

## **Transformational Teaching/Learning**

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### I. Teaching and Learning Methods Used in Myanmar

For many decades, government schools and seminaries in Myanmar have practiced a teaching method called banking education. In the context of education in Myanmar, information generally transfers from professors to students. The knowledge of professors on the related subject is directly transmitted to the students, mostly via lectures. Therefore, professors cannot give more than the amount of knowledge they have to the students. The amount of knowledge the professors obtained can estimate the level of knowledge students can get from the professors. However, in most teaching contexts, the students get a lesser amount than what the professors intend to pass on to them. Therefore, this kind of banking education lessens the knowledge that is passed to the students as time goes by.

The second education system in Myanmar has been memorization. In most Western countries, teachers in government schools and seminaries focus more on rationalization or reason. In Myanmar, most of the subjects are taught and students learn best by memorization. Therefore, the more the students can memorize, the better grade they get in school. Since my elementary until college, memorization has been the best method that most of the students use for learning. Most subjects need memorization; after the exam, all the memorized material no longer needs to be reread or revised. Therefore, most of the learning just happens for the sake of passing the exam; after the exam is done, most memorized things slowly fade away.

The learning culture in Myanmar between teacher and students is mostly “hurt.” In education in the Western world, the teacher is typically viewed as the helper of the students in their learning. In Myanmar, the teacher-student relationship is very strict, and sometimes teachers use their power too much in class—especially in examinations—thereby leading to problems with students. There is no power sharing in the class between teachers and students. Teachers are the most powerful persons in classes; based upon their mood and ideas, classes are conducted and controlled by

them. Most teachers in Myanmar see their role as someone who has the power and authority to rule over their students in terms of their knowledge.

Even in the context of churches, the schooling model is heavily practiced where church school teachers try their best to impart the education or knowledge that they have. Even church school teachers try to “school them in the faith.” Sadly, faith is not something that we can teach or force to be attained by our students or learners, which is just transmitting information. Most of the education in both government and seminary contexts could not influence learners as long as they use the one-way method of teaching where information is carried as one-sided from professors to students.

## II. The Nature of Transformational Learning

### Theory and Critical Pedagogy

The word “change” or “transform” has become a popular term these days. Education plays a crucial role in uplifting the living standards of human beings and global leadership. The ultimate goal of education is liberation, which normally takes place by action and reflection by men and women upon their world in order to transform it (Freire 1970, 60). Similarly, the goal of adult education is to help learners develop the requisite learning processes to think and choose with more reliable insight, to become more autonomous thinkers (Mezirow 2000, 348). Therefore, education in its nature has a tendency toward helping changes and intentions for the betterment of personal and societal development.

Patricia Cranton says that education could be the author of changes in our understanding, which help us change for the betterment of our world as a whole (1996, 160). Regarding transformation, it can take place when there is readiness for giving up and replacing our thinking and belief systems.

God is the one who always brings change into a human’s heart and life according to His sovereign plans and purposes. The Biblical account testifies that God is the God who brings change to many human beings and even to the whole human history. For instance, the radical transformation which took place in the life of the prophet Elijah may be one of the most interesting stories in the Old Testament (1 Kgs 19:1–21).

Transformation occurs when a person encounters a perspective that is

at odds with his or her current perspective (Kroth and Cranton 2014, 3). The prophet Elijah had faced an unusual moment in his life. He immediately faced life-threatening words from Jezebel after being used by God through the miracles of supernatural fire and rain from heaven in front of the prophets of Baal and King Ahab (1 Kgs 18:16–46). That odd perspective changed his heart into fear and he had run into the desert and, at last, had prayed to God to end his life. Then Elijah received a chance to reexamine his beliefs, values, and assumptions while in the desert and at Horeb, the Mountain of God. The reexamination is seen in his conversation with God, back and forth while answering the same question from God, “What are you doing here?” Finally, on the Mountain of God, Elijah experienced a perspective change that happened after receiving the mission of God which was also at odds with his assumptions, perceptions, and beliefs. The small voice from God totally transformed his life and mission over the loud and threatening voice of Jezebel.

Radical transformation happened in the life of Elijah. He subsequently became the agent of God, who could carry on God’s mission by appointing kings and leaders for the Israelites, including his successor, Elisha. As Mezirow says, meaning making and perspective change result in changes to meaning schemes and meaning perspectives (2000, 3–31). His radical transformation literally benefitted Elijah and the history of Israel after he properly reflected upon it in his life and ministry.

Christian theology could be summed up in three important stages: salvation, sanctification, and glorification. Transformation is one of the most important steps in Christian life. It comes after justification, whereby we are declared by God as justified through the saving act of Christ on the cross. According to Romans 1:7, Christians are called not only to be saved but also to be saints, which is the heart and desire of God. Since the nature of God is holy, we, his children are also called to be holy. The apostle Paul writes that you are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of Our God (1 Cor 6:11).

Among different views on sanctification, Lutherans define it as the favor of God into which we are received at initial justification. They hesitate to speak of a “growth in grace” for fear of works-righteousness. For Wesleyans,

perfection is possible and required, which could come gradually or instantaneously. This perfection is, as the Bible promised, understood that the Christian life could be free from sin (Wesley 1950, 3). There are some Biblical references to perfection. God wants us to be perfect like him (Matt 5:48, 1 Cor 11:2, 1 Pet 1:16). John Wesley also says that “entire sanctification” means the perfect love of God and neighbor, for which Christians should be praying and striving their whole life as a gift (Wesley 1950, 3). As the famous inventor Thomas Edison once said, genius was one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration (Nichols 1962, 170); our Christian life also has the ideal of perfection and calls for the required effort to attain it while depending on the help of God (Smith 1963, 9). Like a coin with two faces, the process of transformation has divine help and human striving to attain perfection. Millard J. Erickson (2013, 912) also states that the Christian life is a process of challenge and satisfaction under the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, not from our own strength. It is very true that the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit is tangible to the one who seeks and longs for it in order to become more like Christ.

The nature of a transformed life is clearly displayed in the letters of the Apostle Paul. According to Rom 12:2, the constant inward transformation and yielding of our whole selves to God is required or expected from believers. Yielding should be not only for dedication, but also for separation and being transformed by the renewing of our minds. The transformation, which we are expected to practice, is started by the work of Christ on the cross, which is an ongoing, lifelong process. It will only end when the believer is reunited with Christ in glory (Phil 1:6; 1 John 3:2), which means glorification (NIV Foundation Study Bible 2015, 1221). Sanctification is a progressive matter which aims to be like Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit, which involves both God and us. The main purpose is to be set apart for the use intended by our designer, God, for those who live according to His design and purpose (Mullen 1996, 708, 711–713). God works inside us to transform the sin that besets humanity with the offer of salvation that we teach. We are saved from sin and saved for His glory (Pazmiño 2001, 159–160). Transformation is the business of God, who requires our yielded heart to allowed Him to make us like Christ.

Transformative teaching refers to transforming a problematic frame of

reference in order to make it more dependable in adult life by generating opinions and interpretations that are more justified. It is a way of problem-solving by defining a problem or by redefining or reframing the problem (Mezirow 2000, 20). This kind of transformative teaching aims to rearrange understanding based on the adult learner's own understanding by reexamining the context.

According to Cranton (2006, 36), transformative learning examines problematic frames of reference by making them more inclusive, discriminating, open, and reflective, which in turn enables emotional change. In that process, discourse plays a crucial role, and the learning that brings transformation is either provoked by a single event—a disorienting dilemma—or in a gradual manner. In order for transformative teaching to happen, it needs to be in unusual circumstances which motivate us to reorganize our ways of thought and behavior.

The father of transformative learning theory, Jack Mezirow developed a theory of perspective transformation in ten steps, based on his wife's experience of going back to university as an adult learner (2000, 22). The steps are:

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination of feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame
3. A critical assessment of assumption
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective

Therefore, in general, transformation in learning could be defined as reflecting critically on our own experiences by talking with others to get the best judgment on our new worldview and walking in the new perspective

(Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner 2007, 137). It requires our own understanding of a specific subject while inquiring of the opinions of others in order to choose the best and most meaningful decision for our new world.

The practice of transformative education shows the same context as education, such as purpose, content, teacher, student, environment, and evaluation. More than that, transformational teaching has some other foci that need to be done properly. Practicing transformative education, according to Parker J. Palmer, is creating a space where a community of truth is practiced (2007, 92). Palmer helps us to understand the community of truth as an essential form of reality and the matrix of all being (2007, 100). From that community itself, we can know what reality is by being in that community.

Moreover, the community of truth can be seen as having many communities, distant across space and always changing through time. At the center of it, there is a subject which is available for a relationship. The living subject serves as the connective core of all the relationships, which is circular, interactive, and dynamic (Palmer 2007, 104–106).

Regarding the nature and importance of the community of truth, Palmer states, “The firmest foundation of all our knowledge is the community of truth itself. This community can never offer us ultimate certainty—not because its process is flawed but because certainty is beyond the grasp of finite hearts and minds” (2007, 107). Secondly, in the practice of transformational teaching, creating a space where obedience to truth is practiced is necessary. Obedience to truth means listening with a discerning ear and responding faithfully to the personal implications of what one has heard (Palmer 1993, 89). Therefore, to teach is to create a space where obedience to truth is practiced for education which brings transformation (Palmer 2007, 105). In the practical context of transformative education, the community of truth is crucial as a part of learning and the spirit of obedience is required for the truth to be applicable.

### III. The Approaches and Practices of a Spiritually Formative Curriculum for Students

In order for students to experience transformation, the following approaches and practices need to be considered and focused.

## 1. The Teacher

### A. Character

Joseph Epstein says, “What all the great teachers appear to have in common is the love of their subject, an obvious satisfaction in arousing this love in their students, and an ability to convince them that what they are being taught is deadly serious” (1981, xii). With that, there are some personality traits that a teacher should possess. Required character traits include a love for the subject and love for the student. These traits reflect in teaching the subject in order to let students know.

*a) Identity, integrity, and authenticity.* Good teaching is not just a technique but comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher (Palmer 2007, 10). Therefore, a good teacher can teach only when identity is clearly laid out. Palmer says that good teaching requires self-knowledge; it is a secret hidden in plain sight (Palmer 2007, 3). Good teachers understand their identity very well and help others find their own identity. According to Palmer, “The courage to teach is the courage to keep one’s heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning, and living, require” (2007, 11—12). There might be moments when teaching demands more than teachers expect. In that moment, teachers really need to invest anything which is demanded. Real courage is needed as a teacher, which comes from understanding one’s identity and making a difference or impact on the students’ life and learning context.

Identity is a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make people who they are, converging in the complex mystery of being human. Integrity is becoming more real by acknowledging the whole of who we are. Identity and integrity include being truthful to our shadows and limits, our wounds and fears, as with our strengths and potentials (Palmer 2007, 13–14). Therefore, good teachers know who they are and are willing to reveal who they are.

Authenticity is a quality which everyone desires to see in other people’s lives. Especially for a teacher, one of the most important characteristics is authenticity. According to Cranton, the most commonly discussed facet of authenticity has to do with the relationship between teacher and student, which includes helping a student learn, caring for students, engaging in

dialogue, and being aware of the exercise of power (2006, 112). It is only through relationships with others that authenticity can be fostered. Being authentic in our relationship with students is central to being supportive. It does not mean that all teachers must have warm, deep, caring relationships with learners in order to be authentic or to be supportive. For some educators, a respectful distance is appropriate; for others, a collegial relationship works best; and for others still, a close relationship comes naturally (Cranton 2006, 162).

The quality of relationships depends on how well we know ourselves and how authentically we bring ourselves to the relationship. James Hollis proposes four principles of relationship: (1) what we do not know or want to accept about ourselves, we project onto others; (2) we project our wounds and longings onto others; (3) when the other person refuses responsibility for our wounds and longings, projection gives away to resentment and issues of power; and (4) the only way to heal a faltering relationship is to take personal responsibility for our own individuation (1998; Cranton 2006, 162). In a relationship, there are so many things to cope with, including our own struggles by ourselves to build a better relationship with others. Being authentic to ourselves and being authentic to students have many advantages in transformative learning.

Peter Jarvis also defines relationship as a kind of experimental and creative act whereby adult educators consciously have the goal of helping another person develop (1992, 113). According to Paulo Freire, the six attitudes for a meaningful and authentic dialogue are: (1) love for the world and human beings, (2) humility, (3) faith in people and their power to create and recreate, (4) trust, (5) hope that the dialogue will lead to meaning, and (6) critical thinking and the continuing transformation of reality (1970; Cranton 2006, 162–163).

*b) Humility.* The next character trait for teachers is humility, which anyone can talk easily about, but is hard to live out. According to Palmer, humility is the virtue that allows us to pay attention to “the other”—be it student or subject—whose integrity and voice are so central to knowing and teaching in truth (1993, 108). As a teacher, there is always a tendency not to be humble, but transformative education requires humility. In the words of Karl Deutsch, humility is “an attitude towards facts and messages outside

oneself... openness to experience as well as to criticism... a sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs and desires of others" (1966, 230). Humility is one of the most important qualities of a teacher for transformative education.

## B. Methods

In transformative education, how teachers teach, or the method of teaching, plays an important role. This modern age has more than a thousand teaching methods. In order to be transformational, teaching methods need to be unique and flexible.

*a) Creating space.* One perspective on teaching seeks to create a space where students and teachers can enter into fearless communication with each other. In that communication, they allow their respective life experiences to be their primary and most valuable source of growth and maturation. This calls for a mutual trust in which those who teach and those who want to learn can become present to each other, not as opponents, but as those who share in the same struggles and search for the same truth (Nouwen 1966, 85–86). Transformational teaching, therefore, asks first of all for the creation of a space where students and teachers can grow together with mutual trust from their experiences in life.

*b) Openness, Boundaries, and Hospitality.* Palmer conveys the three major characteristics, or three essential dimensions, which a transformational teacher needs to apply in the teaching context, namely, openness, boundaries, and an air of hospitality (1993, 71). Openness does not refer primarily to space but focuses more on removing barriers which could block the learning. Such barriers could come from us, in us, or around us so that the truth can find us. Therefore, our conscience and our classroom could be openly processed in the learning, without any barriers and disorders, if we can properly create a space for it.

The second important method to practice is setting boundaries. Since boundaries serve as the firmness of space, a learning space needs boundaries that will rightly guide the learning process and protect it from confusion and chaos. Therefore, a good and effective teaching method always needs profound and firm boundaries or limits (Palmer 1993, 72).

Third, hospitality receives people, each other, our struggles, and our

newborn ideas with openness and care. The main concern and intention of hospitality are to prepare an avenue where a community of truth could be formed and the pain of truth's transformation be borne. It is the strategy of God, which always gives a chance for us to experience truth through strangers (Palmer 1993, 74). These openness, boundaries, and hospitality are the crucial practices for the transformative learning environment.

*c) Making Space for Feelings.* Paying attention to feelings is also an important practice for a transformative teacher. According to Palmer, space for feelings is the place where a group's capacity for tough-mindedness can grow (1993, 87). Methods that make space for feelings are mostly focused on exposing our own ignorance, asking hard questions, challenging the validity of what others are saying, and receiving similar challenges—all in a spirit of growth rather than just attending to our familiar feelings. As a teacher, creating an emotionally honest learning space with some simple techniques, where no one needs to fear, would be a place where a community of truth properly flourishes.

### C. Expectations of the teacher

For teachers, there are some expectations in order to see transformation in the lives of students. Nouwen says, "The real host is the one who offers that space where we do not have to be afraid and where we can listen to our own inner voices and find our own personal way of being human. But to be such a host we have to, first of all, be at home in our own house" (Nouwen 1966, 102). To become a good host, teachers should be able to stay and enjoy being at home, which means enjoying their own company.

Secondly, a good host needs to know the right time to let the guest go. Nouwen also conveys, "A good host is not only able to receive... guests with honor and offer them all the care they need but also to let them go when their time to leave has come" (1966, 84). There is a time when teachers let students go with the ability and knowledge attained through their learning process. Teachers need to be made ready for those moments of meeting and separation. It is important to create a free and fearless space where mental and emotional development can take place for the students. There are also some prior requirements for a teacher to understand the students.

*a) Individual experience of students.* Individual experience, the primary

medium of transformative learning, consists of what each learner brings (prior experiences) and also what he or she experiences within the “classroom” itself. It “constitutes a starting point for discourse leading to a critical examination of normative assumptions underpinning the learner’s... value judgments or normative expectations” (Mezirow 2000, 32). Experience is also what educators stimulate and create through classroom activities. Learners and teachers reflect on experience as they learn new ideas about themselves and their world (Mezirow and Taylor 2009, 5–6).

*b) Teachers as critical reflective learners.* The nature of transformative learning involves critical reflection and encourages teachers to undertake self-examination. Hence, they can revise their expectations of themselves, their learners, and the larger place of education in society when these expectations are exposed as invalid or distorted. Critical reflection helps educators articulate their assumptions and lets them understand why they do what they do. It allows them to change their practice if it has been based on invalid or constraining habits (Cranton 1996, 93). Reflection helps teachers to be more fit in the context of the student and the learning community.

Mezirow states that “by far the most significant learning experiences in adulthood involve critical reflection—reassessing the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing and believing, feeling, and acting” (1990, 13). Transformative learning can happen in both the lives of the students and teachers only as teachers reassess their own way of knowing things and dealing with problems. In the process of transformative learning, healthy relationships, trust, honesty, and friendship are needed for thoughtful and in-depth reflection, which leads to genuine critical reflection (Mezirow 2000, 308). In order for proper reflection to be done, a teacher needs to have very strong relational qualities for the best outcome.

*c) Educators are learners.* Self-directed learning could be one of the most important qualifications of adult educators. Educators have their own meaning perspectives which could be underdeveloped, not thought through clearly, constrained by the experiences they have had, or distorted by misinformation. As a result, educators could have limited perspectives on education. Therefore, adult educators need to keep on learning and to develop

by questioning their beliefs about and perspectives on their practices. According to Cranton, becoming a self-directed learner as an adult educator is itself a transformation of a perspective on education (1996, 116). As Mezirow states, “Adult development means the progressive realization of an adult’s capacity to fully and freely participate in rational dialogue, to achieve a broader, more discriminating, permeable and integrative understanding of his/her experience as a guide to action” (1994, 226). Reflecting properly on previous experiences in life as an adult educator is the essence of professional development for educators.

*d) Revealing and affirming.* There are two more approaches teachers should have for the student: revealing and affirming (Nouwen 1966, 87). Revealing means the responsibility of the teacher to reveal the things that the students possess in their lives to offer their fellow students and teachers as well. This strategy is quite radical for students since they have been seen and treated as the ones who need to receive. The teacher needs to figure out ways to let students share what they have in their lives (Nouwen 1966, 87).

According to Leighton Ford, “Affirmation means pointing out and being grateful for the strengths that we see in others and encouraging them to build on them. It involves nothing but paying attention, caring and expressing our core” (1991, 1). Therefore, affirming teachers always see and affirm the good they see in the lives of students. The good host is one who not only helps the guests see that they have hidden talents, but also is able to help them develop and deepen these talents so that they can continue their way on their own with a renewed self-confidence (Nouwen 1966, 88).

There should always be a revealing and affirming atmosphere for the student in each context of learning. Both aspects show that students are not just poor, needy, ignorant beggars who come to the man or woman of knowledge, but that they are indeed like guests who honor the house with their visit and will not leave it without having made their own contribution (Nouwen 1966, 89).

## **2. The Student**

### Approaches to learning

There are different approaches to learning for students. Among them, constructivism is a possible means for transformative learning to be involved.

Constructive learning means that learners construct their own knowledge from their experiences. The cognitive process of meaning-making is emphasized as both an individual mental activity and a socially interactive interchange. Self-directed learning, situated cognition, transformational learning, reflective practice, and experiential learning are aspects of constructivism (Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner 2007, 297). Candy C. Phillip says, “The constructivist view of learning is particularly compatible with the notion of self-direction since it emphasized the combined characteristics of active inquiry, independence, and individuality in a learning task” (1991, 278). Therefore, students need to process their learning by self-direction in order for transformation to occur in the community. This change is mediated through personal reflection and dialogue with others. Experience also plays a crucial role in adult learning. Hence, life experiences are resources and also stimulation for adult learning where constructivism starts when learners connect the learning with their experiences (Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner 2007, 293).

### **3. Role of the Holy Spirit**

The indwelling Spirit undergirds the ministry of teaching in the three phases of preparation, instruction, and evaluation (Pazmiño 1997, 217–222). In the life of Jesus Christ, we can see the involvement of the Holy Spirit in various ways from the very beginning of his life till his present ministry through the universal church. At the same time, the indwelling Spirit fosters the processes of learning so that the spirits of the students are transformed along with their minds, souls, hearts, and bodies (Pazmiño 2001, 87).

#### **A. In preparation**

Robert W. Pazmiño says that the preparation of a teacher’s spirit or soul is an essential element for teaching (2001, 205). Moreover, preparation—of the teacher’s heart, mind, and body—is required for transformative teaching. Also, the preparation phase and the Spirit’s influence cannot be limited to teachers. The lives of the students must be identified as a crucial dimension of the Spirit’s ministry if any learning is to happen. The Spirit’s work is honored in the context and content of teaching (Pazmiño 2001, 105). Therefore, in the moment of preparation, teachers, students, and the Holy

Spirit must take their place ahead of time.

A teacher's preparation phase under the Holy Spirit starts at birth and continues throughout his or her development. Then the transforming presence of the Holy Spirit bestows unique gifts, abilities, sensitivities, and skills upon the teacher. Moreover, the Spirit calls the teacher to be involved in a particular ministry and offers empowerment for the preparation for teaching (Pazmiño 2001, 105).

Prayer is essential in preparation as teachers request the Spirit's enlightenment and trust in what they sense to be necessary for the particular teaching session. Moreover, the Spirit assists teachers in assessing student readiness and in planning with prayer and reflection before the actual instruction (Pazmiño 2001, 106). D. Campbell Wyckoff points to the divine as complementing both the natural and human aspects (1955, 104). The Holy Spirit is the determinative environmental presence. The challenge for teachers is to create those conditions where the Spirit of God can work most fruitfully in the life of a person. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in helping teachers teach is crucial as they start to prepare for any teaching.

## B. Actual experience of teaching and learning

The illumination of the Holy Spirit works in the human heart in a special way to help it understand or grasp the message of God. One of the most important aspects in the context of teaching is not to minimize the role of the Holy Spirit, a role that is the basic element for transformation. Though instruction is a risky venture, as Christian teachers, the more we rely on the presence of the Holy Spirit, the more we will be stable and effective in our teaching ministry with more creative ways (Pazmiño 2001, 107).

Second, the Holy Spirit can work from outside our planned curriculum if our discernment goes well with his agenda. Pazmiño states that the Spirit works in instruction through the questions, responses, and actions of participants (2001, 107). Sometimes, issues and problems which are not identified in the preparation could provide occasions to be open to the Spirit's leading. At the same time, those things can turn into distractions. Therefore, Pazmiño says,

Discernment is required. Part of the teaching task is to creatively weave together student responses with the immediate content with

the wider context of teaching. Being aware of what students bring with them into the classroom setting can signal this. God's Spirit in us assures Christian teachers of hope and empowerment in their calling and provides perspective for meeting the daily challenges of teaching. (2001, 107)

So, we should make sure that the Holy Spirit is working through the context of the learning environment based on the things that have happened in the student's life.

Third, the Holy Spirit can use the life of the teacher as an agent of change for the students. Palmer also explores the dimension of teaching that "teachers proclaim who they are in the instructional act. Because of a relationship with the Holy Spirit, Christian teachers are able to proclaim that they are children of God with all of their weaknesses and strengths" (2007, 42). Teaching with authority and courage is a dimension of ministering to others with the hope that transformation can occur. God's Spirit in us assures Christian teachers of hope and empowerment in their calling and provides perspective for meeting the daily challenges of teaching (Pazmiño 2001, 108).

### C. Relationship formed

The work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's whole life on earth is relational and significant. The blessed Comforter given to the church at Pentecost undergirds the teaching ministry. The Spirit comes alongside teachers who teach to form a divine-human partnership fraught with wonder and dread. This is both a marvel and a mystery that sustains teachers in their diverse ministries (Pazmiño 2001, 100).

Peter Hodgson describes the teaching work of God's Spirit this way: God "teaches" through the "educing," or leading forth, of the human spirit into the widest range of its potentialities. Through the interaction of Spirit and spirit, the possible becomes actual, the ideal becomes real, truth becomes known, beauty takes shape, the good enters into practice. This is the work of God's Spirit. (1999, 6–7)

Hodgson's description affirms the essential teaching element that God in us through the person and work of the Holy Spirit assures us of an empowered partnership for teaching. The strong relationship between the Holy

Spirit and the spirit of the human teacher brings breakthrough and transformation.

Moreover, God works through us in the teaching ministries of the church that extend God's mission in the world (Pazmiño 2001, 132). James E. Loder captures the dynamic and logic of our relationship with the Holy Spirit by considering the Reformed understanding of the *Spiritus Creator* (1998, 17). This understanding embraces the transformational potential of the relationship between individuals and the Spirit. Loder notes, "Although distinctly different in origin, destiny, and magnitude, the human spirit and Divine Spirit are made for each other, according to a relationality ultimately designed to replicate the relationality of the divine and human in the person of Jesus Christ" (1998, 17). The Holy Spirit supervises the transformation processes of conversion, sanctification, edification, and mission. In addition to this general dimension, the Spirit confronts, corrects, directs, and resurrects when our teaching efforts fail to fulfill God's purposes and the promise of new life (Pazmiño 2001, 101).

Where the world of education is lessening its focus on global and community benefits over individual benefits and self-service, real transformation should be recovered and achieved in every context of education.

Transformative education has been a famous topic and subject area in the Biblical accounts both in the Old and New Testament. It is closely related to the nature of God, who called us to be like him and to live our Christian lives as his Son, our Savior and our model. Moreover, some theorists have affirmed and put priority in education that is transformational and beneficial to society and even the whole world. In the practical ministry of teaching, transformation can happen by creating a space where the community of truth and a community of obedience are opened and welcomed to be practiced.

In practical teaching and learning for transformation, teachers play a very important role related to their character, teaching methods, and role in transformational teaching. Next, students are responsible to construct their own learning. As guests and contributors, students are also responsible to contribute to what they already have in the learning context. Finally, the role of the Holy Spirit is crucial to the whole process of teaching, even in the preparation and actual teaching where the relationship is formed for

the process of transformation in any stage and context. The Spirit also enables persons to live in accordance with the truths disclosed or discovered in instruction. The Holy Spirit is the agent working for long-term personal and social transformation among people in the world. Christian educators must, therefore, evaluate the workings of the Spirit in the areas of renewal and transformation.

#### IV. Spiritually Formative Practices,

#### Transformational Learning Practices, and Discipleship

Spiritual formation practices are the crucial components in helping a Christian grow spiritually by using means and methods. Transformational learning theory, according to Mezirow, has three fundamental components: disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, and integration (2000, 3–31). Those who take these three steps of transformational learning theory into their lives, by doing critical reflection on their lives' disorienting incidents, can attain a perspective which is their own, and which in turn transforms them. Therefore, both spiritual formation practices and transformational learning practices help a believer experience a transformed life, which is the aim and purpose of Christian discipleship. Teaching and learning without any change or growth is just passing on information to the students. Real teaching and learning take place only as people really have time to reflect upon and get the meaning of what is taught and learned for themselves and to let transformation occur. This kind of learning is important in the process of discipleship. Both spiritual practices and transformation learning practices help a disciple to be able to become a true disciple of Christ. Therefore, both practices are similar in nature and they still can contribute to discipleship, which is the ultimate purpose of being a follower of Jesus Christ. A transformed life, the ultimate destination of discipleship, can be achieved by spiritual formation and transformational learning practices.

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