

In summary, the text in our storytelling method has power and authority to resolve the conflict of the learner. In this perspective, the text plays a role as an alternative Story and Vision overcoming the conflict formed by the old world and image.

### **5.3.1.2 The learner**

In the journey of faith, understanding the place of the learner is very important. Unlike traditional teaching, one of the most crucial changes of our storytelling method probably lies in the new awareness of the learners or students. As already mentioned above, the characteristic of traditional authoritative teaching is apparently a monologue, where the teacher transmits to the learners what is good for them and the learners passively receive what is told to them (Egan 1988:29). In this education mode based on a one-dimensional communication approach, the teacher is active, while the learner is relatively passive. Though it has the advantage of being able to transmit the content easily, its crucial weakness is that it makes the learners lose curiosity, wonder and participation, all of which are present in the alternative interesting teaching process.

To overcome these problems, those who emphasize story and image-oriented teaching advocate that the place of the learners should be understood differently in Christian education. To them, all learners are on a journey of faith and should find their own answers for a meaningful life. They are no longer passive receivers, but active subjects (Groome 1980: 263). In our

storytelling method, consequently, the learners should be considered as the partners in the conversation in a relationship of mutuality and equality.

### **5.3.1.3 The teacher**

In our storytelling journey the teachers are those who journey for or with the learners on the road of the pilgrim. For the learner, the teacher becomes a guide who leads them. Since every child has religious potential, the teacher has a crucial responsibility to help each child so that he or she develops his or her potential (Joubert 1994:2).

Though no one can deny that this is the primary duty of the teacher, the teacher in our storytelling method is also, however, a partner who is journeying with the learner. The teacher is also a learner. In this respect, Groome defines the teacher as “leading learner” (Groome 1980:263). The teacher is no longer one who manipulates or coerces the child by abusive responses in the name of God’s word (Atkinson 1993: 67).<sup>19</sup> Rather, the teacher is a counsellor to help or encourage children so that they choose God’s way in freedom.

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<sup>19</sup> Criticizing the behavioural approach supported by H.T Skinner, Atkinson (1993:67) indicates the danger of coercive education forms: “Such a view leads to abusive response such as prosperity gospel on the one hand, or extreme guilt, suffering and manipulation through guilt on the other... many pastors attempt to encourage personal evangelism through guilt-instilling practices.”



#### 5.3.1.4 The better world

The final destination of storytelling as journey is toward the better world. According to Groome (1980:9; 12–17), the journey of the pilgrim entails moving from a dialectic relation between the past and the present, to the future. As far as he is concerned, providing hope for the future beyond the present is the concern of true education. Groome (1980:9) says:

We educate to ensure that all of us can have a future. When this concern is properly expressed in education activity, then the future is seen as arising from the heritage of the past and the creativity of the present but with a newness beyond either past or present... education must not allow people to settle for what is already, but lead them instead to build a better world.

In the same context, Brueggemann (1989:10), in his book, *Finally comes the poet*, emphasizes the significance of the better world in witnessing God's Word. For him, God's Word, retold and disclosed by storyteller or poet, is to invite people to create a better and more hopeful world beyond the present world.

When His word is disclosed once again, "we [*the educators and the learners*] move through the wearisome death-ridden days of our life and come back once again to Easter to be stunned into disbelief, and then beyond disbelief, to be stunned into life, now filled with fear and trembling" (Brueggemann 1989:11).

In summary, storytelling as a journey metaphor indicates what the

relationship between the teacher and the learner is about, how the text should be treated, and where the storytelling should move.

### **5.3.2 Storytelling as imaginative approach to the text**

As I have already emphasized, storytelling is the most effective way that we can image the biblical text and its world. In this respect, storytelling as image-oriented teaching has a different approach in comparison with the dominant idea-oriented teaching.

Traditional idea-centred teaching moves from finding the text's meaning to finding a message for contemporary audience (Fuller 1981:38). In this dominant method, moving from the text to the situation of the learner, the teaching and sermon often develop in three stages.

The first, and major concern of the teachers or educators is to find the idea (or crucial issue) of the text to be proclaimed and taught. Speedily skimming the biblical text, they ask "What does the text mean?" In the process of answering such a question, a principal or major issue of the text generally emerges. For example, this text is about love, or forgiveness, or salvation through the Cross. Once the teacher or educators find the crucial issue, the next stage is application to the real life situation of the learners. And the final stage is to require a changed action or deed (Baumer 1985:84).

As many educators indicate, this is the typical form of the deductive approach. Nel (1994:28), a south African educator, explains the tendency of

this position:

Teaching the biblical message is often seen as handing over carefully considered doctrines of the Bible. In the face of the problems of the teaching of the Bible to children churches and educational systems often choose to interpret the Bible on behalf of the children and to offer them 'the correct interpretation' as clearly as possible and as early as possible. What is very often conveyed in this manner is not the Bible itself but an interpretation of the Bible. The meaning of a certain story is thus moulded like jelly and served.

In agreement with Fowler, Nel (1994:28) emphatically states that the deductive method is often presented in an authoritative teaching style.

There is nothing wrong with such a methodology. No one denies that a deductive approach is a good partner in the search for more effective communication of the Word. Especially, when one tries to teach non-narrative texts, this form will be an effective form of Bible teaching. Our question, thus, is not whether this method is biblical or not, but whether it is an appropriate form to further a child's development in the 7-11 age group (Roux 1994:12; Krych 1988: 56).

As Roux indicates convincingly, since it is primarily focused on cognitive performance (or reason), and while it downplays the role of imagination, it is not an appropriate form for children aged 7-11 years, who understand the Gospel presented with imagination and story more effectively. Deductive methods can communicate information to children, but the mere acquisition of cognitive knowledge does not necessarily lead to transformation of the



child's life (Baumer 1985:84). In a similar way, Nel (1994:28) indicates the danger of this form. Because of the loss of imagination through lack of story, it misses the freshness of the text: "It takes away the exciting discovery that: 'I am part of that story. It is my story, because I am part of the faith community'."

On the other hand, the storytelling method as an imaginative approach to scriptural texts has a different direction and process. The teacher does not begin with a cognitive question "What does the text mean?" but with the affective question "How does the text feel when it speaks?" This does not mean that an imaginative approach to scriptural texts ignores what the text is saying. Rather, it means that the primary concern of this approach is not with teaching the lessons of the text, but with experiencing the message of the text. Though experiencing the message of the text is included in the cognitive aspect, nevertheless, the finding and teaching of the main idea of the text itself does not produce the transformative experience of the text. In this respect, it is better to say that this position seeks an affective-cognitive approach in the sense that an imaginative approach to the text overcomes the limitation of the idea-oriented direction, while still finding the main idea through the cognitive aspect.

For example, when the teacher tries to approach John 22: 15-19, an affective question can offer more than information about the text. When Jesus asks Peter three times, "Do you love me?" it is not "merely an academic exercise to test Peter's fidelity, but comes from real-life feeling between these two men" (Baumer 1985:84). This affective approach enables us to see an interaction

between Jesus who experienced the brokenness through the cross for his people, and others, especially Peter and Peter's brokenness and the whole shattered situation affectively or imaginatively. An imaginative teacher can suggest a question like this: how did Peter feel when Jesus asked the same question three times? It evokes the experience from the text, rather than just the fact or knowledge of the text.

Through such an affective approach to the text, the teacher can naturally proceed toward the interaction between Jesus and contemporary audiences, searching for an analogous situation in today's learners. The imaginative teacher will feel how each child in the situation felt when the story is told. The problem of Peter's brokenness can be theirs, living with a similar failure and dilemma. Describing our ambiguity through the process of identification between text and today's situation, this journey through an affective approach finally arrives at the resolution through Jesus (Krych 1988:88–90).

In this imaginative approach to the text, storytelling can never be reduced to principles or knowledge to be applied to the life of children. Instead, the imaginative teacher plays the role with imaginative interaction of providing a bridge between the children's problems and the solution of the Gospel, by creating the unique human situation that is analogous to the lived experiences expressed by the text and by suggesting the resolution of Jesus.

This is a typical form of the inductive approach.<sup>20</sup> In the inductive approach

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<sup>20</sup> Groome (1980:207-223) suggests the praxis approach as an effective inductive form. Groome's praxis approach involves five steps, which he calls movements: 1) Movement one: Naming present action; 2) Movement two: The participants' stories and vision; 3) Movement three: The Christian community

the starting point of the teacher is the conflict suggested by the real context of the learner. After this, the teacher moves to the text, which has a similar conflict. The teacher helps the learners so that they recognize their problems and feel the seriousness of those problems. In this respect, the inductive approach appeals to the experience of the learners.

Having begun with specific experience, the teaching now moves to a general truth. In this process, the conflict is solved through biblical truth (cf. Egan 1988:39–61). As Litchfield (1992:166) says, “the inductive approach is like a mystery that will be solved in the final act.” Where the mystery is alive, the children imagine God’s word and the world of God’s word experientially.

Thus, storytelling as an imaginative form to the reader of the biblical text is appropriate to a child’s development, especially for 7–11-year-olds as well as being a biblical method which has been used the most extensively in the entire Bible. Although we admit the significance of the deductive mode in transmitting God’s truth, and also the importance of the cognitive dimension in teaching, we believe that the affective–cognitive meaning of the scriptural texts is a better form for satisfying both the entertainment needs and the faith formation of children. For a more detailed explanation, we examine the processes of (inductive) storytelling in the following section.

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story and vision: 4) Movement four: Dialectical hermeneutic between story and participants’ story. 5) Movement five: Dialectical hermeneutic between vision and participants’ vision.



## **5. 4 THE CONCRETE PROCEDURES OF THE STORYTELLING METHOD**

Through the above discussion, we have demonstrated that the storytelling method is an inductive method based on plot structure. In this regard we should answer the following two questions. First, should we follow the entire structure of the proposed biblical text without reformulation? Or should we change it? I hold that it is necessary to reformulate the biblical plot. If it is necessary to change the plot form of the biblical text; the second question is, then, what are the specific procedures of the storytelling method by which this reformulation will be accomplished?

### **5.4.1 The reformulation of the biblical plot**

When Christian teachers or preachers try to tell or retell the biblical story, the biblical plot line (or story–line) is considered as a standard form for effective teaching and preaching. In this chapter we propose that, basically, the storytelling method respects the movements of the biblical plot presented by the chosen text for effective teaching. However, this does mean that the ideal of the storytelling method should be slavishly followed for the entire form of the text. Rather, even though it is necessary to follow the basic structure of the biblical plot, the biblical plot inevitably needs to be reformulated for two main reasons.

One reason is the complexity of plot form itself, though every form does not have the same structure. Pratt (1990:202) illustrates one common plot form.

Here is a diagrammatic representation:

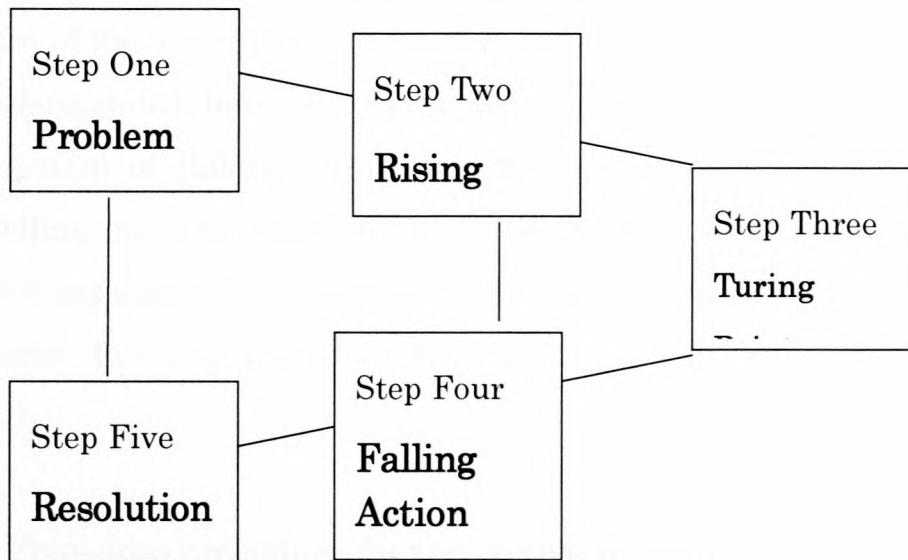


Figure 13. Dramatic Plot Flow: From Richard Pratt (1990:202).

As the diagram shows, it is not easy for children to follow the entire plot flow because of its complex form. When we deal with such a text, total adherence to plot structure has an advantage in the sense that it follows the biblical story–line, but it is not appropriate for children in an early development stage. That is, it may be biblical, but it may not be existentially appropriate. Richter (2002:52) indicates this aspect well: “Plot is a central element of narrative form, yet children often find it difficult to comprehend, retell or construct plots effectively.”

Another reason to be considered is that the adherence to the biblical plot works well for most narrative texts, but it can fall short when it treats

non-narrative texts in genres such as epistles, poetry or proverbs.

Because of the above two reasons traditional complex plot structures should be re-formulated into new forms for easy understanding and the active participation of children. Thus, our major concern is how to articulate a storytelling method appropriate to the child's development, while still maintaining theological integrity. In the following section, I will first suggest a concrete five-step procedure for encouraging the active participation of children.

#### **5.4.2 Five-step procedure for the active participation of children**

For this five-step procedure for active participation, I am indebted to such scholars as James Loder (1981), Alan Monroe (1962:303-40), Kieran Egan (1988:39-61), Lowry (1980), Groome (1980) and Krych (1988:54-97). Though they differ slightly in their approaches, nevertheless, the basic presupposition and structure of their methods are similar in the sense that their teaching theories primarily focus on the experiential participation of the learners, especially children, and they extend plot models that build up a problem and its solution. Adapting their creative Bible-teaching methods to my purpose, what I am attempting to do here is to present how a worldly image moves into an alternative image. In other words, our storytelling begins with the children's own need, which is revealed by a worldly image and then moves on to show how an alternative image in God's action is the answer to that very need (Krych 1988:24). In this movement children experience not only entertainment, but also a biblical world beyond this old,



sinful world.

This five-stage procedure is as follows: presenting felt discrepancy, analysing felt discrepancy, experiencing resolution through the Gospel's message, visualising the Gospel message, and demanding a new action. Stages one and two are grouped as conflict by false image which comes out of the old, sinful world. Stages three and four can also be another group of resolution by an alternative image (or vision) which comes out of a new world. The final stage is future action appropriate to the Gospel message.

#### **5.4.2.1 Stage one: presenting felt discrepancy**

Stage one is to present conflict created by the gap between a human predicament and God's answer. Before discussing the role or function of this stage, a serious problem to be addressed is whether, in considering the child's development, it is appropriate to present his/her serious predicament as original sin. As already mentioned, Goldman (1965: 140–48) suggests delaying teaching until children in the 7–11 age group are cognitively ready to understand the Christian faith. But this opinion includes a theological danger in that one can ignore the seriousness of the sin and the need for the Gospel in children. As Krych (1988:55) indicates, “all members of the human race without exception are in fact sinners from the moment of conception. So, all children are sinful human beings for whom the human question is a reality.” Though this does not mean that we should teach the gospel to children in exactly the same way that we do to adults, nevertheless, it is our

serious duty to teach clearly both sides of the Gospel in considering the matter of “how.”

Arguing that children also are sinners who need the answer of grace and forgiveness, Krych (1988:57) continues:

From birth the child experiences deep alienation, disruption, and estrangement. Freud pointed out that from early childhood an individual exhibits self-centeredness, negation, estrangement from reality, hostility, aggression, guilt, and cruelty... these factors continue to be part of the child's development... Thus we can expect that children will readily be able to handle the question side of the correlation in terms of hostility and aggression.

Since “each child is involved personally and responsibly in the hostility and estrangement from reality, from self, from others, and from God,” to find the experiential conflict is an appropriate method for relevant teaching (Krych 1988:57–58).

From the necessity of suggesting conflict, we should now move to the function of this stage. The major duty of stage one in the storytelling is to create interest or desire in the minds of the children. The teacher attempts to upset the tranquillity through presenting a felt discrepancy. When children lose their equilibrium, they can open the ear of the mind in a need or desire for something that they do not yet have (Loder 1981:37; Krych 1988: 76–78).

For example, if we teach Luke 6:27–38 under the sermon's title of “Love your enemies,” stage one can present the deepest human problem that one cannot

love enemies. Also, when dealing with Peter's restoration and commission (John 21:15–19), as Krych suggests (1988:35), Peter's denial and need of forgiveness should be studied before providing the answer through Jesus, in the following way, "What Peter might have felt and thought after the denial; at times I've felt like Peter."

Likewise, when storytelling begins with a felt discrepancy which exists in the children's own situation and moves on from there, we can avoid the danger of transferring our adult experience on to the children and expecting the children to recognise themselves. Rather, where the felt need of children is presented, our teaching can capture their attention and, as a result, prepare the way so that the child relates the Gospel to his/her experience. In this respect, I call this the "creative conflict" step.

#### **5.4.2.2 Stage two: analysing felt discrepancy**

Stage two is an extension of stage one. Very similar to Loder's 'interlude for scanning', this is the stage of analysis or diagnosis. In this stage the teacher not only clarifies in greater detail what the particular need is, but also analyses the extent to which that dilemma affects the children (Loder 1981:32; Yoder 1991:54). While stage one is just meant to upset the equilibrium, stage two is intended to examine why that ambiguity or conflict occurs.

For example, in Luke 19:1–10, we meet Zacchaeus who "is satisfied with himself as one who puts himself and his needs in the centre of his life,



indicated by his taking inflated taxes.” His life, of course, is alienated from other people. But a conflict occurs. Though the Bible does not mention a specific reason, he really wants to see Jesus. It is more than mere curiosity about Jesus as evidenced in verse 4. If the inner turmoil of Zacchaeus is the stage of disequilibrium, stage two is moving into deeper questioning. In relation to stage two, the question to be asked is: what is Zacchaeus trying to find through the encounter with Jesus? Or a more fundamental question: what is Zacchaeus’ problem?

According to Krych (1988:85), his major problem is leading a self-centred life. It is not our intention to ascertain whether Krych’s answer is right or not, since people can answer from different perspectives. What we are emphasising here is showing what the purpose of stage two is. The purpose of stage two is to pursue a fundamental reason behind the conflict with the question “why?” Analysing Zacchaeus’ life, in this stage, the teacher should move from conflict or felt discrepancy to diagnosis of that problem.

When the teacher analyses the felt discrepancy appropriately, as many scholars agree, our teaching produces two significant benefits. One is that it is an effective way to relate the problem of the ancient text to that of the contemporary listener in various ways. If, as Krych suggested, Zacchaeus’ problem is his self-centred life, the teacher can easily connect this problem to the self-centred life of a contemporary Zacchaeus. Here, the Bible story and our story can interact.

Another benefit is that it can hold the unresolved tension until the resolution

to the felt discrepancy is given. When tension is at a maximum, the participation of the children is also at a maximum; it is not an exaggeration to say that the success or failure of our teaching depends on the existence and the absence of tension. For, as C. Miller says, “tension is that agitated state of our nervous system that is called disequilibrium. In any state of disequilibrium, we are doing all we can to move back into a state of balance.” Illustrating an experience on the icy road, Miller (1994: 111–12) goes on to describe what teaching or sermon in tension looks like:

Winters in Nebraska were characterized by months of icy roads and sidewalks. Needless to say, I have slipped and fallen on the ice a multitude of times. I don't mind walking upright on the ice. What I do hate is that awkward, incorruptible state of falling. There is a state of existence when we are neither right-side up or faceside down. We are in disequilibrium. The futile cry of our soul in this limbo is anguish. Neither up nor down, we are possessed by a furious need for definition. Where are we? When will the crash reorient our lives? Will we break something? Will we look foolish? In the state of disequilibrium, all these thoughts run through our minds. It doesn't take much time to fall, yet it is such an eternity that our entire lives flash before us. In the act of falling, we are never carefree. We are never bored, We are never disinterested. We are all attention. We care.

From the above explanation, we can say that stage two is meant to sustaining the tension of the ambiguity and prepare us for the resolution.

Before proceeding toward stages three and four, it is necessary to summarise stage one and two. These stages represent conflict and its analysis. As already indicated, these two stages are governed by a false image which is based on Sin. As in Romans Paul described the predicament of human beings

before presenting redemption in Christ as good news, so effective storytelling indicates and diagnoses human problems in an image of sinfulness before arriving at God's solution by way of an alternative world and its image.

#### **5.4.2.3 Stage three: experiencing resolution through God's good news**

Up to this point we have focused on the conflict and the need, on the analysis and diagnosis. In a sense these are stages of preparation for the solution. Now, in stage three and stage four, the solution to the need and the diagnosis are given and fortified.

In stage three the teacher presents the proposal that will alleviate the inconsistency or solve the problem that was defined and analysed in stages one and two. To borrow Groome's classification, this stage is very similar to the Christian community Story and Vision. Groome distinguishes between an individual's story and vision, on the one hand, and the Christian Story and Vision, on the other. Unlike an individual's story and vision, the Christian Story and Vision provide an alternative image of the kingdom of God. For Groome, in this stage the teacher "invites people to bring their own stories to reflect upon and grapple with, question, and personally encounter what is presented" (Charter 1994:92). In a similar context, this stage in our storytelling method invites children to witness an alternative Story and Vision.

According to Lowry (1980:63) and Egan (1988:59-60), the major duty of this stage is that the teacher should let children know the answer of Jesus Christ



as a true solution. In this stage we discover how the Gospel of Jesus Christ intersects with and corrects the human predicament. Krych (1988:82) also indicates the necessity of Jesus Christ as answer to our predicament :

Humanity in the situation of estrangement sought many a solution and failed to find an adequate answer to the human predicament. Human beings could not solve the existential situation. The answer to our predicament comes from outside of the situation in the person of Jesus the Christ who came into the human situation and did for humanity what humanity could not do for itself. He sought a solution that was truly adequate to the problem of sin and accomplished it once and for all successfully—indeed he was, in himself, that solution. Thus, humanity can now participate in that “solution.” The final outcome through Jesus the Christ is not merely a reversal of our initial situation, but true forgiveness and indwelling by the Spirit, so that persons through faith can participate in new life and indeed be truly a new creation.

Krych (1988:87–88) continues to suggest a concrete example which shows how the answer by Jesus is offered as a resolution of human predicament. As already mentioned, the text is John 21: 15–19. Here Krych first indicates Peter’s threefold denial on the problem side. After this Krych (1988:89) suggests a solution by Jesus through John 21:15–19. Let us listen to her reasoning:

The solution to Peter’s dilemma comes at the initiative of the risen Christ. The Lord takes Peter aside and in a threefold restoration not only accepts Peter as friend but gives him a commission to serve the believers. In spite of Peter’s disloyalty, Jesus restores to Peter the task that he had earlier been given. Forgiveness is expressed in the strongest of terms by restoration of the relationship and by the responsibility entrusted to Peter. Peter is treated as if he were a trustworthy follower in spite of his action

and words to the contrary. As the Johannine church knew and proclaimed, the risen One is the One who was crucified. The One who was broken on the cross is the One who takes Peter's brokenness and shattered world and self into that brokenness of the cross. Peter's disloyalty and self-condemnation are negated by the loyalty of Jesus the Christ to Peter (and to all of his followers) as he hangs rejected and denied yet constantly loyal and accepting of those who deny him. And so he is the One with power, the only One who can heal the estrangement between Peter and himself, the only One with power to restore Peter as the loyal and loving disciple. The void for Peter is transformed.

In dealing with God's good news in response to the human being's dilemma, however, what we should be careful of is its tendency towards individualism. As already indicated, the ultimate aim of our storytelling is the formation of faith in children. Many educators like Groome (1980: 119), Nelson (1988), Westerhoff (1976), Seymour and Miller (1993:243) and Harris (1989:177) emphasize the importance of community in forming the faith of the children. Quoting Harris, Simpson (1999:130) says, "Faith formation occurs when Christians are jointed together in a relating community, the body of Christ. Personalism is again discovering that to be a person means to be with."

To develop a community-oriented direction, the teacher makes the child feel that God's good news for the human predicament should not be limited to the individualistic sphere. Each child is not alone in receiving the answer. Rather, the good news to the problem "is shared within the church community and calls us together to share and struggle, to suffer and rejoice, as we hear and respond to the Word in worship and as we witness and serve" (Krych 1988:28).

#### **5.4.2.4 Stage four: visualizing God's good news**

Experiencing resolution through God's good news is followed by visualising God's news. An experienced answer should be fortified by this stage. As stage two analysed and emphasised stage one in which our predicament was internalised and applied in a relevant way for today's situation, stage four has a similar functional relationship to stage three in the sense that stage four pictures God's good news proposed in stage three for the children. In other words, we are able during this stage to picture how different life would be if we were to adopt the proposed good news (Yoder 1991:39).

Though there are various ways to visualise God's good news. I think that the most effective and powerful way is to show a concrete example or personal story which is appropriate to God's good news proposed in stage three.

For example, if we try to teach the issue of "forgiveness" based on some New Testament texts, we can set up stage one as the unforgiving mind or the difficulty of forgiveness. In stage two we can analyse the reason by using the question 'why?', and identifying our children into that problem. From this negative side, stage three can present Jesus' forgiveness or His command as God's good news for the human predicament. Now in order to picture God's good news, stage four can offer a personal story, like the forgiveness of Joseph, in a dramatic way. We could also show what happened when Joseph accepted his brothers. In this process God's good message concerning forgiveness can be transmitted to or incorporated into the minds of the children in a new way.

Once again, it is necessary to summarize stages three and four in relation to the image. We find that the negative or sinful image of the first two stages turns into a positive or alternative image. Through image movement, our storytelling can invite children into God's world effectively.

#### **5.4.2.5 Stage five: demanding a new action**

Stage five requires action or changed life. As its name implies, this final stage is slightly different from the concept of many scholars who support narrative teaching, the storytelling method, and a creative Bible study method. To many scholars such as Cavalletti (1992), Craddock (1979), Lowry (1980) and Krych (1988), the final stage of storytelling method or their creative teaching form should be open-ended. Although I share their anxiety regarding the traditional education model in which the teacher directs the learning of the children and the children become passive receivers, nevertheless I object to a radically open-ended model for two important reasons.

One reason is that it often drives our storytelling towards an individualistic tendency. In the radical open-ended form the final conclusion is the task of the listener (child). Just as each person arrives at a different conclusion in the same movie, so a radical open-ended conclusion can go in the same individualistic direction. If this is true, it can lead to a fatal danger in the formation of the faith of children. For, as I have already indicated, the faith formation of children happens in a Christian community, which is built



through a common vocabulary (Foster 1994:69).

The other reason is closely related to the one mentioned above. In some cases, leaving children to form their own insights or conclusion could be an inordinate expectation. Criticizing Cavalletti's radical open-ended teaching approach, Gibson (2001:57) indicates that it can give too much religious freedom to children.

Rather, according to Gibson's judgement, children need adult direction for assimilating the Christian message. As Brueggemann (1982:22) says, children need the authoritative response of adults through which they want to learn "both about the deep conviction of the adult and about the precarious foundation of our faith." Thus, with due respect to the positive benefits of the open-ended approach, this stage should rather call for action or commitment or change of some kind in response to the above four stages. As Gibson (2001:57) suggests, "The teacher makes direct statements to convey the assurance that what she is saying reflects absolute truth."

I strongly believe that such a clear demand for a new life does not detract from the mood and effect of our storytelling. Rather, when the above four stages can be completed with the demand for a new life, children move forward another step with a clear assurance concerning God's will.

From the above discussion, we now summarise the particular aspects of our storytelling method as four points:

1. Our storytelling moves from a false image, which is governed by a sinful

world, to an alternative image, which is governed by a new world view or God's good news.

2. Our storytelling is an appropriate form for the active participation of children. Interest and tension are necessary factors for the involvement of children.

3. Our storytelling is directed towards the faith formation of children in community, rejecting faith based on individualistic directions.

4. Our storytelling honours the narrative form, but it ends with the demand for a new life, rather than with a radical open-ended form.

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

Through the above discussions this chapter has examined several aspects which are considered appropriate for the creative storytelling form. The major focus of this chapter was particularly on how to articulate the teaching form which both honours the biblical integrity and is at the same time appropriate for the child's developmental stage. In my opinion, when both sides are adequately catered for, our storytelling can encourage the children so that they participate in the imagined world of God with interest and wonder.

As we have seen above, for this purpose, the experiential-expressionist perspective and cultural-linguistic perspective are not in opposition. Rather, both their benefits are needed to articulate our storytelling method effectively. As the experiential-expressionist requires, rhetorical skill and methodology for intriguing the children is a necessary factor for effective teaching. When we judge that today a serious problem in the Christian education of children

is boredom, the effort to create entertainment for the children can be a major purpose of storytelling. Here, our teaching becomes intricately related to a child's developmental stage. But this is only one side of the truth.

Another side is that our education is to be biblical. The cultural-linguistic perspective emphasizes this aspect. Here the aim of education is more than merely entertainment. It lies in forming the identity of children as people of God's kingdom by retelling an alternative story and by participating in an alternative world which is governed by a new image. In this instance our teaching also becomes an appropriate model for biblical integrity.

In this study the function of storytelling was another major issue. As many scholars suggest, effective teaching should appeal to the whole person. It must change the heads, hearts and lives (actions) of children. Children need to think God's story, feel Gods' story and do God's story. If any one of these is over-emphasized or ignored, our teaching becomes distorted. Conversely, when they are emphasised in a balanced way, our teaching (storytelling) can be an experiential event for the children. Furthermore, the storytelling as an experiential event goes beyond an individualistic tendency. It becomes the basis for building up communal identity.

Before suggesting more concrete procedures of storytelling, another aspect that I investigated was "storytelling as journey and an imaginative teaching approach". In the journey approach storytelling is different from the traditional teaching approach. The storytelling is text-oriented teaching in the sense that it becomes the Story and Vision for our predicament by secular

images. In the journey approach the teacher and the learner are mutual partners along a shared journey. Also, their trip moves toward the future, beyond the past and the present.

In the study of storytelling as an imaginative teaching approach, the major content consisted of contrasting the idea-oriented method based on a mainly deductive approach and the image-oriented method based on a mainly inductive approach with concrete examples. Here we found that storytelling is a kind of inductive approach, moving according to the plot structure of the Bible.

The final aspect of this chapter was to suggest a five-step procedure to encourage the active participation of children. Though this form is not totally new, it has several characteristics which differ slightly from other creative teaching methods. My major concern was how the image moves from negative to positive and thereby preserves both entertainment and formation functions. Also, stage five was not purely inductive. Depending on the content of the text, it can be a direct ethical appeal on how to apply God's truth to the changing situation of children. Basically it is a different approach from the radical open-ended form.

In the light of these discussions, we can conclude that our storytelling method is the most effective form for inviting children to participate in an alternative image of God's world.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The main focus of this study has been to explore the function of imagination for faith formation of children 7–11 years of age. It has been based on two premises. The first is that an imaginative way is the most relevant way to teach the Christian faith to children. This imaginative way operates as an alternative function for children whose imagination is negatively influenced by the modern electronic media. The second premise is related to the first premise. If the effectiveness of Christian education depends primarily on the imagination, what is the best teaching method to stimulate the imagination of children 7–11 years of age? This thesis suggests that the storytelling or narrative teaching form is most appropriate.

In order to explore the above premises, this dissertation examined four components: children aged between 7–11 years, the Bible as the source of education for them, the function and role of imagination for children, and the storytelling method as an effective teaching form for them.

In Chapter 2 this dissertation explored children as significant objects of Christian education and dealt primarily with general child development as well as holistic development. To understand general child development this chapter studied four aspects: cognitive/intellectual development based primarily on Piaget's theory; emotional and social development based on

Erickson's theory; behavioural and moral development based on Kohlberg's theory; and faith development based on Fowler's theory. After this Chapter 2 argued for a holistic approach for the faith development of children. According to this holistic perspective, the faith formation of children aged 7–11 is not limited merely to the cognitive aspect, but requires a multi-dimensional approach. While traditional propositional education exclusively emphasises a one-dimensional aspect of faith, in the holistic view there are the three dimensions in balance with one another: the cognitive dimension (faith as knowledge and mystery), the affective dimension (faith as trust and community), and the behavioural dimension (faith as word and deed). Since these three dimensions function as an integrated whole in children's education, it is impossible to understand them as separate entities and in unilateral positions. What this fact implies for our study is that this holistic view lead us to reconsider the role of the affective approach, which has so far been neglected as trivial. This is not meant to suggest that the affective aspect should be promoted to the other extreme, but rather that it can connect the cognitive and behavioural dimensions holistically. As DeVries (2000: 23–29) clearly showed, the affective aspect, especially imagination, plays a role as a bridge to combine the cognitive and behavioural aspects. In other words, the cognitive aspect can be transmitted into the behavioural aspect through the role of the affective aspect.

In Chapter 3 this dissertation sought to examine the Bible as the source for faith formation of children. Unlike the traditional notion of the Bible, this chapter proposed the Bible as story and image. The reason that I emphasised the Bible as story and image is based on two considerations: one is that this

new notion is appropriate to maintaining biblical integrity. The other is that it is also appropriate to the developmental stages of children aged between 7–11 years. In my opinion, two conditions could be satisfied when we understand the Bible as story and image, for the Bible is originally the story book of God and is full of varied images and, at the same time, 7–11-year-old children, who are in the “mythic–literal faith” stage, can approach the Bible most effectively when it is communicated in the form of story and image.

The Bible as story has a plot structure in which each event of the Bible is related to another by an explicit or implicit cause–and–effect structure, that is, by proceeding from conflict to resolution. Unlike the traditional didactic understanding of the Bible, the major benefit in seeing the Bible as story is that children can participate in the biblical story with wonder and mystery.

Another understanding of the nature of the Bible is to see it as an image book, which is different from seeing it as an idea book. The Bible as image is an appropriate form to explain the transcendent God to children who are living in a perceived reality where they can engage with the Bible via their feelings and seeing.

As a result, where the Bible as plot–structured story evokes the wonder of children, and the Bible as God’s image stimulates the feeling and seeing of children, it functions as a transformative power for the faith development of 7–11-year-old children. This point concluded Chapter 3.

In Chapter 4 this dissertation endeavoured to examine the function or role of

imagination for the faith growth of children. In an historical sketch of the concept of the imagination, I traced the dualistic trend among intellectualists who considered the imagination as inferior or as a mere mimic of the sphere of pure reason. Their opinions, however, were challenged by Paul Ricoeur's Phenomenological view, who emphasised the creative tension in the theories of the reproductive imagination and productive imagination. Turning to linguistics, P. Ricoeur sees imagination as a metaphorical process in which the primary function of metaphor is to redescribe the counter-reality beyond the perceived reality.

After this historical survey, two significant concepts of imagination for contemporary Christian education were introduced: one is integration (*Einbildungskraft*) and the other is the point of contact (*Anknüpfungspunkt*) of revelation. Imagination as an integrating force can unify various factors necessary for knowing. Imagination as locus refers to "the link between divine revelation and human experience" (Green 1989:40). Here, as Green (1989:40) continues to point out, the imagination is "the anthropological point of contact for divine revelation."

From these definitions of imagination, this chapter examined the theories of three scholars in order to investigate specifically what imagination-centred education would entail. The three scholars had slightly different perspectives on educational theories; nevertheless they were in agreement to the extent that they considered the imagination as being at the centre of their educational theories. Loder focused on imagination in faith transformation. Dykstra emphasised imagination as vision and character. M. Harris regarded



imagination as incarnation.

The function of imagination for 7–11-year-old children is dealt with in the final section of Chapter 4. Though there are various functions of imagination, for the sake of our study I limited them to three: holistic imagination—helping toward the balanced faith development of children; incarnational imagination—incorporating God’s revelation to the present situation of children; and alternative imagination—shaping the biblical word for the present world of children.

Finally, in Chapter 5 I attempted to suggest the most effective method to enable the child to imagine God and His world described in the Bible. This is storytelling that can appeal to the child in an imaginative teaching approach. In this chapter I approached the significance and function of storytelling from the *both/and* perspective to harmonise both the experiential–expressionist view and cultural–linguistic view. Also, in discussing the function of storytelling, my perspective was holistic in the sense that it appeals to the thinking, emotion and will of children and, as a result of this, it functions in forming the identity of children as part of Jesus’ community. I then discussed storytelling as a journey and considered the imaginative teaching approach to distinguishing how much the storytelling way differs from traditional teaching methods.

In the closing section of Chapter 5 I suggested a five–step procedure for the storytelling method by adapting the theories of several scholars like J. Loder, M.A. Krych, K. Egan, A. Monroe and E. Lowry and by suggesting ways to

supplement the weaknesses of their theories. The aim of these steps was to establish a form to promote the active participation of children. These five steps are: presenting felt discrepancy, analysing felt discrepancy, experiencing resolution through the Gospel's message, visualizing the Gospel message, and demanding new action.

In result, since imagination can be completed by the narrative teaching or storytelling method, I strongly propose imaginative storytelling as an alternative teaching style to traditional teaching approaches.

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