Transforming Waters

The Creative Wisdom of Transformation

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Ryan's Version

Abstract

The purpose of this work is to develop an understanding of the phenomena of transformation that can suggest the possibilities for a transformative approach to ethics as well as guide further study and praxis. Interviews were conducted with eight individuals to look at their experiences of transformation. The practice of baptism provided a distinctively theological perspective. A thematic analysis of these interviews was completed. These themes were brought into conversation that included other authors in order to develop an initial conception of transformation. The initial paradigms I develop is that transformation is a process of wisdom in which we come to perceive the patterns of our world, their significance and how one can act in these patterns. We gain wisdom through our culturally created perceptions, our way of life and contexts. Transformation then occurs as we creatively engage these patterns, imagine what is possible, shape our forms of life, and develop power in our contexts in order to realize the good. Transformation happens as we integrate these dynamics and become integrated in processes of transformation that are greater than ourselves. In this process baptism reveals how we are ultimately transformed within the action of the triune God.

Dedication

This is dedicated to my Father Herb and Mother Carolyn whose Love helped form me

To my wife Susie whose Love daily transforms me

And to my daughter Gabriella whose Life opens me to the mystery.

Abbreviations

GHG	Green House Gases
IECE	Initiative to Eliminate Coal Emissions (pseudonym)
IFP	Interfaith Partnership
IFWRLS	2010 Interfaith World Religious Leaders Summit
MDG	Millennium Development Goals

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Introduction: The Question of Transformation

I remember sitting at a party near the end of high school, and in the midst of the celebrations, a theological question struck me: "I have been saved by grace, now what?" My years of Sunday school, confirmation and church, with their lessons of being justified by grace, had sunk in. As I reflected on the brokenness, but also the beautiful possibilities of life, it seemed like faith points towards something more. This reflection deepened a few months later as I left the small town of Camrose, Alberta to live on a First Nations' reserve in Saskatchewan and then in Guatemala. As Guatemala's civil war rumbled on as I witnessed first hand the violence, exploitation and poverty of our world. My awareness of the brokenness of our world exploded. At the same time I had a growing awareness of the environmental destruction being wrought in our world. Increasingly it was clear to me that we live in a world that is broken, and careening towards an even more frightening future.

What struck me then, as it does now, is the clear immorality of some of these situations. There is no question that machine-gunning down an entire village is wrong[1], leaving people to die from hunger or risking the destabilization of the ecosystem on which life and future generations depend is simply immoral, especially when it is clear that we have the capabilities to address these issues. Yet what has puzzled me is humankind's inability to take significant action to address the immorality in which we participate.

My involvement with the church has only made these questions more poignant. In my life and work in the church, at local, national and international levels, the capacity of the church to address these moral[2] challenges is absolutely astounding. The churches have immense capacity

[1] This was the fate of one of the villages that neighbored Hactenago, where I lived in Guatemala.
[2] For the purposes of this paper morality will be understood as the aspect of life that seeks to realize what is good and diminish what is evil. Ethics will be used to refer to the disciplines that reflects on and seeks to understand the moral dimension of life.

in terms of their financial resources, the skills and political power of their members and in their potential to be a moral voice and example. I have seen this potential realized: in nuns transforming a community in the midst of the violence of Guatemala; in the changing of hearts through prayer at Taizé; in a congregation being a living example of resurrection in a broken inner-city neighborhood in Boston, and in churches coming together from around the world to cooperate in their calling to serve the poor. I have also repeatedly seen the spoken commitment to justice fail to be translated into the life of the church and have recognized that these realizations of our potential are just a drop in the bucket of what is needed and possible.

It is not always a lack of will or desire that characterizes the church's failure to address the brokenness of the world. I once served on the board of an ecumenical justice organization that is deeply committed to living out the church's call to justice. I had asked the Executive Director about moving the focus from being just a voice for justice to focusing on how we are able to achieve and measure the impact we could have on realizing justice. The Director responded, "But that means we would have to change the way we do everything." This left me with a question: 'How does change happen so that it moves us towards the good? This is the question of transformation.

A Theology of Transformation

I would argue that the question of transformation involves a model of theology that explicitly integrates spirituality, dogmatic, and moral practice within our contexts. According to the ethicist Timothy O'Connell, during and prior to the Protestant Reformation there was no real separation between what we call ethics and dogmatic theology (19). Further, as still held by Orthodox churches, there was also no real separation between dogmatic theology and the

spiritual life (Bartholomew 5). While they may remain distinguished in some academic reflection, I believe that a fundamental unity between spirituality, theology and morality as a part of an individually and communally lived life of faith is central to transformation.[3] This unity is important because it changes the framework for theological questions. Theology moves from being an attempt to develop an abstract conceptual understanding of God to being a practice in the midst of life that seeks God's wisdom and formation. In Western theology the field of contextual theology has lifted up the need to explicitly hold together these aspects of faith. According to Douglas John Hall, contextual approaches seek how God is revealed in the contexts in which people live, while also seeking how God calls us to live and profess faith in those contexts (75). The revival of an ecological focus in theology has taken this contextual focus further by expanding it to include not just the human context but also the ecological and cosmic orientations present in Christian traditions (Northcott 147; Eaton 100). Out of this has come the reclaiming of natural theology, which recognizes how God is revealed through creation and "can broadly be understood as the systematic exploration of a proposed link between the everyday world of our experience and another asserted transcendent reality" (McGrath 2).[4]

What this means here is that the presence and action of God is sought in the midst of creation and the lives of people and then through reflection on these lives. This focus on God's presence and transformation in the midst of life means that in this work I am not seeking abstract cognitive knowledge about God, nor an understanding of how others have addressed this question historically. Instead I will focus on how people have experienced transformation in their lives in order to seek wisdom that can guide the lives of Christians and reveal God in the midst of our world. This theological focus shifts the question that guides this work closer to my earlier

[3] A similar joining of ethics, spirituality and theology is becoming increasingly common in the works of such theologians as Guttiérrez; Fulkeson; and Davis Sedmak and Janz; along with many others.
[4] See also Bonhoeffer 143-144.

question, "How do we come to realize the life giving goodness that God's grace provides us in the midst of life?"

Key Assumptions of this Work

God and the Good Are in the Midst of Creation

The presence of God and the goodness of God in the midst of creation are one of the core assumptions on which a theology of transformation is built. This assumption begins with God's *seeing* creation as good in the midst of God's creating (Genesis 1 NRSV). Developed out of this is the assumption that this goodness implies that there is a moral aspect to creation. From this it is assumed that there is a way of living in harmony with these moral patterns within creation. This is the Wisdom that Proverbs 8:22-36 speaks of as being before creation, "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts long ago" (22); as being present in the midst of creation,

> When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep; when he assigned to the sea its limits that the waters might not transgress his command when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight" (v.27-30);

and as being a guide for life, "And now, my children, listen to me: happy are those who keep my ways. Hear instructions and be wise and do not neglect it . . . For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord: but those who miss me injure themselves; all who hate me love death" (v.32-36). The presence of God with God's wisdom and goodness is not understood as something that existed only before the fall and was then fully corrupted by the fall. Instead, God's presence, goodness and wisdom are understood as an ongoing reality in creation as revealed by the incarnation of God in Jesus and the giving of the Holy Spirit. Goodness is also

assumed not simply to be a human creation, but rather as coming ultimately from God and existing as an aspect of the relationships amongst creation with God.

The Need for a Post-Critical Realism

This paper utilizes a post-critical realist perspective as developed out of the work of S. Patterson in Realist Christian Theology in a Postmodern Age. This work assumes that there is a reality; that we perceive this reality only through interpretation; this interpretation is limited by the extent of one's perception, and by how our interpretation is culturally shaped and culturally constrained; and thus that the relationship between human understanding and reality is an interpretive process that exists in between human perception and the network of relationships that constitute the broader reality.

A Post-Critical Morality of Relationships

Together these elements lead us to a perspective that sees God and thus the goodness of God present and coming into the relationships of the created world. We participate in this reality, but this participation is constrained by the limits of our life, creation and the reality of sin. Since God comes into creation, the relationships between what is good, our interpretation of the good and our way of life that seeks to realize the good remains possible, but limited and problematic. Positing the good as in the midst of relationships also means that what is being sought is neither some sort of correspondence between our understanding of the good and a separate reality, nor a logical coherence within our understanding or even between our understanding and a world, but rather a wisdom that can shape relationships and lives so that in them what is good may be realized.

This position involves a rejection of the notion of the complete and ongoing corruption of creation after the fall,[5] along with the modern assumption of the fact-value distinction[6]. This is not a simplistic rejection. Sin is assumed to be a part of the reality of our world. This means that "what is" can never simply be assumed to equal "what is good". After all, the question of transformation rests on the recognition that our current reality does not fully realize or express the goodness that God intends for creation.

That we approach reality, including moral and theological realities, through interpretation means that we can never assume that our understanding of reality and morality is complete or objective. Since we are not God our interpretation is always limited by our created nature, shaped by sin and by our context that we also actively shape. Interpretation is always an act of an interpreter and as an *act* interpretation has its own moral dimensions and limitations.

The assumption that morality and goodness exist in the midst of the relationships of creation does imply a return to natural law, but not to a version that sees the moral order as a fixed structure or that sees natural law as something that can be found in human reason alone. The ever-changing, complex and relational nature of creation shows us that any sense of fixed laws that are easily discerned has a high degree of folly. Likewise, the limits of human perception mean that a reliance on logical rationality, which itself rests on human perception, would also be too limited to be an authority on its own. The morality present in creation is thus assumed to be neither fixed nor independent, but rather as existing in the ever-changing dynamics and relationships that make up creation and our lives.

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[5] For the development and support of this point see Northcott, 33, 199-200.

[6] The fact value distinction is an important modern assumption that holds that an 'ought' cannot be derived from and 'is" for a further exploration and critique see Gutting 49-50, 70-73 and Northcott 243

The Purpose of This Work

The question of transformation is an ancient question. As such it has already been explored and examined by countless others both within and beyond the Christian tradition. Amongst those who ask theological questions in the midst of life, versions of the question of transformation are common, whether they concern sanctification, deification, liberation, emancipation, etc. At their core these questions have in common the question of how, in the midst of life, we can begin to leave sin and brokenness behind and be drawn into the goodness that God intends for human life and all creation.

The numerous approaches to transformation are too vast to summarize in the space available. The challenge in regard to this question is not lack of study, but overabundance. In the midst of the plethora of work related to transformation, the purpose of this work is to be a kind of stepping back in order to gain perspective and have a fresh look at the question of transformation by examining it as lived phenomena.

As such, it is important to clarify what is not the purpose of this work. The purpose of this paper is not to try to find causal relationships that produce transformation. This would be beyond what is possible for this paper and its methods. And so, this work is in no way attempting to claim any predictive or prescriptive power; nor is it trying to develop a universal perspective on transformation. This paper is also not intended as a critical review of existing literature related to transformation. While the perspective of other writers will be used for insight, the purpose of this work is neither to refute other perspectives nor to get a 'right' understanding of the intention of their work.

This work is meant instead to be a moment of reflection in the midst of my own work for transformation, which has also allowed me to engage with others so as to explore the phenomena

of transformation. The hope is that through this work a clearer understanding of the dynamics of transformation can begin to emerge from the themes explored here. From this I will explore what a transformational approach to ethics could look like; what directions of future study this opens up; and how this can guide my own future practice. Key dynamics will be explored by looking at examples of transformation in the lives of eight people and their communities.

Method

The paper utilizes the phenomenological approach developed by Max Van Mane and the hermeneutical approach developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer. This methodology begins with the need for the careful development of a question, with the question being understood as that which both defines the subject of the work and creates a kind of opening which thereby allows the subject to be rediscovered.[7]

This work rests on the assumption that that each person's experience provides us with a potential, but partial, opening to the understanding of a subject. These perceptions are initially approached by looking at the human experience of transformation from a phenomenological perspective. Phenomenology attempts to "'re-achieve a direct and primitive contact with the world' – the world as immediately experienced" (Merleau-Ponty vii; Van Manen 38). According to Van Manen, a phenomenological approach is useful when addressing questions concerning the experience of something that humans live through. It does this by looking at lived experience, which is our "immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life" (4-41).

[7] The discovery of the question has through research and practice evolved over several years. Because of this co-evolving, as it is written out there appears to be a certain circularity between the methods and what has been found. In part this is due to the conversion of an ongoing process into a linear text. It is also the product of an attempt to follow the principle that one's research methods should be consistent with what is being discovered in one's research.

This lived experience must then be remembered, interpreted and shared. In this paper people's lived experiences of transformation were turned into a text through interviews in which people were asked to tell their stories about how they have experienced transformation. These will be referred to as "stories of transformation." These stories initially included interviews with six individuals: Carol,[8] works in the area of corporate social responsibility and at the time of the interview was an executive director of a non-profit organization; Doug, a businessman involved in politics, the coal industry and in trying to eliminate carbon emissions from coal plants; George, a scientist who works on water issues primarily in the development of the oil sands and in Uganda with community development projects related to water; Father Joseph (Joe), a Franciscan Friar and former Abbot who functions as a retreat preacher, spiritual director and councilor; and Mary, a spiritual care giver. My initial definition of transformation as a movement or change towards a state considered good or better. Since these interviews focused on their experiences of transformation, the stories include accounts of both personal as well as organizational and social transformation.

In addition to these interviews, processes of social transformation that I have been directly involved with have also been considered. These include the Kairos Dialogue Day concerning the Alberta Oil Sands as well as the 2010 Interfaith World Religious Leaders Summit (IFWRLS) and related Interfaith Partnership (IFP). Here, two additional interviews were conducted: Tom, the chair of the Kairos committee that organized the oil sands dialogue; and Esther, chair and one of the founders of the IFP that hosted the IFWRLS. I have also relied on my own experience of these events as recorded in a personal reflection journal and other documents, so as to include an element of reflection on my own praxis.

[8] The names of all of the people that I interviewed have been changed. With permission from those I have interviewed, when there are identifiable, public processes that have involved the interviewees, the identification of these have not necessarily been changed.

Having conducted these interviews, the next step in this method was to do a thematic evaluation of these interviews. A 'theme' refers here to an element, motif, formula or device which occurs frequently in the text (Van Manen 78). Themes that were particularly stressed were also focused on. These themes were used as a means of gaining insight into the phenomenon of transformation which then also provided the structure of what is presented here.

The people interviewed here are not only people who have lived transformation, they have also reflected on their experiences of transformation. Thus those interviewed have been treated as co-researchers whose experience and praxis (the coming together of action and reflection) in transformation have been used as a source of insight for the understanding of transformation. In addition the perspectives of researchers whose work has been recorded in published books and journals has been included.

The overall purpose of this work is not to just to study people's experience of transformation, but to gain a greater understanding of the question and subject of transformation. Because of the limitations of any particular perspectives, what is not sought here is universal knowledge. What is sought instead is knowledge that can be recognized by others and has a degree of independence from any particular knower. In order to move us towards this intent, I have attempted to bring the different perspectives described above into a conversation with each other[9]. The purpose of this conversation is focused on understanding the subject of the conversation, transformation, and how these different perspectives are able to reveal different aspects of transformation.[10]

This conversation did not develop directly between these perspectives, but rather through this writing process. This means that this dialogue has been generated primarily between these

[9]This is what Polanyi has called universal intent. See Mitchell (92-104).
[10] For a fuller description of the understanding of conversation used here see Gadamer 385-89.

perspectives and my own horizon of understanding.[11] While I have attempted to understand the perspectives of others, the final work has been shaped and limited by my own interpretive process. The final work is thus another story of transformation of which I am the author. The commitment to developing knowledge which has some independence and can be shared will be held in this paper not only in the attempt to be as faithful as possible to the perspectives of others, but in the opportunity given to all who were interviewed to review the almost final project. Their feedback was used to shape the submitted work.

The theological element of this paper will come primarily through a focus on baptism. Theology is understood here as a practice of reflective prayer. According to the monk and theologian Thomas Keating, prayer is a process which seeks to open us to perceive and experience the presence and action of God in the midst of our life (14, 17-18). As reflective prayer the purpose of theology is not primarily dogmatic, historical, nor is its standard primarily that of rationality. Instead theology is understood as seeking to understand the nature of God, and God's presence and action of God in the midst of life. Baptism will thus be used as a kind of prayerful lens, through which we can see and understand God's presence and action in transformation.

Baptism has been chosen because it represents not just a moment of transformation in a Christian's life, but because, as the Orthodox perspective on baptism and the Western emphasis on spiritual baptism reminds us, according to Haitch, it is a moment of transformation that is fulfilled throughout a Christian's life and beyond our earthly life (Haitch 1-22, 155-73). Baptism will thus be treated like a seed, which both contains a moment of transformation, while liturgically setting out a pattern of transformation that happens over the life of the baptized, whose primary actor is God. So while our stories of transformation will help us to understand the

[11] The concept of horizon and dialogue come from Gadamer 305-306, 74-75, 97.

human experience of transformation, baptism will be used as an opportunity to reveal the holy depths of transformation. Baptism and the stories of transformation will be brought into conversation so that the themes of transformation that are revealed in these stories can help us better understand the transformation that happens in baptism, while baptism will be used to reveal how God may be present in the processes of transformation that happen in our daily lives. Baptism was chosen not because it was specifically referred to by those interviewed but rather because of the relationships between the themes that emerged from these stories and the themes present in baptisms. For simplicity's sake I will use the form of the baptismal service found in Evangelical Lutheran Worship (227-31). Claims about the pattern and theology of baptism are subsequently limited by this form.

The selection of people to interview and decisions about what I would consider transformation rested on my own initial assumptions of what constitutes the good. This assumption included the assumption that the good includes the experience of the sustainable flourishing of life, with all its breadth; based on our biological, psychological, social and spiritual natures; that the good involves relationships that result in an experience of mutual thriving and service; and that the good is not something fully grasped by any individual, but ultimately rests in God and our relationship with God. At the same time I have tried to be open to how those that I have interviewed have understood and experienced the good and I have attempted to allow this to shape what is written here.

Chapter 1: The Transformation of our Perception

We begin with Mary's story of transformation. When she was young Mary was sent off to Canada, to live with an abusive father who didn't want her. She ended up in, and eventually left, an abusive marriage and struggled at times with mental illness. Mary lived through darkness, but her story does not end there. In time she began to find healing in her life and especially in her relationship to God, and she has become a spiritual caregiver and guide to many. Her story of transformation is a story in which her very darkness has been transformed into a light that guides others. As Mary describes it, "It all stems back from my view of God. As soon as I viewed God differently, it was like this 'Oh', and that was where, looking back, talking about it now, it happened gradually, but that was where my transformation started, it was when I viewed God differently". The fact that it was a change in how she saw God that Mary experienced as beginning her transformation points towards the central role that perception[12] plays in transformation.

One of the themes that was present in each of the stories of transformation was the shift in how in how one perceives the world or God. These changes in perception included changes in how God and our relationship to God is perceived (Joseph), coming to see the possibility of Canada hosting a global inter-faith dialogue (Esther), recognizing that environmentalists and oil sands developers shared similar concerns (Tom), a sudden recognition of the transient nature of life (George) and moving from seeing climate change as a "joke" to seeing the problem of putting too much carbon into the atmosphere as a moral problem and an opportunity (Doug).

The important role that shifts in perception play in stories of transformation should not

[12] Perception is defined here as our sensing of reality through our interpretive frameworks and our relationship with the world.

surprise us when we consider the significance placed on interpretation by Philosophy,[13] Sociology[14], and Psychology[15] and the success that such approaches have had in helping us understand society or treat disorders such as anxiety and depression. Each of these fields of study recognize interpretation as a critical and inescapable element of who we are as humans and that it is through interpretation that we encounter the world and shape our emotions, behaviors, and society.

The work of sociologists further shows us that interpretation itself is located and formed within a network of behaviors, emotions and societal patterns and history (Blumer 101; Weber 108; Gadamer 100; Berger 189). This helps us to see that how we interpret our world is not just a product of isolated mental acts, but is instead connected to one's way of life and the broader social world. This leads us to the question of *how* interpretation functions as a part of the stories of transformation that we are studying.

The Paradigmatic Imagination - Interpreting the Patterns of our World

In Carol's story we can begin to see how interpretation leads to transformation through the perception of patterns as well as how transformation involves the bringing together of personal and social transformation. In her career Carol worked with oil companies in some of the most difficult areas in the world. In the process she helped companies transform their practices to address environmental and social impacts along with the risks associated with oil production.

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[13] The development of the importance of interpretation in philosophy can be found in the work of Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Michael Polanyi, Sue Patterson, Paul Ricour (for a good summary see Dan R. Striver's Theology after Ricoeur: New Directions in Hermeneutical Theology) and Richard Rorty (for a good summary see Richard Rumana's On Rorty). How this philosophy has effected theology can be found in Kevin J. Vanhoozer's The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology.

[14] A description of the development and use of this perspective especially in the work of Max Weber, Georg Simmel, George Herbert Mead, Erving Goffman, Herbert Blumer, Peter Berger and others can be found in Wallace and Wolf.

[15] The use of an interpretive framework in psychology is prominently developed in the cognitive behaviorism school. See the work of Aaron and Emery Beck.

She became one of the first female vice presidents of a major Canadian oil company. Then everything changed. She was infected with a virus on one of her trips that left her on a couch for eight months, which resulted in the loss of her position and status but gave her time to reflect. This transformed her life again. Carol started her own non-profit organization, and now works with companies to address issues of social responsibility as well as with other organizations and people in their own processes of transformation.

One of Carol's accounts is particularly helpful in allowing us to see how interpretation functions to bring about transformation:

> We land in Nigeria and it is hell on earth. We are not the first westerners, but the ones before us have really screwed up. They hate westerners and it is a mess. We are flying over the delta area and it is horrible, it is hell. I couldn't believe it. It was transformational for me to see it. And when I was told that we had invested already, without anyone talking about all these challenges I was just furious. I was actually . . . I was angry. I went to the CEO at the time and said "How on earth can we go to a country like that and invest and not be contributing to that hell." The most corrupt place on earth at the time . . . The gas flaring at the time. And he looked at me. And I said "I don't know how you can do it, how you think this can be possible" And he said "What is it going to take" and I said "I don't know if it is even feasible." And that was a shift. I had never said that to any one before. I am a can-do person. I can make it work. I couldn't make that work. It was impossible. So we sat down, we backed up. We had already invested. So that was a problem. And we worked out a plan of how of how we can approach this, methodically, clearly honesty. It was dealing with corruption, dealing with the Canadian Government, dealing with the Nigerian government, dealing with partners doing gas flaring. It was a shift for that company . . . in being a company involved as a global player. At that point my job changed. We actually began to look at above-ground risks as a strategy. We were not just looking at geology and engineering. The way we looked at projects changed. The way we talked about things changed. It had been building up . . . the risks were mounting . . . there was a change, a shift.

In this story we see transformation happening through Carol's use of what the theologian Garrett Green calls the paradigmatic imagination. Green's concept of paradigmatic imagination is based on the concept of paradigm developed by Thomas S. Kuhn. Green uses the term paradigmatic to denote our pattern making or pattern recognizing faculty (94). Green then

expands this concept by adding *imagination*'s ability "to make accessible what would otherwise be unavailable to us" (62) and religion's ability to make "the world accessible to the imagination of their adherents in such a way that its ultimate nature, value, and destiny are made manifest" (79-80). When Carol views what is happening on the Nigerian Delta as hell she uses a religious metaphor to connect the flaring, pollution, anger and corruption. In the process she makes available how these form a pattern whose 'ultimate nature' and 'destiny' is hell and thus immoral.

The significance of perceiving patterns is emphasized by Wesley, Zimmerman and Patton in their book on social change, Getting to Maybe . What Westley *et. al.* emphasize is the complexity and constant change that is a part of our world. As a result they argue that social innovators need to both stay tuned to and recognize the patterns around them. In a complex situation where there are countless elements interacting, and changing, it is impossible to know or predict all of the relevant factors. Instead what is necessary is to recognize the *significant* patterns, and how these patterns are changing (7-12, 55-91). Significant patterns are not just elements that exist side by side. A part of the nature of complex situations is that there are countless actual and possible elements and relationships that interact, while this interaction constantly changes. Paradigms help us deal with this complexity by acting as a kind of filter, bringing into our perception patterns that we can then see as significant. For example in her use of the metaphor of hell and in her creation of an above-ground risk strategy, Carol was selecting from all of the elements of the Nigerian Delta those elements that were related to oil production that were negatively effecting Nigeria's people, its environment, its politics as well as how a company could act to change these effects.

Carol's anger is significant in this. While her anger is evoked by her interpretation of what she sees in Nigeria as hell, Carol also described how emotions are an important means by which she perceives her world and comes to recognize the patterns of her world and their moral dimensions. The importance of emotions for involving us in the moral patterns that we perceive was put forward by neurologist Antonio Damasio in Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain. Damasio described how people with a particular brain injury were able to intellectually make appropriate moral judgments about the moral dilemmas developed by psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, even as in their own lives they could not make good decisions. The reason for this was that they lacked emotional engagement. Damasio argues that our emotions or "somatic markers" connect our basic biological and social drives to our learned experiences and expectations in a particular situation (173-196). Our emotions thus help us to perceive and experience the significance a situation may have for us both personally and socially. In other words, on its own our intellectual reasoning about a moral problem is not enough to shape a moral life. We also need our emotional perception to place us within the pattern by helping us experience through our bodies how the patterns that we perceive matter to us. Carol's anger helped her to experience both the cost oil production was having on those in Nigeria and the social cost of being a part of a company that was contributing to this. This perceived significance then helped to motivate her actions toward her company and its CEO. What we can see in this is the important role that emotions such as anger play in involving us within moral patterns and shaping our actions.

The metaphor of hell allowed Carol to see what was happening in Nigeria and evoked an anger that moved her to act. This transformation then continued when she took what she perceived into the context of her company and developed a paradigm of above-ground risks that

was used to shape that company. At this point two significant things happened. The first is that the moral perception provided by the religious concept of hell and the anger it involved remained. It was, for example, the metaphor of hell that carried the moral significance of what Carol saw into her conversation with her CEO. The second significant aspect was that, as it crossed into the business context, Carol was able to expand the paradigm so that it could become a business *strategy* concerning above-ground risks. This strategy brought together the pattern that Carol perceived together with business practices and relationships with other partners in order to create a new pattern of practices for how her company would function in situations that were morally problematic and risky. This altered pattern of action then affected the actual patterns that Carol had first seen. Carol's story thus demonstrates how paradigms can be transformative: 1) by allowing us to perceive the patterns of the world in which we live; 2) by allowing us to recognize their moral significance; 3) by emotionally involving us in these patterns; 4) and by creating new patterns of conduct which can reshape existing patterns.

This paradigmatic function also presents us with an important challenge. The theologian and ethicist Clemens Sedmak argues that the very possibility of ethics is based on the "openness of our world. There is no one way of either reading or acting in the world" (124). This openness is not an expression of reality being random, rather it is an expression of the richness of reality and its ability to produce unexpected manifestations (Mitchell 85). This 'openness' is an important element of transformation. In the face of creation's rich complexity and ongoing change, the 'openness of the world' to multiple interpretations means that our paradigmatic imagination can recognize more than one pattern, including patterns that may be emerging and growing in their significance. Holding onto a particular paradigm that once worked may, in the face of this complexity and change, can become what Westley *et al* call a "rigidity trap" that can

prevent social innovation, by confining resources and actions to prior patterns as our world shifts around us (65-71). This is why, in our stories, for transformation to occur we often see the letting go of old paradigms that might once have been functional, in order to adopt or create new ones. Our active use of paradigmatic imagination is a necessity for us to function and thrive in our ever-changing world; it is also a part of its interpretative nature.

As Green reminds us, the patterns of the world that we perceive through our paradigms are not just patterns that exist in the world; they are patterns that we are involved in creating through the use of our imagination (72).[16] Our paradigmatic imagination involves not only our recognition of existing patterns, but also our active bringing together of elements to create patterns. The paradigms of both "hell" and "above-ground risks," while existing as a part of culture, did not exist simply as an aspect of the Nigerian Delta or business practices. Culture is defined here as the part of our world that is human and shaped by human action. It includes our history, our symbolic systems, and patterns of living as they are embodied by both individuals and communities. The paradigms of hell and above–ground risks were actively created and applied by Carol in the process of constructing our world. This is evident in "hell" in its almost unworldly connections, and "above-ground risks", which as a paradigm brings together a wide variety of elements, including investors, flaring, governments, standards of corruption, environmental concerns and moral judgments. While there is a relationship between these, it is neither simple nor direct. It is the paradigm that brings out these relationships in perception and then develops these relationships further in subsequent practice. The active element can be seen in how others have looked at the same situation and chosen to use the paradigm of "sovereignty"

[16] Our participation in these patterns will be further developed in chapter three using the work of Dreyfus, especially how we are embedded within and embody these patterns.

or "fiduciary responsibility to share holders" or "economic development" in order to both create and support the continuation of the pattern that Carol perceived as hell.[17]

The openness of the world to multiple interpretations and our active role in the creation and use of paradigms help us to realize that the act of interpretation, and the choice to use a particular paradigm is itself a moral choice, one that, as the philosopher Ricoeur reminds us, we attest to with our very life (Striver 194-210). In constructing our interpretation of the world around us, we are continuously evaluating what is of value, what is relevant, the associations and patterns we are willing to recognize and the patterns of possible responses we are willing to perceive. It is because of this that Gadamer suggests that practical wisdom, *phronesis*, which "represents the critical judgment of a wise person to evaluate the good in a certain situation" (Striver 42) is an essential element of hermeneutics (interpretation). For Carol, when she decided to interpret oil development on the Nigerian Delta as 'hell' and to interpret her company's ongoing practice in terms of 'above-ground risks as a strategy' this interpretation was both a morally significant choice and act of practical wisdom, that resulted in transformation.

Seeing Through

When we recognize that people actively create their paradigms, and if we accept that these paradigms are made up of elements drawn from traditions, this raises a significant question: to what degree does our role in shaping our perception confine us to a humanly constructed reality that is limited to our own cultural constructions? This possibility has shaped the thought of post-modern thinkers such as Wittgenstein, Hauerwas, Lindbeck, Rorty, Foucault and many others (Gutting 25; Rorty Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature). This raises a question: is our transformation simply a question of shifts within our humanly constructed cultural system,

[17] This perspective was shared with me by a senior manager from another major oil company working in Nigeria.

or is our transformation about our relationship to a reality greater than our culture? Even many of these thinkers mentioned above do not go so far as to suggest that there is no reality beyond the cultural system (Rorty "Taylor on Truth" 22). Here we assume that what is good is a part of the creation in which we participate. This shifts the question to: What is the relationship between reality with its goodness and our culturally shaped perceptions? This is a question that we can begin to explore through the following story of transformation.

Doug's story of transformation begins during his time as a gang leader in Montreal. His story involves his parents who, in realizing the growing problems their son was facing, moved to a smaller center where Doug's life was changed to the point that he considered becoming a minister. After university, through a series of unexpected twists, he ended up leading the coal divisions for two resource companies and led a team that developed not only coal mines, but also the mining infrastructure for areas of British Columbia where there had been no prior coal development. He went though a period of transformation again when he entered politics and became a Member of Parliament. After politics, he became the head of the coal lobby in Canada. It was through this role that he was again transformed, convinced of the moral issues around the quantity of carbon that we emit into the atmosphere and the possibilities of changing these emissions. He later left his role with the coal lobbies and developed an initiative to develop technology that would eliminate atmospheric emissions of CO2 from coal plants (Initiative to Eliminate Coal Emissions - IECE). It is this latter story of transformation that we will focus on. As Doug describes it:

> "I was now the official lobbyist for the coal industry . . . After the first few months in the job I was asked to go to this meeting where all the Presidents and Vice Presidents of the CO2 producers, coal and oil, were going to be sitting there to daydream about what they were going to do to reduce CO2 in the future. . . . It is chaired by the government of Canada. . . They had for some reason invited this guy from Los Alamos Laboratories . . . And there was no place for him to sit. So I make room and so he can sit here. Again a

> serendipity thing. If he hadn't sat by me, I would have never had this thing. At the meeting people are going around and they are talking about how they are going to turn down the flares. And it is all nonsense. Even then I am going, I am saying, 'This is nonsense. This is not going to do it.' This guy beside me, he is not making any speeches, because he is not from Canada. During the coffee breaks he is talking to me. He is saying, 'We should really be talking about totally redesigning the system so that we never let the carbon go into the air. We hold onto it all the time. So that we take the energy out of it and put it back in the ground.'. . . . It turns out that this guy is a renowned nuclear physicist from Los Alamos. He has come up with this scheme of taking the energy out of carbon and so on, and putting it through reformers, I won't go though the mechanics, and then putting it back in the ground as solid rock. . . Next thing I know I have an invitation from Los Alamos national laboratory . . . And they gave me their whole story and they said 'What do you think?' And I said, 'It sounds great, but you will need money.' Then they said, "Can you help us get some money?" This is the US government asking me for money. I said 'Let's go on a trip. Let's go to the Canadian government and different people and see if we can raise some money.' We did that. So suddenly we are raising some money. . . It just so happened that it was such a wonderful idea. You know. I just said to myself, 'We just have to do this.' This is where I feel like I have failed. I am sure there were opportunities. It turned out that we needed billions of dollars to actually develop this. I am sure in my own mind that there were missed opportunities to meet some people who could have raised that money. That is where I felt that I had a mission. Here is a coal guy brining the solution to carbon dioxide. It just seemed like such a magical opportunity. It got me excited. I worked on it for five years. I quit my job as the president of the coal association. I created for myself a new job in this . . . I never raised the money . . . The thing that made me want to deal with it. I went though the arguments with Owen and Christian (the two physicists involved in IECE), not the arguments about, not global warming per se, but the arguments that we were putting too much carbon in the atmosphere, and the arguments against it. And concluded, and I still believe that they are absolutely right, Tthat as a species we are putting too much carbon in the atmosphere and enough to make significant changes and that was unconscionable, and it has to be changed.

What is important to note is that what Doug is addressing, levels of carbon in the atmosphere, is not just a cultural phenomenon, or simply determined by a language game. Instead Doug talks about it in terms of the chemistry of the atmosphere and oceans and perceives the moral significance of this, is largely based on its effects on the biology of life.[18] This chemistry of our atmosphere is a reality that humans can perceive, but its reality and effect are not determined by human perception. Instead they are built into the ecological and systems of the

[18] Doug's understanding of calling in his relationship to God is the other factor shaping his moral perception. This is developed later.

planet and how life has evolved within them. As such carbon levels are a reality that affects humans, but they also affect our world in ways that stretch far beyond the narrow confines of human values.

The assumption that value or significance is something that is simply created by humans originated in modernity with Descartes' turn towards the subject, in which the individual subject became the determiner of truth, including moral truth (Gutting 116-17; Taylor). The post-modern turn towards culturally derived values has taken this turn to the subject and expanded to a social dimension, by making social rules, practices and power the determiner of truth.[19] A problem such as too much carbon in the atmosphere reveals the folly of this turn. Assuming the IPCC is correct, increasing carbon in the atmosphere will harm countless other forms of life and human life on a massive scale. This is not just a value that humans can decide if they will apply. It is instead built into the very physics, chemistry, biology and evolutionary patterns of our planet. If we assume, as I have done here, that the good exists as a part of creation, then in these patterns there is a value, independent of the value humans give creation. That this broader good is affected by a phenomenon created by human culture, means that human created rules are not independent, but rather tied into from this broader pattern of the good by the causal relationship within creation. This forces us to look beyond simply human created norms, or social patterns, to how we participate in and effect patterns the much broader created reality.

One could argue that I have simply used a language game to make and justify this point, and that it was a rational argument that convinced Doug that we are putting too much carbon into the atmosphere. Wittgenstein makes an important point in response to this. According to Wittgenstein, the link between language and the world can only be shown, because any

[19] See, for example, Murphy and Kallenberg "Anglo-American Postmodernity: A Theology of Community Practice and Kevin J. Vanhoozer "Theology and the Conditions of Postmodernity".

description itself would be another "language-game that assumes certain language world links" (S. Patterson 79). While a cultural- linguistic perspective might emphasize the limitation of the word *only*, I would like to emphasize the possibility this sets out. While our arguments are a language game, the link to the world *can* be shown or pointed to. In Owen and Christian's arguments there is an attempt to *show* Doug the moral problem of putting too much carbon in the atmosphere. In the process they point to the reality that they try to help Doug see. Likewise in the technology that they developed they were able to both create and *show* an alternative to simply releasing carbon into the atmosphere, whose functioning is actual chemical and physical processes.

The importance of *seeing* a reality that is beyond our culturally shaped interpretation is shared by other stories of transformation. The participants in this study described what they were doing not in terms of constructing meaning, but it in terms of seeing, viewing or perceiving an aspect of reality. As Carol states in the quote earlier about her trip to Nigeria, "It was transformational for me to see it." Doug also described this ongoing process of transformation in terms of "seeing" opportunities and "seeing" relationships between things. Similarly Colby and Damon, in their study of moral exemplars, found that one of the consistent characteristics in moral exemplars was a sense of certainty, combined with an openness to revision, as if they could see an object (44, 76).

While the visual language was quite strong in many of the interviewees, they also described this perception in terms of other modes of perception. While Mary described her experience in terms of her view of things, she also talked about when she could "really sense the presence of the Holy Spirit . . . it is just a different feeling." While Carol spoke about how "You start to change how you see things," she also spoke about "going back to some of the knowing

part, I am physically reacting to that. ” Father Joe spoke about listening. Doug spoke about how his shift occurred through rational arguments based on scientific research. While they used a variety of human faculties, what is consistent is that transformation occurred through being oriented towards perceiving a world beyond just their interpretation even as they saw themselves as involved in what and how they perceived.

This represents a shift to a much older sense of truth. As Gutting argues, “While Descartes led the modern turn to understanding reason as procedural rules as a means to finding truth, Plato’s understanding of reason was not of reason as making decisions based on reasons and evidence and sticking to them, but rather for Plato reason involved the “attainment of a correct vision of moral truth” (115). Further, the “Delphic injunction “*gnat seauton*” (know thyself) was not a directive to explore our inner depths but rather to “locate human nature in the grand cosmic scheme” (115). Likewise for Augustine, “the progression of reason is a series of increasingly full sightings of Truth” (116).[20] This ancient understanding gives us a version of reason as a process of perceiving a truth that is beyond ourselves and within a larger cosmic scheme in which we participate and have a place. This participating in and sensing reality and our place in it through our linguistic and interpretative frameworks is what, for the purposes of this paper, I will define as perception[21].

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[20] An important distinction should also be made from these earlier views. In Augustine and Platonism to move toward a fuller perception of truth was to move away from glimpses of truth in the material world, I would argue that God’s seeing the world as Good and Jesus’ incarnation affirms the presence of truth, even the truth of God in the material world.

[21] What should also be noted is that this is in contrast to both the coherence or correspondence model of truth. The coherence model sets internal logical consistency as the standard for truth. The understanding of truth used here in contrast sets the world that is beyond the conceptual system as the determiner of truth. The correspondence model sets the degree to which a proposition matches with reality as the standard. As Heidegger (Poetry, Language, Thought) points out, this agreement itself rests on a notion of truth as unconcealedness. Unconcealedness emphasizes the degree to which reality is revealed, even if the means of revelation does not correspond with that reality. In this sense, for example, an impressionist work of art is true because it reveals something about the world and our relationship with the world even though its actual form does not match the form found in the world (50-56)

What this language of perception allows us to see in the stories of transformation is how transformation happens when a particular aspect of reality becomes recognized *through* the culturally constructed perception of people. These people were not transformed by encountering a new set of concepts that painted reality differently. Rather these people experienced transformation as they looked at their world *through* their interpretation, much like a lens, so that different aspects of reality that were previously concealed could be revealed, such as the effects of emitting large quantities of carbon into the atmosphere. What we see happening is not simply the reshaping of a cultural linguistic system of meaning, rather what we see happening is closer to Heidegger's conception of language and truth where language brings into the open and discloses or calls forth a particular aspect of reality into its thingness so that it can be seen (72-5 , 203). This is truth as *aletheia*, "the unconcealedness of beings" (51), where what was hidden or forgotten can be seen or remembered. This revealing is not so much a creating, as it is a listening, in which for the poet to speak (i.e. use language) the poet must "submit what he says to an ever more painstaking listening" (216). Instead of creating a fantasy, a poet must submit to what appears (225).

Heidegger points out that revealing always exists with a dynamic of also concealing (53-55,72) so that we are not blinded by the excess of the world (228). In their research into moral exemplars, while Colby and Damon found a sense of certainty as if they could see an object, they also found that it did not lead to dogmatism. Rather, there was a kind of continuing to look to see another aspect or side previously hidden (44). The recognition of the limits of our vision should make it clear that what we are addressing is not a type of complete objective knowledge. As Patterson describes it, while we are still concerned with truth, we cannot escape the "language-riddleness" (29) of our encounter with the world. In other words, what happens in our stories is a

perception of reality, but this perception is *shaped* by, *limited* by and occurs *through* linguistic and interpretive frameworks. Like seeing or listening there is also an attentiveness that allows this perception to be shaped by what it perceives.

The dynamics of revealing and concealing, along with the limits of our perception, necessitate that our perception always involves a choice. It is a choice of what in the complexity of our world is revealed, but also of what will be concealed. This is a choice not only of what we choose to perceive, but also what relationships will be recognized and what will be seen as significant in a person's life. This moves us to the challenge of framing.

Transformation and Framing

Framing, as understood here, captures the perceptual process of revealing and concealing that brings particular aspects of our world into the fore of our perception by showing their significance for us based on our past experience, while at the same time pushing other aspects of our world into the background of our perception. Framing is a process that has been identified in the fields of artificial intelligence, leadership and by philosophy. According to Shanahan, the question that the concept of framing presents us with is the problem of how we identify what matters, the relevant and irrelevant consequences and beliefs about the world that need to be taken into account in any action when a situation is open ended and complex.[22] As Dreyfus argues, this should not be seen as giving significance to our world, but rather as a process owhich connects the current situation and what we have previously experienced as significant (349-361). Its role in transformation is captured by the story of the Kairos[23] Dialogue Day.

[22] See also Dennett 41-42. The use of this term is here is modified from Dennett because I am not using a propositional logic model and the emphasis will be on what is morally relevant.

[23] Kairos is a national Canadian ecumenical justice organization that brings together eleven churches and church related organizations. Kairos here refers specifically to the local Calgary based group of Kairos.

Kairos Calgary set a lofty goal for the Dialogue Day: to bring together environmentalists, churches and the oil-sands industry in order to overcome the polarization of debate that characterized public discourse concerning the oil sands. It was hoped that through a public dialogue a common ground could be found which would provide a way forward that would be more sustainable and moral. This dialogue brought together Andrew Nikiforuk, a leading critic of the oil sands; Don Thompson, the President of the Oil Sands Developers Group, which leads the public relations effort of the oil-sands industry; and members of churches from inside and outside the oil sands industry. A sign of just how polarized the debate had become was the fact that this was the first time Nikiforuk and Thompson had met. In part, the ability to overcome the divide that has kept environmental groups and the oil sands industry from even talking marked the success of this event. The dialogue involved presentations by both of these men, small group discussions in which participants raised questions, a panel discussion and closing comments. It was organized by Kairos-Calgary, which is chaired by Tom and of which I am a member. I was one of the opening speakers whose task it was to set out the purpose of the day and set its tone.

The process of framing and its significance was seen in Nikiforuk's and Thompson's presentations, particularly in how they presented the disruption of the boreal forest and CO2 emissions from the oil sands. Each presented almost identical information. The difference was in how they framed it. When Nikiforuk presented on the issue of land disruption he used a smaller measurement, hectares to quantify the disturbed land. This then allowed him to put forward large figures, while revealing through background images some of the harshest results of mining the oil sands. This framing focused the audience's perception on the disruptiveness of oil sand production and emphasized its size, in order to bring to the fore ground the problem of land disruption (see fig.1).

In contrast, Thompson expanded his frame to include the vast size of the boreal forest across Canada, presenting the disrupted area, and then the mined area, as a small percentage of that larger frame (see fig.2). He followed this with images of reclaimed land which had buffalo grazing on it. His presentation framed land disruption in such a way as to make land disruption appear insignificant, and to bring people's attention towards industry's efforts to minimize long term impact.

Fig. 1. Slide emphasizing disruption.

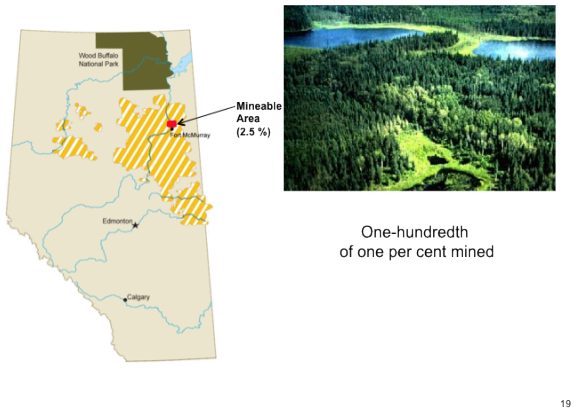

Fig.2. Disruption relative to boreal forest.

Another important instance of framing was demonstrated when the issue of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission from the oils sands was raised. In Nikiforuk's presentation, the rapid growth of GHG emissions from the oil sands was shown. This framed the oil sands GHG emissions as a rapidly growing problem (see fig.3). In Thompson's presentation, in contrast, what is shown are the emissions from the oil sands along side with the emissions from coal-fired power plants (see fig.4). Within this frame the oil sands GHG emissions are a minor part of a much larger problem.

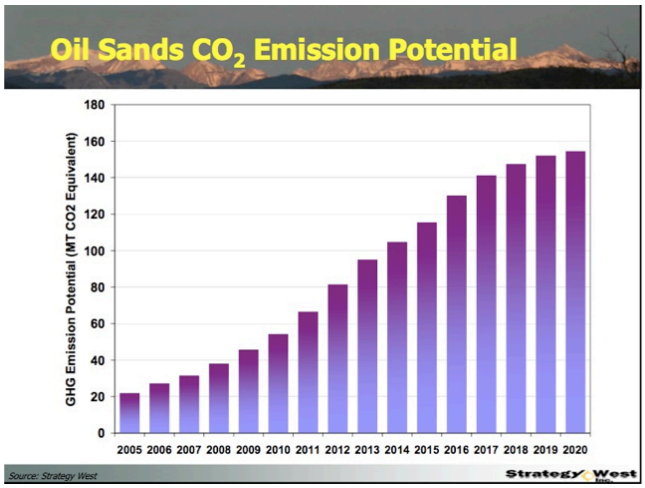

Fig. 3. Growth of Oil sand's Emissions.

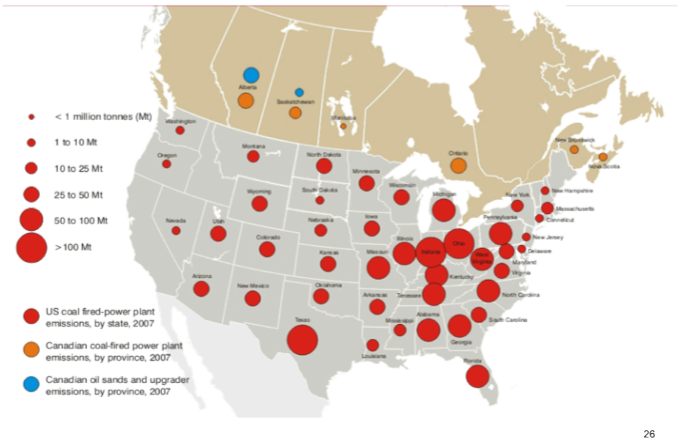

Fig. 4. Oil sand's emissions compared to coal.

When we look at these two presentations, what we need consider in our own framing is that what is occurring is more than the simple presentation of two different perspectives or interpretations. Both presenters are trying to change the public perception of the oil sands in order to shape the political regulation of a multi-billion dollar industry that affects countless lives, both human and non-human. The question becomes: what criteria can we use to evaluate either the moral significance or the transformative nature of any particular frame when the information presented is not false? In the concept of hermeneutical *horizon* Gadamer addressed some of the important issues around limitations to perception. These issues can act as a guide for how we can understand and evaluate any particular frame.

Identifying the Question

According to Gadamer, in each life situation there can arise a particular question, that is, a particular challenge, problem, shock or disruption that calls us to open ourselves to what is or could happen in the world (365f). The first challenge in evaluating any frame is that of dentifying the question that any particular situation asks of us and coming to a shared

understanding of this question is. For the Kairos Dialogue the question was, "How could religious communities play a role in moving us beyond the current polarized debate and assist the different sides of this issue to find a way to move forward that is moral?" The importance of identifying the common question was shown when for the first part of the day Nikiforuk and Thompson largely talked past each other. It was only after Tom intervened and asked them to adopt the question of how and where they could move forward together that the polarization began to break down.

Inclusion and Exclusion from Frames

The importance of a question is in part how it begins to set the focus and limits of a particular frame. Setting limits for what is included and excluded in any frame is not only a function of a frame's question, but also how we answer that question. Inclusion and exclusion affects perception by revealing and giving emphasis to what is inside the frame while concealing and de-emphasizing what is excluded. This is seen in the inclusion of reclamation efforts and the exclusion of their limitations by Thompson, or in the exclusion of all other effects oil sand production has on the boreal forest and the inclusion of the most disrupted land by Nikiforuk. What can also be revealed within a frame are particular relationships. This can be a relationship internal to the subject framed, such as the relationship between land disruption and reclamation or the relationship between oil sands production and increasing GHG emissions. It can also be how the perceiver relates to the subject, and their own past experience with the subject.[24] Nikiforuk, who often presents to environmentalists and those excluded from Alberta's political power system, for example, attempted to show the relation between the audience's past

[24] An important aspect of this is the relationship between how our perception of the subject is framed and how our psychological make up will cause us to tend to respond in particular ways. These aspects of framing is beyond the scope of what emerged here. A further articulation of this can be found in the work of Kahneman and Tversky.

experience and the oil sands by focusing on the oil sand's environmental impact and how it affects Alberta's political system. Thompson, who often presents to business audiences, attempted to include the audience's experience by focusing on economics and energy needs. Inclusion can also be used to de-emphasize something else within a frame by placing it in a larger context. This is seen in Thompson's placing of GHG emissions from the oil sands in the context of emissions from coal usage.

Inclusion and exclusion are important, involving more then just a difference of perspective, but rather the shaping of justice itself. As Kimberley Curtis has argued, "disregard" -- that is the exclusion from one's frame -- is an *a priori* condition of injustice. This is because when something is concealed from our focus and vision, this omission creates a cover for injustice to occur. At the same time, inclusion of too many elements can also become a cover for injustice by deemphasizing something that may be significant or by scattering focus and effort. The challenge comes in addressing the criteria that Gadamer raises: "Is the horizon (or frame) the right horizon for the question that is being asked?" (302) The challenge of framing is to clearly reveal the elements of a situation that are significant for answering the question that is posed while concealing elements that may distract. Since this involves the connection between question and frame, it implies the primary importance of defining the question. This challenge also raises the importance of determining what will be recognized as significant and allowed into our frame.

Porosity

Gadamer points out that having a horizon also implies the possibility of being able to see beyond what is simply nearby and beyond our old horizons as our horizons change (302). The limits of our frames lead us to an additional function of framing, the porosity of our frame.

Porosity acts like a frame's filter and can vary in how and how much that which is beyond their horizon is allowed in. Dogmatic or fundamentalist frames, for example, have a lower porosity compared to frames that actively seek new perspectives. In the Kairos Dialogue we witnessed many variations in porosity. This usually occurred in terms of the degree to which each person would confine themselves to their party line and how they would use their party line to filter what perspective or evidence they would accept. It was precisely at the point at which the two presenters' porosity increased, and they began to include and address some of the points raised by the other, that there was a move to a more common ground. Evaluating porosity is a matter of balancing out two factors. More porous frames can be transformative because they allow into our frames the perspective of others. They allow us to explore the world and in the process create the possibility for both revealing significant concealed elements of our world and creating a more expansive and comprehensive frame. On the other hand there also needs to be a limit to porosity so that our vision is not blinded by too much potentially irrelevant or misleading information. The challenge of porosity is setting criteria that can be used to evaluate and select what is appropriate to be allowed through this filter into a particular frame.

Significance

Gadamer describes an additional element of horizons that relates to framing: "A person who has a horizon knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small" (302). It is not just what we perceive, but also the comparative value that we give to elements that is an essential element of any frame. This same point is emphasized by O'Connell, who in his book on discipleship argues, "value inculcation, the making of disciples, misunderstands its mission if it views itself as the process of convincing people that what seems good is bad, and vice versa. Rather its mission is convincing people that what seems

more important is less important, and that something else is more important" (63). In community organizing, how an issue is significant for a person or for those that they are connected to is called self-interest. Self-interest is recognized as being an essential element and driver of social change (Jacobsen 50-58). The challenge of any frame then is not just inclusion and exclusion or porosity, but also in how it reveals the relationships and significance of what is included to those who use the frame.

These aspects of framing were used together to bring about a degree of transformation at the Kairos Dialogue day. Defining a common question, one that sought a way to move forward together, allowed Thompson and Nikiforuk to move their polarized positions to a point where they could see the significant elements that they share. This involved a shift in what they included and excluded from their frames, until they were able to begin to articulate a shared vision for the oil sands, such as imagining a 'sinless' oil sands project, or a fair carbon tax, or an accurate and independent air quality monitoring. What was transformative was the way in which these frames allowed them to perceive areas where they both recognized the work that needed to be done to address issues that they both could see.

As this happened what the participatns began to see was a shift toward greater porosity. Thompson, for example, when challenged after making disparaging comments about Dr. O'Conner, who has raised health issues concerning the oil sands, retracted his claims (at least for that day). Likewise Nikiforuk acknowledged work being done by the oil industry to address some of the issues he had raised and considered how the oil sands fit within the larger challenge of carbon emissions. In these areas, as Tom stated, "The thing actually worked!"

The challenge of framing that the dialogue day struggled to overcome was captured by Tom when he stated that, "They are not ignorant of the range of issues or difficulties. Neither

side is ignorant. They weight different responses differently with different emphasis of what to hold on to." Both of the main speakers after the dialogue largely went back to their polarized perspectives. The reason for this failure to create long-term change is suggested by the model of public dialogue developed by Hutchinson (31-37) and used by Harder (163-169). This model involves 1) personal reflection and sharing stories to build empathy; 2) identification of important facts; 3) ethical reflection to examine how people value these facts; 4) post-ethical reflection to seek commonalities in terms of values or inconsistencies between values and actions; and 5) shared action. What this model suggests is that the failure to realize long-term change may be because the dialogue never delved sufficiently into how what was discussed connected with what the speakers or their organizations valued as significant. They agreed on some facts, but they did not sufficiently agree on the value these facts had; there was little examination of how the other's values were rooted in different experiences or world views; neither of the main speakers identified how the shared insights that were gained were significant personally or in their ongoing roles; and possibilities for shared action that were identified were never identified as significant enough to make a commitment to act on.

In contrast to the dialogue day, we see an ongoing process of transformation with Doug and Carol in so far as what they came to see was perceived as personally and organizationally significant. Doug described how he had "always been interested in thinking about what God wants me to do." Doug saw the problem of releasing too much carbon and how this could be addressed being linked with his personal sense of being called. This connected his new perception with his personal sense of mission and the relationship he had with both God and the coal industry. As Doug stated, "This is where I felt that I had a mission. Here is this coal guy bringing the solution to carbon dioxide. It just seemed like a magical opportunity. It got me

excited." Likewise, Carol saw the situation in Nigeria as a significant challenge for her company, and as "hell", a "hell" in which she and her company participated. The significance of this was experienced by Carol in her anger and it was demonstrated in how she confronted her boss and reshaped her work around this insight.

What also sets the stories of Doug and Carol apart is that in both of these stories there is an additional element: they both came to a point where they saw the possibility of creating either a process or technology that could address what they saw as significant. This suggests that our perception leads to transformation not only when it allows us to see the realities of our world that are significant to us, but also when we can perceive ways of creatively shaping these realities.

Creativity and Imagination

Up to this point the emphasis has been on how transformation happens as our paradigmatic imagination reveals to us the patterns of our world and our participation in these patterns. This is not the entire function of our perception for transformation. Humans are not only able to perceive our world, we also have the capacity for creativity. The transformative possibility of creativity was captured in the initial creation of the 2010 Interfaith Partnership (IFP), which hosted the 2010 Inter-Faith World Religious Leaders Summit (IFWRLS). The IFP began with a dream, that "Faith groups in Canada and in G8 Plus countries will be a constructive, interfaith and transitional presence promoting justice though the G8 Summit and related political moments in 2010." Its initial objectives were to:

> 1) Facilitate a highly recognizable mobilization of people of faith with constructive actions and strong voices in support of justice for the most vulnerable people of our Earth and our Earth itself. (Relates largely to the Statement and use of the Statement). 2) Influence the policy positions of Canada and the G8 Plus countries in support of justice, particularly in regard to progress on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the enhancement of peace and dignity for all. (Relates largely to the G8

> Summit and related meetings). 3) Build and deepen sustained interfaith collaboration for promoting justice. (Relates largely to the Interfaith Partnership). (Partnership 1)

Neither the IFP nor the IFWRLS began as a reality in our world. My own involvement began with a conversation between Esther, who became the chair of the IFP and myself at the end of the ELCIC national convention. She had just come from the IFWRLS in Germany and I had been trying to find a way that we could bring faith communities together to address the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We began dreaming about bringing faith communities across Canada together, perhaps by hosting a summit when the G8 came to Canada and tying this to the development of a grassroots movement. There was no budget, no organization to pull it off; there was just a shared dream and a hope for the impact it could have. An Ad Hoc Working group was formed a few months later. A year and a half later it dissolved to allow for the creation of the Interfaith Partnership, and almost three years after that initial dreaming we had successfully hosted the IFWRLS, which was preceded by a national grassroots campaign. This all began with creative imagination (and then a lot of hard work).

The story of the INWRLS illustrates the transformative potential of imagination to allow us to perceive the world not just as it is, but the world as it could be. This is the creative power of imagination. It gave us the power to dream of what we wanted to develop; to dream in such a way that we were not confined to the current reality of either budgets or existing organizational structures; and to dream in such a way so as to direct the creation of what were basically new realities in the inter-faith world of Canada.[25]

This dreaming did not occur in a vacuum. It developed out of an existing international process of having IFWRLSs at the same time as G8 meetings. It was intended to address existing

[25] Dreaming was also a theme of transformation that was particularly emphasized by Doug's story of transformation, while also being present in the other stories.

justice issues in our world; it was based on knowledge about how the faith community could address these issues along with knowledge about some of the existing realities of the interfaith community and its dynamics. The carrying out of the summit involved years of careful planning and bringing together people, communities and resources. In the IFP we can see that creativity is not just the perception of what is possible; that creativity is rooted in the perception of the dynamics and resources of what is, while not being confined to these; that creativity also involves the creation of a path towards the creation of the world that our imagination perceives.

This same creative pattern was a theme that was present throughout the stories of transformation: in Carol's creation of a strategy for above-ground risks, in Doug's creation of IECE, in the creation of the Kairos Dialogue day and, as will be discussed in the next chapter, in George's development of dry tailings technology.

From this pattern of creativity we can see that transformation is not just a question of perceiving the moral dimensions of our world through our paradigms and frames, it is also about how our perceptions can creatively imagine and bring into realization a world that we hope for. Transformation, understood as such, challenges us to seek how we can come to perceive through our paradigmatic imagination the significant dynamics and relationships of our world and how we can work with them; to seek out the question our context presents us with and to find frames that can open us to see the morally significant features of our world; and to seek for ways in which we can use our imagination to creatively reshape our world so that in it what is good and life giving would be realized.

Chapter 2: Perceiving a Pattern of Transformation

Up to this point we have been looking at some of the themes that have emerged from the stories of transformation studied here. This has enabled us to see some of the elements that are a part of a transformative process. This now allows us to step back and from these elements and begin to describe the initial emergence of a pattern of transformation

Reality, Culture and our Shared World[26]

I began by recognizing that we encounter the world through our interpretation, which we actively shape and which is shaped by our society. This analysis looked at how our paradigmatic imagination helps us to perceive patterns in our world. The stories also shows us that how people were not simply looking at their own interpretation, but rather they perceived the world *through* their interpretation.

That the perception of the people interviewed was not simply stopping at their own interpretation, but rather trying to grasp a reality beyond their interpretation, reminds us that we are a part of a reality much greater than our self. Whether we are speaking about the flames shooting out of gas flares, carbon in the atmosphere, or God, all of these exist with a certain degree of independence from human culture. One only has to look at the most recent images from the Hubble telescope, which reveal hundreds of the billions of galaxies that are a part of our universe,[27] to be reminded that we exist as a part of a reality that is much vaster than we can even imagine. Inversely, as we begin to learn about the almost incomprehensible nature of the smallest bits of that universe and all of the ways that these interact and are in relationship, layer upon layer, in the midst of which is the web of life, we begin to realize that this larger reality is

[26] This conception is similar to Heidegger's (Poetry, Language, Thought) concepts of earth, work and world.
[27] See http://imagine.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/ask_astro/answers/021127a.html or for images see http://www.spacetelescope.org/images/heic0406a/

complex beyond comprehension. Trying to understand this reality as confined to human interpretation, as corresponding to a picture of reality that we may have, or cohering within some system is evidence of the profound foolishness of human arrogance. Yet reality also has a structure, regularity to its pattern that gives existence its shape, within which we act and by which we are affected. This is *reality*, it is what was created by God and was seen by God as good in the creation story of Genesis (Genesis 1 NRSV). As such reality contains the good within which we have life.

While we live within this reality, we do not perceive this reality directly. We approach it *through* our interpretation. This interpretation is a human creation. It is something we actively do. It is shaped by the society we live in, with its language, symbols, metaphors and paradigms. This society is in turn shaped by its own history, stretching back before memory, crossing countless other societies on its journey. This human aspect and perspective within reality is what, for this paper, I will call *culture*. Culture is what we, as humans, create. Our culture includes the language of 'love', 'hell' and 'above-ground risks' and how they are understood as significant for individuals and organizations. Culture includes our paradigms, our frames and our attempts to convince others that our perspective should be accepted. Our culture also gives us elements that we then combine to make up the dreams that we pursue. Our culture is both a part of the greater reality and it is that through which we approach and perceive reality.

There is also a third element that exists between our culture and reality. Our *culture* is what we humans create, it is also a part of what I am calling *reality*. How these come together is what I will call our *world*. A flaring gas well is neither just the reality of its molecules, nor is it simply a cultural creation, rather it is something that human culture created by reshaping a piece of reality. Mary came to perceive God as love; the word love is a part of her paradigmatic

imagination that shapes how she perceives the reality of God, a reality that goes beyond what a word can capture. Yet through that word, God is experienced as shaping her life and her relationships with others. The quantity of carbon that is in the atmosphere is in part simply an aspect of the reality of our atmosphere, but it is a reality that has been changed by countless smokestacks, tail pipes and trees lit on fire by human hands. This carbon will in turn shape shore lines, coral reefs, rain and temperature patterns, affecting elements of reality beyond what humans can directly control or perceive. This will in turn force us to change how we as humans live and even what we will value as significant. What I will call the *world* is the dynamic relationship that exists between the culture we create and the vast complexity of the reality in which we participate. So when our culture opens us to perceive reality we do not encounter reality directly, instead we experience this mixture of culture and reality that together forms the world in which we live.[28]

As our culture comes together with reality to create a world there is an order. By order I mean the relatively consistent patterns of interaction that give the universe a degree of stability. There is also a degree of order to human culture and practices. One of the assumptions on which this paper rests is that in the midst of this order is the moral order. This order allows life to be created and to flourish. Moral order is also an element of human culture. While this cultural order has a degree of stability it also something we shape in order to find ways in which human life can flourish. In addition to and based on these orders there is also the continuous reshaping of how they are expressed or brought together in any particular situation or relationship. At the level of our world, the challenge is to shape this interaction of orders so that there is a degree of

[28] It is important to note the difficulty in speaking or writing about reality. Since we encounter reality through our culture, the language we use is always a part of some form of cultural performance. The challenge for the reader is to not be caught within the limits of the performance, but to look beyond the performance to the reality that it points towards.

harmony that can allow for the flourishing of life. According to Northcott and O'Connell, this attempt at finding harmony between the created and human cultural order is what the tradition of natural law seeks to bring to our perception of morality (Northcott 225-26; O'Connell 19-26).

In contrast to some tendencies in natural law theory, in these stories of transformation what we see is that the relationship between culture and reality that creates our world is not static. Since it is a relationship, when one side changes, the world we encounter changes. When Mary's cultural perception of God changed so that she came to interpret God as loving, the reality of God may not have changed, but because the paradigm of loving God shaped her perception and relationship with God, the world involving Mary and God was brought into closer harmony. Mary then experienced transformation as she lived in and out of this transformed relationship, experiencing and sharing the goodness it contained. In this transformation is seen as occurring through the reshaping of our culture (perception of God as Love), in relation to the nature of reality (a loving God) so that what is good can emerge in the world (for Mary an experience of healing and a life of helping others experience the same healing).

When Carol perceived oil exploitation on the Nigerian Delta as "hell", she encountered a world that was fundamentally different from when it was viewed as a good investment, even though the reality of the Delta was the same. In this case a process of transformation began when her perceptions allowed her to perceive the need of transformation and the significance this held. This transformation grew when Carol then combined this with her understanding of the processes that can shape business practice so as to translate this perception of hell into the creation of a cultural strategy addressing above-ground risks. This then shaped the culture of the company. The way this business functioned began to change, causing the relationship between its culture and the reality that it participated in to also change. Through this process

transformation occurred as the relationship between human culture and reality shifted from a world that had become destructive to a world that allowed a little more space on the Nigerian Delta for life to flourish. It also shifted the corporate world so that its practices could promote the flourishing of life in some way. We see in this that transformation comes not only as we perceive the patterns of our world, but also the significance they hold. Transformation develops as this knowledge is then used to perceive how we can creatively reshape a culture, and with it the world that is created in the relationship between that culture and reality.

Doug came to see the amount of carbon that we release as a moral problem largely based on reasoning that came from the scientific method of exploring the patterns of our world. We can see in his story that transformation is not just about an arbitrary imposition of a world view, rather transformation happens when our perception is open to being shaped by our encounter with and exploration of the realities of the world that we are a part of. Through IECE this led to both a further scientific work to further understand these patterns and engineering work to develop ways functioning within these patterns to realize a potential good.

Wisdom and Creativity

Together these stories reveal how transformation happens through the shaping and testing of our perception in order to perceive the patterns of our world, the significance, including moral significance, they hold and how one can work within these patterns and reshape them in order for what is good to emerge in our world. This is what I will call *wisdom*.

Mary did not just perceive God as loving; she actively changed how she lived and how she works with others to experience healing. Doug not only perceived the need to address carbon emissions; he created and developed IECE. Once created it then exists as a part of our

world, which can become an element of yet further creative activity**.** Likewise, Carol did not just perceive the need and the possibility of how her company could address "above-ground risks", she used this perception to see how she could act to shape how her company would address these risks. The IFWRLS would not have existed or impacted our world without the creative act that saw the possibility of reshaping existing elements together to create the IFP and IFWRLS. In these acts the world was transformed by not just following existing patterns, but by creatively seeing how they could be reshaped. This reshaping of our cultural patterns in order to realize the good in our world is what I will call creativity.

Looking at the themes of transformation and perception, we can now begin to see a pattern of transformation, namely one in which transformation happens in the dynamic relationship between our culture and reality as they together shape our world so that life can flourish. This transformation happens through *wisdom* and *creativity.*[29]

Distortion

The limitations of perception and the creative possibilities of imagination have a darker side, the power to distort, obscure or hide aspects of our reality. As O'Connell argues, using material developed by Bandler and Grinder:

> The human mind-body unity really desires its own happiness. Consequently, anything that happens within the person is an attempt to achieve happiness. If we view this interior happening as a sort of "contribution by some power within," then the contribution must be understood as an utterly sincere and completely genuine attempt to be helpful in this quest for personal happiness. It may not be a skillful or effective contribution, but it is sincere. Even negative feelings, inner attitudes, or inclinations that appear to be profoundly destructive, are nonetheless genuine attempts to be helpful to the self. (108)

[29] It is important to note that this builds on and is closely related to the concept of the hermeneutic circle of action and reflection. I have decided to, at this point, keep this concept in the notes in order to not simply adopt this theory, but rather remain attentive to the experiences of transformation presented here and what they can add. What is added so far is the focus on perceiving the patterns of our world and creativity as the reshaping of these patterns. This will be brought into the central argument in chapter three.

While there may be some extreme cases where people truly are not attempting to achieve happiness, if we assume that in most cases people sincerely desire their own happiness and we could extend this to include what is good, yet what we often experience shows how people repeatedly fail to achieve either their own happiness or realize what is good, we must ask where our unskillful or ineffective attempt to achieve happiness and goodness comes from. One source that we see in these stories is in the ways in which we distort our perception. The presence of distortions is seen, for example, in Mary's earlier image of God as a stern strict father figure, which had to be overcome for her transformation. Distortion could also be seen in the presentations of the two main speakers at the Kairos dialogue as they tried to shape how people saw the oil sands in an attempt to get people to adopt what were two opposing views.

This power to distort our perspectives, especially by the use of heuristics, has been recognized and examined by psychologists Kahneman and Tversky. Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in "Framing Moral Intuitions" has taken this further by showing how framing effects (for him the "effects of wording and context on moral belief" (52)) can also shape how people perceive the moral features of a situation. Marx, Freud, critical theorists such as Habermas ("The Hermeneutic Claim to Universality" 189-209), hermeneutical theorists such as Ricoeur (Striver 147-48) and theologians such as Tillich (Shinn 21) and Keating (93-107) take this problem of distortion further by showing how distortions are products not only of our psychology but also our history, our society, our economic and political relations. What these thinkers make clear is the great difficulty that we have in perceiving reality accurately and the great pressure that exists within our psychologies and in our social location to maintain particular distortions of reality.

If all human perception is an interpretation and thus subject to distortion, this raises an important problem. We perceive our world through the culturally shaped lens of our perception. As already seen in our stories, this can allow us to encounter the world in ways that transform how we see and experience our world. At the same time we have seen that our perception functions by both revealing and concealing aspects of our world as well as by actively choosing what we will experience as significant. This creates the possibility of our paradigmatic imagination excluding from our perception those aspects of reality that may challenge our expectations or paradigms. This was found for example in the classic study by Bruner and Postman in which subjects were shown cards where the color and suit were recombined (i.e. a red spade) in the midst of regular playing cards. Not only were people unable to recognize all of the incongruous cards accurately at even the longest exposure time. 16 of the 28 subjects even began to show sign of confusion, disruption and frustration. This shows us how challenging it can be for us to avoid becoming locked within our own, culturally created, distortive circle. This leaves us with the question: what condition is necessary for us to break out of this distortion to acquire wisdom? An answer to this question can be seen in the story of Father Joseph.

Honesty

When you meet Father Joseph (Joe) you encounter a man who seems to radiate peacefulness and love. Now in his eighties, Father Joe is a Franciscan Friar who has experienced transformation in his own life and is a guide to others in their transformation. He began his career as a successful professor, but left that life, moving to western Canada to become a Franciscan Friar as he sought to become “a little one before the Father.” As a Friar, he became a

priest, with a ministry focused on preaching, counseling and spiritual direction. He also served both in Africa and as an Abbot of his monastery.

Father Joseph captures the transformational challenge of how we overcome perceptual distortion when he describes honesty as an important aspect of transformation:

"The second thing is the acceptance of the situation as it honestly is. Not as we want it to be, or the way it may be, but the way it is. And some times it is pretty good and other times it is not good at all. But we have to look at both, at what is not so good and what is good and we have to balance it out. It is not so easy and some times it takes years."

Father Joe teaches us that the power of distortion to conceal those things that challenge our distorted perception or way of life, is overcome by the active practice of honesty, which is both an openness to and acceptance of things as they are.[30] The significance of honesty, or being open, is also emphasized by Gadamer who, while laying out his theory of how interpretation is shaped by prejudices, made *Bildung* (formation) the central interpretive virtue, which he understood as "keeping one-self open to what is other - to other, more universal points of view" (17). This openness and commitment to honesty was often demonstrated by each of the participants in this study by their openness to having some of their core perceptions of the world change. This same pattern was also found by Colby and Damon who write:

> Most of the (moral) exemplars express a core commitment to honesty. They were as rigorously honest with themselves as they were with others. (Indeed, this was one of the most striking qualities that distinguishes the exemplars from other well-intentioned people trying to do good in the world . . . . When a commitment to honesty is sustained throughout life, it paradoxically creates fluctuations in one's other beliefs. In fact, the greater the truth commitment, the more uncertain the commitment to other attitudes and opinions -- although not to all other beliefs, since, as our exemplars demonstrated, a core commitment to honesty can coexist with other central articles of faith. (77)

Honesty is not just about being open to the perception of facts, but also being open to the moral dimension of what is perceived. Father Joe's description of honesty ties honesty to the

[30] See also McGrath 48-49 especially the quote by Murdoch.

perception of the moral dimension of our world, of "what is not so good and what is good." This moral perception is challenging. As Father Joe says, "It is not so easy and some times it takes years." This challenge comes because honesty is not just about accurately perceiving a world that is out there, it is about the challenge of perceiving a world that we participate in, that holds significance for us and of whose morality we are a part. This is where his comment that it takes years is important. For Father Joe, honesty is both a commitment and something that is actively practiced by an active opening and listening within our relationships with God, our self and each other. Honesty is not a one-time event, but rather occurs over time as trust is built, and as our existing psychological and social patterns are brought into the open.

In our other stories of transformation we see the overcoming of distortion through a remarkable degree of openness and honesty. People strove to see the world as it is, and they allowed this to shape both their perception and their lives. For example, a typical economic model of distortion would assume that Doug's position as the head of the coal lobby would give him great incentive to close himself off to perceiving anything that would challenge that position, assuming what the educator Paulo Frere has called "anti-dialogical action" in which the world is mythologized (120). Yet Doug sought out dialogue and was not only open to listening to a scientific argument about emitting too much carbon, but also to perceiving its moral significance.

This is where recognizing the distinction between our culture, reality and the world in-between comes in. If our perception was only a cultural creation, it would be locked within its own distorting circles. When we use our perception as an opening through which we perceive our world, then this opening creates the possibility for that world and reality to break in to disrupt our distortive circles. In other words, if we shift the emphasis off of our belief systems, or

our 'knowledge of reality', and instead treat our beliefs as an interpretive system and as an opening *through* which we perceive our world, then we free these systems to be shaped by what we perceive, or what breaks through this opening.

This is, as Father Joe reminds us, not easy. Habitual patterns of thought, re-enforcing social relationships and psychological drives, often come together to protect distorted ways of perceiving the world. Still our stories show the possibilities for overcoming these barriers when people engage the difficult commitment and work of allowing a part of our world, or even the potential of our world, to break through our distortions, to reshape our interpretation so that we can perceive our world, including its goodness and evil, anew.

Father Joe's story pushes how we understand this overcoming of distortion and the process of transformation further. When he spoke about honesty and how essential listening was, he spoke specifically of, "listening to the Spirit working and speaking within." For Father Joe our honesty about our lives and relationships involves a prayerful listening to how God is working and speaking within these relationships. Father Joe did not see transformation occurring just through our honesty, but rather he described how, "I am being transformed by the love of God or grace, grace comes in and I am changed and it makes it easier to love you and other people." For Father Joe, the heart of our transformation is our relationship with God and how God is acting transform us. To deepen our perspective on how God transforms we now turn towards baptism.

Baptism and Transformation

Baptism is an act that by grace enacts the transformation of the relationship between the baptized and God and in this it contains, like a seed, the potential pattern of transformation which

is lived out over a lifetime as the potential in baptism is fulfilled. Baptism is being used here, much like the stories of transformation, to afford us insight into the process of transformation. Its emphasis on how God transforms us allows us to approach it as a paradigm through which we can perceive the pattern of how God is present in transformation, not just in the ritual of baptism, but throughout life as the potential present in baptism is fulfilled.

Baptism frames transformation in a way that reveals how at the heart of transformation is the saving grace of God that the baptized receives as they are baptized and live "in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 230). This Trinitarian formulation in the baptism ceremony reveals that it is the Love of God that flows between the three persons of the Trinity, which the baptized restored into. The Trinitarian nature of God sets out the Trinitarian nature of baptism's transformation.

We begin with the first person of the Trinity, God the Father, who created all that exists as the primary act of grace, turns us toward the created *reality.* In the first creation story of Genesis, water seems to exist at the very beginning, even before the beginning of this telling of the story of creation (Genesis 1:1-2 NRSV). There is little wonder then that Haitch, referencing Schmemann, describes water "as the most ancient and universal of all religious symbols," representing the whole material world. "It symbolizes life, for there can be no life without water" (14). In the Genesis story, these waters were then shaped by God's Word, which gave order to the water, an order that God saw was good (Genesis 1:1-11 NRSV) even before humans were created. When human words are spoken over the waters in baptism, this is an imitation which according to Tertullian points us back towards how God's Word was spoken and shaped the waters in creation, whereby God saw these waters as good, rested upon them and made them holy (9-11). In baptism God the Father and the created water point us to a reality in which,

according to Luther, God dwells (quoted in Moe-Lobeda 84). As such this reality has a goodness and holiness that in our creation we are created out of, participate in, and have life through.

As the baptized is washed in water, Divine Love is poured out for the baptized, making the baptized holy. In this act, baptism transforms as the reality of God comes down upon the frailty of a human being. In the use of waters, baptism reveals that the bridge between human culture and the reality of God occurs through the created order, for which water is a symbol. As Haitch writes, in reference to the baptismal theology of Alexander Schmemann, "Baptism transforms how people relate to the material world, restoring these relations to their God intended form. The world is then no longer a commodity to be consumed or exploited, but rather all creation becomes once more a means of communion with God." (2) In this act, God the creator brings us into the divine relationship of love through the created order and in the process we are restored, not only to God, but also into communion with God's creation.

Luther, in his small catechism, describes baptism as involving both water and the Word (348-349). The Word he refers to are the words of Jesus found in Scripture. In a baptism these words are not abstract universal words, rather they are words that are spoken in an ordinary culturally shaped language and spoken by an ordinary and particular pastor or priest. Luther stressed that the water used in baptism is *plain* water. For us who live after the post-modern critical and linguistic turn, aware of all the limitations and confines of language, it is perhaps equally important to stress that the words that are spoken are themselves, on their own, plain words. What then makes the plain waters and the plain words transformative?

Luther describes how the words that are in and with the water and that do the things of baptism, as not just words, but the Word of God. This does not mean that the words are magical, but rather the words and actions of baptism function as a paradigm revealing God's redeeming

action. In this revealing the spoken words of a priest or the written words of a book become an opening to the Word of God, which is Christ, the second person of the trinity, who was both baptized and who gave the command to baptize (Luther 348-349). It is Christ who, as both fully human and fully divine, bridges divine reality and human culture to open for us the world of God's grace. According to Moe-Lobeda, we are made righteous, redeemed and transformed, as God, Christ, comes down to dwell in us (74, 77-78). In baptism we have God, and thus what is good, coming to dwell in us through the Word (Christ) and the words that are spoken coming together to create a *world*, that is a relationship between human culture with its language and the divine reality with its Love.

A baptism is not only Word and created water; it also involves the gift, anointing and promise of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's presence within and amongst us. "The Holy Spirit nurtures the life of faith in their hearts until the final deliverance when they will enter into its full possession" (Churches 2). The Holy Spirit begins to enact our adoption into the Trinity, "taking us to the Divine source (the 'Father'), transforming us Christically as we are so taken" (Coakley 50) and conforming us to the image of Christ (See Romans 8 NRSV) as the Holy Spirit works internal to both the human heart and human relationships. In this, "the Holy Spirit is agent of the believer's transformation into an agent of Christ's Love" (Moe-Lobeda 87). Thus by the Holy Spirit, we are transformed and in this process human culture and creativity becomes a means by which God transforms our world.

In baptism what is created is a paradigm that reveals how God transforms us by bringing us into the relationship of God's Love. In the water we are pointed toward the *reality* of creation, and to how God's grace transforms as it comes to us in God's presence and in the goodness given to creation that gives us life. In the words of baptism we are pointed toward the

Word, Christ, who comes to dwell in and redeem what is human. In this Christ transforms by reconciling what is human and what is divine, creating a world that is the relationship between divine reality and human life. The Holy Spirit, in baptism, comes to dwell in us and amongst the baptized, transforming us and our *culture* so that we can become a means of transformation as we are brought into the love of the trinity and become a part of God's love for our neighbor. If we understand with Augustine that all that is good comes from God (9), then a baptism acts as a paradigm that, in revealing the threefold source of our relationship with God,[31] also reveals the threefold relationship with the source of what is good that we are drawn into in transformation.

On either side of the central act of washing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, our baptism lifts up the human side of the transformative pattern of baptism for the Christian Life. At the beginning of a baptism we encounter the beginning of a paradigm of transformative wisdom. Baptism begins with the recognition of perception of the patterns of evil and sin in our world, which, in the act of exorcism, we reject. This is what we saw in Carol's perception of the hell present in how oil was being exploited in Nigeria; in Doug's perception of the moral problem present in the amounts of carbon that we were releasing; in Mary's recognition that her perception of God as a stern father was a misperception; in Kairos's view of the destructiveness of the oil sands and the lack of discourse concerning the oil sands; in the IFP's recognition of global poverty, environmental unsustainability and violence in our world. In each of these the sin of our world is perceived and rejected.

Baptism's insight is that it sets out transformation, not simply as turning from what is wrong to what is right, but as a turn from sin to God. Baptism reveals how God has first turned towards us and then acts to turn us back to God. This places God at the centre of transformation

[31] The importance of the relationship with God as a part of transformation is also a critical element of liberation theology see Gutiérrez, The Density of the Present: Selective Writings, 82.

and as the primary actor in the transformation process. This is especially true if we hold the Lutheran insight that sin is ultimately our turning in upon our selves (Moe-Lobeda 79). This was reflected in our stories of transformation. For example, when asked what allowed them to come to see God differently (Mary) or to be open to perceiving the problem of carbon emissions (Doug), both Mary and Doug described this as the result of the action of God and the Holy Spirit. Likewise Father Joe described how "I am being transformed by the love of God or grace, grace comes in and I am changed and it makes it easier to love you and other people." Likewise, Carol described how transformation happens as we are being held by God. The paradigm of baptism reveals that the pattern of transformation is not just from what is evil to what is good, but rather it shows that what is most significant is the moving from the rejection of sin to the confession of God, from being turned in upon our selves to being turned towards God.

After we are washed in baptism, we are then given the gift of the Holy Spirit, anointed with oil, commissioned to be the light of Christ in the world and welcomed into the mission of the Church. In this second half, after our relationship with God is restored in the water, we are gifted, and called to be God's transforming love in the world (see also Moe-Lobeda 87). In this second half, baptism helps us to see that transformation is not just about the individual, but it is also about how one is empowered to become a means through which the Spirit works to love and transform our world. This was present in each of these stories of transformation: in how Mary's changed perception of God led her to recreate her life and take on the role of a spiritual care giver; in the response to the perception of global problems that led to the imagining of the possibility for inter faith cooperation in Canada and the creation of the IFWRLS and the IFP. In all of these stories perception not only involved the wisdom of perceiving what is evil and turning to God and what is good, it also involved creative wisdom that led people to act to bring

about transformation. This brings us beyond transformation through perception to how transformation happens through the shaping of a way of life.

Chapter 3: Transformation and our Way of Life.

Baptism's Trinitarian formulation directs us towards how transformation happens both through how God is present in creation and in how God works through us. At the same time both the recognition of sin and the suspicion that post-modern philosophy has given us raises for us the question of how we can know the good present in creation. This further leads us to question how, even with the Holy Spirit working in us, can we gain the wisdom to shape the relationship between human culture and reality so that goodness can emerge. Already we have noted how in these stories of transformation we saw transformation happening as people saw the world *through* their perceptions and perceived both the patterns that were occurring in their world and the possibility for creating new patterns in which the good can be realized. This picture of transformation remains incomplete.

Baptism also points us towards the life of Christ. In Jesus we see God, with God's goodness and wisdom as an embodied person, living a particular way of life, embedded within a particular historical context. Likewise in each of the stories transformation was not just a matter of changes in perception; rather transformation involved a relationship between perception and particular ways of life. A way of life is defined here as the patterns of actions and relationships that enact a persons or community's ongoing life. As developed here, a way of life is shaped, and shapes the set of beliefs held by a community and the individuals of that community and it involves how we participate in the world through our bodies and behaviors. An important approach to this comes in the work of Hubert L. Dreyfus.

Affirmation and Embedded Transformation

By bringing the philosophy of Heidegger into the work of artificial intelligence (AI) and cognitive science Dreyfus has brought attention to how our thinking cannot be separated from how we are embodied and live as an embedded part of our world. In his work he has challenged the adoption of a view of cognition based on Descartes in which values are assigned by a mind to meaningless facts. Based on the philosophy of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and others, he has argued that we have to instead look at how objects are a part of the "organization of the everyday world" (332) and thus a part of a network of relationships and functions that make up our world. Rather than seeing cognition as the creation of a model of the world in our brain, Dreyfus argues that cognition occurs as a part of a world, with the world itself being the model (335). While recognizing that we do, at times, create mental models, Dreyfus shifts the focus from what goes on in our mind, to how we interact with our world, how we are oriented to the world by our senses, possibilities for action, and motivations as an embodied part of our world. Questions about how significance is assigned in this model are turned on their head. Instead of approaching significance as something assigned by an independent mind, significance is recognized as already existing based on our previous experience with our environment, and on patterns within our self and with the world which are formed in prior interaction with the world (349-351). This approach addresses the problem of the relationship between our ideas and the world by removing the distinction between inner and outer (342), directing our focus to the embedded/embodied[32] coping by which we skillfully achieve an optimum "body-environment gestalt" (343). What this optimum state is, is not then a meaning assigned to the situation, but it

[32] For further development of the significance of focusing on our embodiment see also Davis, Sedmak and Janz; Maurice Merleu-Ponty; and McClintock Fulkerson.

is something that emerges from the dynamic relationship between the "coper and the environment" (343-344).

What this does for our understanding of transformation is shift us from seeing transformation as primarily the mental activity of defining what is good which is then followed by actions that try to move us toward this picture of the good. Rather than an intellectually centered model, we begin to see how transformation, even of our perception, happens as a part of a way of life and is embedded in a relationship with its context and thus emerges out of the dynamic interaction between our thoughts and our world. Human culture is not then something that must be bridged with reality, instead human culture emerges as a part of the greater reality, with our world being an emergent reality that is created by this dynamic relationship. The good that we seek to realize is not then some ideal that we seek after, rather it is an ongoing process in which what is good is created, perceived and realized in the interaction between our way of life and our environment.

How transformation emerges out of a way of life and the interaction with its context is one of the themes present in George's story of transformation. George's story involves several different experiences of transformation. These range from his experience of transformation upon returning to his childhood farm to find the yard empty, with the house, the old homestead house, barns and other buildings ploughed under; by living in an impoverished village in Uganda; through his relationship with nature; and in his work with the oil sands and heavy oil producers. In this section I will focus on how George's personal story of transformation began when he grew up relatively poor on a farm in Saskatchewan. When he was young his father died, after "being sick for as long as I could remember." It was soon after this that he began to experience transformation in his life through his confirmation class. This happened as he began to develop a

relationship with the new pastor and his son and came to be accepted as one of the family. Out of this relationship and these classes, he began to develop a new concept of himself. He came to see "that there is a place in the world for a guy like me, growing up as the youngest and most vulnerable child in a poor family, living in primitive conditions out on the farm with a future that seemed doubtful and uncertain." As a result he began to see himself as a "special person," a "person of God for whom there was certain criteria for how I would need to conduct my life." He came to see that he "wasn't a lone person on earth, just a biological being -- that there is some significance to my life."

The first thing that we need to notice in George's story is that it was not judgment but *affirmation* that transformed George. Often in efforts to transform people or organizations there can be a tendency towards judgment, which attempts to impose an outside criteria and in so doing show what is wrong with that person or organization. In contrast George was transformed by the recognition of the significance that his life had and could have: "that there is a place in the world for a guy like me" and by coming to see himself as a "special person," a "person of God."

The importance of affirmation has been well recognized in other studies of change. K. Patterson in her book Influencer, describes the work of Dr. Ethna Reid, who studied teachers who were able to successfully improve student's poor reading habits. Reid found that the vital behavior that made a difference was that "top performers reward positive performance far more frequently than their counterparts (33). The value of affirmation has also been found in asset based approaches such as those developed by Snow for congregations or by Kretzmann and McKnight for building communities.

What is important in George's story is how this affirmation emerged. The affirmation of George came not just out of an ideal of goodness that was imposed on him; rather it emerged as a

part of a way of life and the pattern of relationships his life was involved with. For George this happened in the coming together of his way of life, a poor farmers son, whose father had died, who came to confirmation, developed a friendships with his fellow students and became involved in the Pastor's family. This then brought him into a relationship with a person who lived the way of life of a pastor: teaching confirmation and opening his life and family to George. Teaching and learning were a part of this pattern of ways of life, but the significance of the affirmation that George experienced happened in the relationships between George and these people and their ways of life that welcomed George as a part of their family and treated him as someone special. Their ways of life then acted as a kind of frame that was able to bring focus to the significance of George's life.

A similar pattern emerges in the Baha'i community's participation as a part of the IFP and WRLS. As Esther describes it,

> The Baha'i community was quite transformed by their ability to engage in the process all the way along. . . they were quite transformed because other faith communities took them so seriously, and recognized their expertise and lifted up their expertise so clearly. And they stepped forward and all of that they offered to the process was well received and highly regarded. So their confidence as a part of the interfaith reality and landscape in Canada and around the world was quite transformed. You saw that at the end of the summit when it was one of the Baha'i Lucien Crevel who offered to take a primary role in organizing in France.

In this process affirmation was not about an outside giving of significance to something that the Baha'i community possessed, but rather the significance of their expertise emerged through their role within the IFP. This expertise of course existed within the historical way of life of the Baha'i community, but its significance for the wider inter-faith community was a pattern that was created as a part of the interaction between the Baha'i and this wider inter-faith community as they acted to share their knowledge and demonstrate ways of working between faiths.

Affirmation was also a theme of Carol's story. When describing how she worked for transformation, Carol repeatedly emphasized the need to avoid judging. She described this as a "paradox" and a "risk"; that in order to influence someone to change, one needs to meet a person where they are at, understand them and invite them to perceive differently and, even if they refuse, not to judge them. In doing this she set up a distinction between helping people to see from their own set of values or beyond what they currently perceive, and drawing a line in the sand by judging them based on one's own set of values. As she describes it, "It is not me shoving my stuff, my ideology on someone. It is actually saying to them that inside of you there are a set of values . . . a potential, and I think that everyone has a set of values . . . incredible capacity if given the opportunity to be realized." The important distinction in this is that in judging, an external set of values is *imposed* on someone in order to condemn a person's values and way of life. In contrast, Carol saw transformation happening through an *expansion* of a person's moral vision based on what they already value, and an invitation to develop and expand their way of life as a part of this expanded moral vision.

Dreyfus understands that embedded/embodied coping in "our experience of the everyday world . . . is given as already organized in terms of significance and relevance" (347). A person's self-concept, by its very nature, involves things that a person or community has already experienced and internalized as being significant and relevant. In judging, or whenever a value judgment is experienced as imposed, the connection between that good and what a person already experiences as significant will likely be very weak. By affirming what is already a part of a person's existing pattern of significance, there is a stronger capacity to have an affirmation stick.

The importance of showing the connection to what is already valued is one of the things that K. Patterson identifies as a key trait in people who are able to influence the world. In particular she refers to the work of Dr. Stanton Peele, and to the work of Mimi Silbert at the Delancy Program, which found that when a connection is made to a person's values, people are able to change behaviors; even addictive and long-lasting habits in the lives of hardened criminals can be changed (98-100). This comes with some important caveats. Peele emphasizes that is not just values in general, but rather the tie to particular values and the ways they are socially embodied and taught that help people defeat or avoid addiction (23-44). While at the Delancy program, it was not just the affirmation of existing values, but the connection made between those values and the adoption of a new way of life that helped people overcome addictions.[33] This suggests that transformation happens, not through affirmation in general, rather it requires a wisdom that can recognize what in particular needs to be affirmed, and how this can be connected to, develop or expand a way of life.

Patterns For Ongoing Transformation

In our stories of transformation these expanded ways of life created patterns of interaction that carried the transformation even further. For George, the affirmation of his being "a person of God" was tied to "certain criteria for how I would need to conduct my life." Out of this he developed a pattern of living that allowed him to develop close friendships, improve his grades, and acquire a scholarship to university, while simultaneously gaining spiritual strength from regular worship at university. Eventually this pattern shaped how he raised his children, it led him to do development work in Uganda and affects how he approaches his oil sands work. In

[33] The importance of identifying people's values and then connecting this to action to bring about social change is a core concept in community organizing. See Ganz 36-52.

all of this, how George lives and embodies his transformation has continued to shape his ongoing transformation and also how he affects the world around him.

It may seem to be an obvious point, but it needs to be remembered that it is through what we do that we affect the world. One of the key points made by K. Patterson is that many efforts to bring about change have focused primarily on educating people in order to shape how they think about the world, even though the ability to influence change is actually tied to their ability to focus on and affect specific behaviors (23-44). She then takes this further by showing that that change happens not just through behaviors in general but through a focus on what she calls *vital behaviors,* which are behaviors that have a high leverage in terms of what they can influence. She emphasizes that vital behaviors are not the outcome of what we hope to see; rather they are the actions that lead to that outcome. Vital behaviors are high leverage in that they are limited to a few specific behaviors and yet able to "unleash a floodgate of change" (26-30).[34] In other words it is not simply changing behaviors in general that is transformative. Transformation involves the wisdom to recognize which specific behaviors need to change so that they can have a significant impact because of how they fit in the patterns of our world.

When we shift our gaze to how patterns of behaviors are embedded within larger patterns of behaviors, what we also see in these stories is that transformation emerges not just from specific behavior, but also from particular patterns of interaction. While the IFP began as a dreamed of possibility, the significance of that dream was not that it created a blueprint, but that it initiated a process that started a conversation and developed relationships. The IFP and IFWRLS were then created out of the actual interaction between faith communities, in which the expertise of such communities of faith as the Baha'i shaped the process itself. It was through the

[34] A similar point is made by Wesley, Quinn and Zimmerman. What they argue for is how change happens through a focus on changing what they call attractors and rules, which are specific patterns of behaviors that are able to change large complex patterns.

subsequent process and dialogue that the IFWRLS and IFP became a presence in and contributed to our shared public life.

Similarly in Mary's story, her transformation was not just the result of an ideal that came from her changed perception of God. Instead her story is one where her way of life, involving worship and involvement in church, began to create a space through which the Holy Spirit could work. This relationship, between herself, the Holy Spirit and her context began to expand her perception and relationship with God. As a result she reshaped her life to include such things as regular prayer in silence, courses on the spiritual life, spiritual reading and spiritual direction. From this emerged a transformed relationship with God that not only was good, but was also good in how it transformed her relationship with her self and with others.

Baptism and Affirmation

Baptism also involves affirmation. In its acts of repentance and the washing of sin our baptism emphasizes our broken nature. This is not, though, where the emphasis remains. The acts of repentance and washing lead to baptism's act of adoption, making the Baptized Holy by uniting them with the body of Christ and welcoming them into the community of faith as a child of God. Our baptism is an act of affirmation. In this there is an important tension with our stories of transformation. In baptism there is not an affirmation of some aspect of the one's self. Instead the affirmation of baptism is oriented toward God, to the relationship of the baptized to God, and to the changed status of the baptized in the community of faith. Baptism thus strongly emphasizes that a person is transformed by an affirmation that is a part of the network of relationships.

Similar to our stories of transformation, baptism's affirmation is connected to a particular way of life, as the washing proceeds to the prayer for the Holy Spirit and the anointing with oil. Instead of limiting itself to a forensic declaration that rests between God and the eternal fate of the baptized, baptism affirms by giving the baptized the Holy Spirit and praying for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In this the baptized is affirmed as being someone in whom there is the living presence of God. In addition, since God is present in the baptized, baptism affirms that this person also now brings gifts that come, not just by birth, but from God, such as knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy and what is particularly significant for us, wisdom (1 Corinthians 12: 7-11 NRSV).

By proceeding next to the anointing of oil, we are directed towards the ways in which this affirmation of the living presence of God flows into a way of life that is lived in relation to the community of faith and the world in which we live. In ancient Israel, anointing was used to make official an elevation in status and the term anointed came to designate the king and the high priests or other divinely appointed functionaries; it was used to make the anointed person 'most holy' (Milgrom; Wikipedia; Tertullian 17; Nyssa). The anointing with oil in baptism can thus be seen as expressing God's call of the baptized to embody their royal calling to enact worldly justice and the priestly calling to enact right relationships to God. The importance of this sense of calling was seen in Doug's story where his perception of the moral problem of too much carbon being released and how he responded to this flowed out of his personal sense of being called by God, and being given opportunities by God to fulfill his calling.

In Doug's life and in baptism this calling is not just left as an ideal to be realized. Instead baptism ties this calling to a specific pattern of behaviors:

> "to live with them among God's faithful people,
> bring them to the word of God and the holy supper,

> teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments,
> place in their hands the holy scriptures,
> and nurture them in faith and prayer,
> so that your children may learn to trust God,
> proclaim Christ through word and deed,
> care for others and the world God made,
> and work for justice and peace."*(Evangelical Lutheran Worship 228)*

In these promises, baptism's affirmation flows into a way of life that is explicitly lived in relationship with God, with a community, and towards service of the world. In this, similar to our stories, it also creates a cultural pattern that is intended to lead to future transformation, as people are shaped by a community, worship, follow standards for their life, pray, deepen faith and transform the world by sharing God and working for justice and peace.

In this we must also remember that baptism places the restoration of our relationship with God at its center, and that our anointing comes only after the gift of the Holy Spirit. The way of life of the baptized is made unique, not just by its form, but rather in how our way of life emerges as the embodiment of God's Grace. As Janz writes,

> Indeed in even stronger language, the command of unmerited grace itself is 'to offer the parts of your body . . . in slavery to righteousness' (Rom. 6.19), that is, to the righteousness which comes from God, so that . . . at the centre of this present life, 'grace might reign though righteousness' (Rom. 5.21). Or to state this also in its necessary broader 'cosmic' context we can say the following. It is as we, in our sensible embodiment in space and time, become agents of the divine righteousness though the command of grace, that the reality of God is made real, today in the world of human agency, endeavor and self-understanding at the centre of life. (Davies, Sedmak and Janz 110)

This allows us to see that the way of life that baptism calls us to is not just a "good Christian life," but rather God living through us, as we live a life the pattern of which is ultimately set by the following of Jesus.

Baptism's recognition of sin is an important caveat. Affirmation and how we live can stand in the way of our transformation. A theme that emerged in Father Joe's story was the way in which affirmation in his previous life and his status as a professor turned into self-centered pride, which stood in the way of his transformation. This way of life had to be abandoned so that he could follow God's spirit into a new way of life in which his transformation could continue. In this Father Joe gives us an important insight. Father Joe recognized that at the heart of our transformation is our relationship with God and how God's love leads us to love others. If what is affirmed blocks the growth of our relationship with God or leads us away from the way of life God calls us to, affirmation and our way of life can stand in the path of transformation. Affirmation requires wisdom to discern what should be affirmed and what particular way of life will lead to transformation.

Wise Creativity

Wisdom

In what we have discussed so far about our way of life we can begin to see further aspects of the nature of wisdom that leads to transformation. It was Gadamer who helped turn the focus of hermeneutics to focus on our way of life when he argued that the "recovery of the fundamental hermeneutical problem" includes the "*task of application" (315, cf. 307-41).* As Thiselton describes it *application* relates to the everyday particularities of human life and exists only in relation to concrete forms of life (4). At the centre of his focus on application, Gadamer placed Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* or practical wisdom. *Phronesis* is the ability to evaluate what is morally good and what needs to be done to realize that good in a particular situation.

What we have begun to see in our stories is that the moral good and thus the challenge of *phronesis* emerges out of the dynamic relationship between us as embodied copers (someone who copes with or responds to something in order to move towards a preferred state for there make up) and our environment. Because this is a relationship that we live through our bodies, we shape this relationship by the way we live. In this, *phronesis* becomes about how we shape our way of life. What we learn from our stories is that transformation happens as we shape our way of life in such a way that our pattern of relating to others affirms, brings out and expands what is already good. This also allows one to work with and expand existing patterns of significance and values.

Wisdom is not just about affirmation, but connecting this affirmation to particular patterns of behavior. One form of practical wisdom, which we learn from K. Patterson's work, focuses on understanding patterns so that vital behaviors can be identified that produce great amounts of change. From our stories we see another form of practical wisdom focused instead on creating patterns of behavior or processes from which transformation can emerge. In both of these, wisdom involves discerning which behaviors or which patterns of behavior will lead to the emergence of the good.

Baptism in contrast does not focus on affirming an aspect of one's self, but rather the focus is on our relationship with God and how our calling to a particular way of life flows from this relationship. Baptism's insight is that God is the source of wisdom. In this, the challenge of wisdom is discerning what we must affirm or abandon so that the Holy Spirit can lead us into the way of life we have been called to. We do this so that we may be transformed and embody God's presence in the world.

In our stories *phronesis* is not simply a matter of applying a pre-existing technique or knowledge. Carol lives out her baptismal calling in her work with corporate social responsibility. When faced with her CEO's question of how one could "invest and not be contributing to that hell" her response was "I don't know how you can do it." Her wisdom was seen in how she then initiated a process that could lead to transformation by focusing on building trust and building alliances with those who were interested in addressing the flaring and corruption in Nigeria. What emerged from this process was not just wise, it brought something new into the world, and as such it was also creative.

Creativity

The creative process is perhaps most clearly seen in George's work in developing dry tailings technology. In oil sands production one of the more significant environmental impacts is the tailings ponds that are produced. Tailings ponds are the result of the extraction of silt and clay from the oil sands. A central problem arises because in the process of extraction silt and clay absorb water, swell and thus are unable to fit back into the hole that they were originally dug from. The result are tailing ponds, which currently cover 170 square kilometers and are expected to grow (Pembina). One of the technologies being promoted to address this issue is dry tailings.

In the mid 1980's, George went to New Mexico to look into equipment that could be used to process oil sands. While there he developed dry tailings technology. When explaining the process of developing dry tailings, he described it as the result of "just a sequence of events. A lot of coincidences were involved in it. So there is no discovery. No brilliant brainstorms in this." When he created the process of dry tailings, George had been working with several engineers on how to reduce/eliminate muddy sludge. He brought together knowledge and processes which were already available with elements of his context: an off the shelf polymer to solidify clay

slurries; the inspiration of the New Mexico climate to help him see how the sun could be used to dry the resulting bricks; the chance to work and play with these elements and the available equipment; and his own inquisitiveness. When these were brought together it led to him recognizing the potential to use dry tailings technology on a large commercial scale. For George, this did not come from a process of brainstorming, rather George described it as, "Something obvious comes to mind so you try it."

In George's story an initial picture of creativity begins to emerge. It began with openness, in the form of the question before George of what to do with the tailings. That it was a question opened George to search out unknown solutions. This openness also involved internal and situational freedom. George described his internal openness as inquisitiveness, not accepting the norm and focusing on the science and letting someone else worry about costs. The external openness came in how he was in a new environment, and was given time, a laboratory, "things to play with" along with the freedom to experiment. The second element of creativity is that it was in response to the real and specific problem of tailings from the oil sands. This problem was implied in the question of what to do with the tailings. The third creative element was in the understanding of a good that was being sought in the creative action. In this case the good involved minimizing the environmental impact associated with industrial waste. The fourth element to notice is that George was not creating *ex nihilo*. George's creativity involved wisdom in terms of using his scientific understanding of what he was working with to guide how we could bring together elements to create a new process.

What stands out in this story is the particularity of the situation, the problem, and that which was created. According to Gadamer one of the key elements that distinguishes *phronesis* from other forms of knowledge is the fact that it is not focused on universals, or on applying

predetermined knowledge but rather on acting in response to the particulars of a situation (317). *Phronesis* always involves a kind of creativity in so far as no particular situation is the same as another. A situation usually shares elements and an order that is similar to other situations. This allows experience and knowledge from other situations to be brought into new situations. Still, each situation remains unique. The wise response in each situation thus must be created anew.

This relationship that we see between wisdom and creativity, not only George's story, but also in each of these stories, is what I will call wise creativity. Wise creativity is a way of showing that for transformation to occur something new must be created and that this creativity must be guided by a practical wisdom that allows us to see and choose how the good can be realized in a particular situation, as well as how one can work within the patterns that are present.

One of the characteristics of wise creativity is that it is concrete. George did not theoretically create dry tailings, rather he created actual dry tailings bricks that he could stack in his garage. Wise, creative action is a part of our world. It is a human activity, but in being a part of a way of life, it is part of the lived concrete reality of the world. Thus it involves actions that are not just theoretical but concretely emancipatory, life giving, loving or good. This is the transformative significance of creative wisdom. It is a way of life that concretely creates and reshapes our world, so that we can realize the goodness that comes from God.

The challenge that wise creativity must face is that it suffers from the same limitations that haunt our perceptions. How we live is shaped by our perceptions. Our way of life is also a kind of living paradigm. It has its own patterns of action that bring together particular aspects of our world when we choose to enter *a* situation, interact with unique people and shape our action. Our lives are also limited, and thus they act as their own frame. Wise creativity thus also suffers

from the same problem of distortion that haunts our perception. While our way of life can be caught up in these distortive patterns, they can also give us an opportunity to break through them.

A Lived Opening

In the chapter on perceptions the problem of distortion was initially addressed through the openness to the world that our perception allows. When we look at how transformation happens through our way of life, we can begin to see how our way of life can also open us to our world and be a means of gaining wisdom. Since our way of life is embodied and embedded in our world, it is already connected to the wider world in multiple ways. Our way of life is thus an opening to the world, one that can reveal to us aspects of our world beyond that which our perception on its own can see. These openings and connections give us possibilities for not only shaping our world (creativity), but also experiencing our world and gaining wisdom.[35] In our stories of transformation these patterns of living, through which people perceived their world, took many forms, but from them emerged certain themes.

Disruption

When Thomas Kuhn developed his concept of paradigm he set it out as that which guides the way that science normally functions, where phenomena, even anomalous ones, are either reconciled and incorporated into the paradigm or simply ignored, not seen or dismissed as a research failure needing further refinement (23-51). This ability of paradigms to incorporate even anomalous phenomenon gives them a considerable ability to resist change. This is likely one of the reasons why it often took a major disruption for people to be opened to transformation.

[35] At this point we can see a further insight to the process of a *hermeneutical circle*. This insight is how perception is not so much a separate act as it is embedded in the world. Action and reflection are thus not necessarily two separate moments, but rather our action can be a form of reflection and discovery within the world by which we uncover the significance that exists as a part of the relationships of our world.

In our stories of transformation such disruptions were often not chosen. In Carol's story this took the form of an illness. As she describes it:

> I got sick, I got a virus in Vietnam that was undiagnosed and I went into a steady decline for about a year" . . . "I laid on a couch for eight months after that" "That was transformative because I stopped, I absolutely stopped. My brain was functioning, but my body just absolutely stopped. . . And my identity had stopped. My identity as a businessperson had stopped and my future wasn't clear. It was very much a hiatus period of time. It wasn't a terrible time. It was a tremendous faith-building period of time. It was a time of reflection, observation, deeper understanding, trust. It was a really . . . I went inside. It was a forced situation. When I got better I decided to do different things in my life.

In this story we can see the power of an illness to both disrupt and create an opening within the paradigm that is a way of life. For Carol it was the disruption of the activity of her job, and with this her identity, which created a space that guided her in her transformation.

In other stories the disruption of one's way of life was something intentionally chosen in so as to further develop a break from a way of life in order to pursue what they perceived as good. For example Father Joe intentionally disrupted his life by leaving his teaching role and moving out to western Canada. He adopted a Franciscan monastic life so that he could adopt a way of life in which, "The whole purpose of this way of life is to become little before the Father so that he can use me for others." Whether or not the disruption was imposed or chosen, it creates the possibility for transformation by breaking a person out of their old routines, their ways of interacting with and perceiving the world so as to create an opening that brings them into a new way of life.

According to Sedmak, disruptions are also important because they show how our life is tied into the realities of our world (Sedmak "The Disruptive Power of World Hunger" 131-36). Disruptions allow people to face aspects of the world that may have been concealed in their previous way of life. Disruptions allow us to be knocked out of our distortive perspectives and

gain wisdom, as they force us to bump into what we could not have pre-conceived. At the same time they give us the freedom to creatively reshape our life in response this reconfigured world.

Openness, Clearing and Simplicity

Another strong theme that emerged from the stories was how transformation comes out of the creation of a time and space where a person or community can pause, clear away the distractions of life, focus and be open. At the social level this was one of the ways that both the Kairos Dialogue and the Interfaith Summit functioned to bring about transformation. Each of these created a clearing, by bringing people out of their daily lives, by setting out questions that both defined the focus, excluded other distractions in order to create a physical space and time for dialogue to occur. As Tom described it, "It was the church trying to slow down, trying to create a context where people could slow down together and listen to each other."

At the personal level, Mary stressed the importance of clearing in her own spiritual transformation:

> We get so busy doing, that we don't spend time being. R: Why is just being important? M: Because that is where you connect with something greater then your self. . . if I am busy doing all these things that I think are wonderful, I don't really hear God a lot. . . but when I just be, and look at the mountains, and just sit and look at the mountains and I am connected with something greater then my self. . . we are just so busy doing that we just don't have time to be.

Carol addressed the importance of creating a clearing in regards to her work with corporate transformation. As she explains, "I have seen transformational change in CEOs. How has this happened? It is because they are able to pause and get rid of preconceived notions, which is really hard to do." For Father Joe this opening occurred though the process of letting go. He stated that "I think that both the human level and the divine level worked together to help me let go and become. . . It was a letting go of directions of the past that were not all that positive. It

was also a letting go of things that were extremely positive, because they did not fit into this new form of life."

In these stories the creation of a clearing or opening was transformative in part because as Father Joe, Esther, Carol, and Mary all described, clutter, busyness and the lack of space in people's lives act as barriers to transformation. According to Carol, this happens as the fullness of our lives overwhelms us, distorts our perspective and as the different elements of our selves become "mushed" together or as Mary reminds us, by causing us to lose connection to what is most important. Clearings in our life, in contrast, transform us by allowing that which is morally significant and concealed by the busyness of life to be revealed, encountered and connected to. These clearings can overcome distortions and gain wisdom by allowing elements of our life to settle so that we can gain perspective. Openness, clearing and simplicity can also allow the release of aspects of people's lives and world, so that people can be freed to move into a new way of life. Then, as Westley *et al* described, this openness and release not only allows change, but creates resiliency as resources are freed to be rearranged and used to recreate our world (65-73). As Köhler once noted, "Important intellectual achievements appear to result from 'an abrupt reorganization of given materials, a revolution, the result of which suddenly appears ready-made on the mental scene.' Such insights, he notes, characteristically occur at times of great passivity – what Köhler calls the "three Bs . . . the Bus, the Bath, and the Bed" (qtd. in Green 51). In other words, transformation can happen through the ancient practice of Sabbath.

Entering a New Context

One of the other themes that emerged was that transformation often happened when people physically went to new contexts. This often took the form of travel. Carol described several different ways in which this can occur: in personally seeing the moral challenges of oil

exploitation in Nigeria; or when one enters a context that pushes one to integrate elements of "on the ground reality". She also described how moving to new cities and being in new countries is transformative because you "see yourself differently in a new place . . . as somebody different in a community that already exists."

George was also transformed by his experience of traveling to Uganda. In part this happened because a new context allowed him to clear away all distractions and focus on what he encountered. He describe what he encountered in Uganda as poverty, being the only non-black person and being in a culture where people were hospitable, sincere, genuine, filled with gratitude and both open to and interested in him. What transformed him further was how he brought the perspective he gained from Uganda home and allowed it to shape how he saw the culture he returned to. As George describes it:

> The most difficult part was when I came home. I left all that behind and came home and saw that I had to continue life where I am. I had a kind of guilt in my mind because the kind of lifestyle I had here was so different from what I was leaving behind in Africa. I felt sorry for kids, for families, for whole communities. I wanted to understand what sort of things I can do to continue helping people

Entering a new context does not just happen through travel. The transition to being a Franciscan Friar for Father Joe, the IFWRLS and the Kairos Dialogues are all examples of intentionally created new contexts. New contexts are transformative because they act as a kind of new paradigm in how they are able to uniquely bring together elements of our world into a different pattern than what we are accustomed to. These new context/paradigms, like any new paradigm, allow the possibility of transformation by how they offer a novel perspective and experience from which we can see the patterns of our world and encounter new elements that can be use to recreate aspects of our world.

Experiencing New Relationships

In the stories of how people were shaped by their travels a further theme was seen: the transformative possibility that happens when people enter into new relationships. Carol described when she traveled to Yemen, the relationships she developed there amongst the presence of Al-Qaeda:

> Forced me to think about . . . that grounding. Get rid of all my assumptions. And look at the people I knew really well; people I was friends with; people that I shared values with; and look at what was the same about us. There were lots of differences . . . They wore a hijab . . . They live in a poor country, . . . they are very influential, very strong women . . . We are totally different, but there is a common thread. And it is really important for me to understand that . . . and for others I am interacting with. . . How do you deal with the other? I don't' want to assimilate or fence in the other. . . How do you build the bridge, with someone that different?. . Or any person? What does that look like? . . . How does that help me?. . . Enormously, it was very mirror-like.

It was then the mirror-like function of these relationships that shaped her perception of herself and her perceptions of the world.

Similarly for George, it was not just the context that he traveled to that transformed him. George experienced transformation as the relationships he formed connected him to people and allowed him to experience their culture of sincerity, gratitude, openness and interest in him. This experience then became a mirror or lens that gave him the wisdom to see his desire for these things and the lack of these in his experience of his own culture

What we also see is in these stories is how encountering new relationships transforms people through the development of empathy. For Mary, empathy was one of the ways that she experienced transformation within the relationship of spiritual direction. This empathy was not limited to simply trying to share or understand the feelings of the other, it also included seeking to understand their perspective, and the creation of a shared feeling or experience within the relationship. According to Harder, this shared empathy can provide connections between difference and the possibility for shared action (Harder 160-61). The importance of such

connections and how it can lead to shared actions was a part of the design of the IFWRLS. As Esther explained, the IFWRLS was intentionally kept small in order to create a space for personal encounters and relationships as it was recognized that through relationships between the delegates not only would different perspective be shared and connection made, but out of these future work on the issues raised by the summit could be accomplished.

Habits

Another strong theme in our stories was found in how the ongoing, routine, everyday habits of people that led to transformation. A habit is a regular tendency or practice that can be a component of a way of life. The importance of habit, or *habitus* goes back to Aquinas (O'Connell 41), but it has recently received attention from such thinkers as McClintock Fulkerson (47-48) and O'Connell (41-42). By *habitus* or habit what is meant is not simply a repeated, rote activity, but rather a pattern of activity connected to other acts that shape one's life. As Fulkerson reminds us, *habitus* can be creative, productive and respond improvisationally to a situation (47-48).

Habits were particularly significant in Father's Joe's experiences of transformation. He spoke about the significance of prayer and the life of poverty and obedience. While this might be expected for someone who lives in a monastery, what he emphasized was not so much the routine of monastic life, but rather the habitual approach one takes. One of the ways that Father Joe expressed this was through the habit of listening:

> I think that the most important thing in dealing with people's lives, in transformation, is the capacity to listen. It is the key. Not listening to what they are saying, but listening to what God is saying in their life. It is not really important what I think or say, it is not even really important what they say, except when they are listening to the spirit working and speaking within them. And we both have to hear the same thing in order to make it transformative . . . So probably the first thing I do with people, is to put them on a schedule to learn how to listen, not only listening to themselves, but to the counselor or spiritual director before they can listen to the Holy Spirit which is within.

The importance of a habitual approach to life was also seen in George's pattern of inquisitiveness and in not accepting the norm. For Doug this took the form of always looking for opportunities, as he describes it; "Wherever I am thrown I always see opportunities. . . When stuff is thrown at me, not consciously, only afterwards I realize that I was looking for opportunities, it is not like I am having a bad day I am going to find an opportunity, but somehow I find opportunities in things that others would not see opportunities."

Spiritual practices as habits that led to transformation was a common theme in the stories of transformation. One of the common practices was the practice of meditation. When asked what helped her transformation, Carol replied "Having a meditation practice. I will read the Bible, I will read poetry. I will do something that is a release. So you open up the space." Mary, like Father Joe emphasized the importance of prayer, along with reading spiritual books, and silence.

The power of habits lies in how they create ongoing and consistent patterns in a person's life that then shape one's abiding identity and character. This shapes how people respond to novel situations. Thiselton refers to "the Duke of Wellington's famous comment that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton," in order to argue, "that Eton had provided the *character formation, training and habits of thought and action* that proved decisive for the later moment of decision and action in battle . . . The heart of ethics lies in the formation of character." This is a point also made in the revival of virtue ethics (Macintyre). It has also been found in the research into the motivations of Christians who befriended Jews during the Nazi era, in which it was found that such decisions were not "uncommitted moments of freedom. Rather they are a certain kind of mountain peak, so to speak, in a mountain range of selfhood. When

moments of special choice arrive, people tend to make their decision almost automatically. For in a certain sense the really important decision has long since been made" (O'Connell 143).

The importance of spiritual practices or habits has also been found by Schlitz, Vieten and Amorok. In their study of transformation, based on their research with people identified as spiritual practitioners and teachers, they found disruptions such as pain, hitting rock bottom and what they called noetic experiences were all important doorways to transformation (33-63). They also identified intentional, repeated spiritual practices that fostered attention and were in some way guided as also being an important element that led to transformation (86-108). They identified that these elements led to transformation because they led to insight, allowed aspects of themselves to emerge, cleared out outdated beliefs and habits while moving into a an acceptance and sense of power in the present (131-132).

Together in these stories we can see how ways of life, and particular patterns of life, can lead to transformation. As a way of life these patterns of living are created out of a culture or out of a person's own life history. What makes these ways of life interesting is that their pattern is such that they have a built in openness to the world. This is itself a form of wisdom that can allow us to encounter the dynamics of the world. In this encounter people are broken out of existing patterns of behaviors and perspectives, gain new perceives and discover ways of creatively recombining the elements and relationships of one's life and world. Together this creates the possibility that our way of life can become a lived moral experiment.

Our Way of Life as a Lived Experiment

A part of wisdom is the challenge of how one comes to understand the patterns and moral significance of our world and how can we test the perspectives we currently have. One model of

approaching this comes out of liberation theology (Boff; Segundo). It is the model of the hermeneutic circle or praxis with its dialectic between action and reflection or action and prayer. So far this has been approached in earlier footnotes, but now it is important to bring it into the main argument. What has been noted is how this approach shifts the emphasis to our perception of the patterns of our world and how we creatively reshape them. Further it has been noted how an embedded/embodied approach moves us from seeing action and reflection as two separate acts, to how our action can itself be a form of reflection and discovery in the midst the patterns of the world because of the ways our way of life is embedded within the world. This now points us towards how our way of life can be approached as a lived moral experiment.

Approaching our life as a lived moral experiment begins by treating our life as a moral hypothesis. Our performance may be flawed, or based on some unconsciously held belief, but as O'Connell reminds us, rarely does anyone act to realize what they understand to be wrong or harmful (108). Rather, as Ricoeur teaches us, how we live attests to how we interpret what is good in a situation and how we believe this good can best be realized (Striver 177, 87-228). This understanding of the good is in turn shaped by and expresses the cultural dimension of our world. We have no choice. Simply by being alive we are forced in every movement to take the risk of living out and embodying a particular hypothesis of the good. This provides a great opportunity. By living out this hypothesis we bring it into contact with a world that is more stable, complex and larger then any particular communal or individual actor. In this encounter our culturally shaped way of life becomes a means of discovery as it is forced to respond to and is reshaped by the patterns of this broader world. Whether our culture leads us to believe that we can fly, that the environment is without limits, or that enslaving others is good, as these are enacted they come into contact with, are challenged and reshaped by the reality of the world that

we participate in. If we treat our life as an experiment this encounter with reality can become an opportunity to gain wisdom by testing our understanding of the good and discovering how it can be realized.

Living our life as an experiment first of all involves deliberate attention and intention concerning: acting through the way we live; and reflection both through being open to perceiving the patterns we encounter; and reflecting on what we encounter. Since we do this as embedded/embodied people this also involves being intentional about engaging in ways of living, such as the ones discussed in the previous section, that help us open our lives to a transforming encounter with the world. This allows our way of life to be not only a means of action, but also a means of perceiving the dynamics of the world that we encounter.

The limits of our perception that we have noted also reminds us of the need to be attentive to the risk and to contain and manage the extent of our experiments because we cannot fully perceive their consequences. Our embodied nature means that these consequences can involve a real cost, for our self or for others. The fear of such a const can prevent us from trying anything new, yet at the same time our current pattern of action also carries its own costs, though perhaps more predictable ones. The challenge becomes one of how we manage, contain and accept risk.

In using the term experiment, I want to draw attention to one of the ways in which Kuhn describes, from his study of scientific revolutions, how paradigms shift. Kuhn suggests that it is the perception of anomalies, those occurrences that do not fit with what is expected from the current paradigm, that begin the process of scientific revolution. The challenge this raises, as mentioned earlier, is that normally those anomalies are incorporated into the existing paradigm, not seen or left as problems to be solved at a later date by the current paradigm (52-57). Kuhn

argues that what leads to scientific paradigmatic change is not only being open to observationally and conceptually viewing the anomalous events, but to seeing when they should be treated as counter instances that call for the development and acceptance of a revised paradigm. It is this that leads to scientific revolutions that help us better understand our world (77-82). Previously I had discussed how seeing beyond the distortions of our perceptions requires openness and honesty. In looking at our way of life as an experiment we take this a step further. In science what allows people to move beyond or to reshape existing paradigms is the moment when there is an awareness of anomalous phenomenon, that has been observationally and conceptually recognized, and then understood as being significant enough to lead to a change of paradigms and procedures (62). In suggesting that we treat our life as an experiment it is the intentional awareness, observation and recognition of the potential significance of anomalies that I want to suggest is a part of how we gain wisdom.

While the practical wisdom that I am lifting up here as transformative is not seeking universal theories as science attempts to do, it is informed by experiences which are a part of the paradigms through which we perceive our world. As Kuhn explains, when we know the patterns that our paradigm predicts with enough precision, they can also open us to perceive anomalies from this pattern (65). Anomalies, because they are not what our paradigms expect or predict, often are how those things that are normally concealed by our paradigms break into our perspective. Thus if we choose to treat anomalies as something that can expand our perception check our wisdom they can become opportunities for transformation. This is what Sedmak ("The Wound of Knowledge: Epistemic Mercy and World Hunger") and Fulkerson (13-14) both suggest when they write that it is our ‘wounds’ that generate creative theological thinking and emancipatory action. The transformative process thus occurs as the discord of anomalies directs

us to again recreate our way of life until we can experience a kind of moral harmony between our way of life, our culture and our world.

The richness of this approach happens when it becomes a part of our way of life, lived in the midst of the network of relationships and perspectives that make up our life. Father Joe articulated this:

> I think that through prayer, definitely the prayer life of the friars and their acceptance of me played a big role in allowing me to die to myself and become a full fledged member of the community . . . Prayer to me is the ongoing conversation I as an individual have with my Creator . . . so that if I was having a bad day because I didn't know how to respond to a situation, I would turn to the Spirit and go "what is going on here." . . . I think that the ongoing relationship with the Father, showed me that I had to be dependent upon the Father but I also had to learn how to be dependent in a positive way upon the brothers with whom I was living. After all they were the ones responding to me on a mental, emotional, social and psychological level. . . While at the same time I was experiencing somewhat the same thing in the adaptation of how I wanted the Father to be a total part of my life. And so the human aspect taught me a lot about the divine aspect. But it was the divine aspect that helped me to gradually, gradually evolve into the actual human experience that I was going through, which I didn't find 100% easy.

In this description we see Father Joe growing into what for him is the fullness of life, dying to himself. This happened as, in the midst of his practice of prayer and community life, he encountered the anomalous disruption of not knowing how to respond to a situation. He then treated this as an opportunity to grow in wisdom by using it as an opportunity to turn towards God in prayer. In his prayer he encountered the Source of the good and a Model of the good. This allowed him to both re-experience the good he sought and from this he re-examine himself and his situation. He then used the insight he gained from this to shape how he depended on his brothers. In the process he also deepened his dependence on God.

In this what we see in this is not the doing away with the moments of the hermeneutic circle focused on action and reflection. Instead it shifts us to see, even more strongly, how all of this *praxis* occurs in bodies which are a part of relationships in the world. This is a gift, because

it allows our wisdom to become something that is not just thought, but rather experienced as we encounter anomalies in the midst of our creative reshaping of our the world. Father Joe's story also reminds us that as we discover the wisdom of how we can realize the good, we are also deepening our relation to the source of this good, God. This turns us again to baptism, but now we can begin to see how it also sets out a pattern for a wise creativity that comes form God.

Baptism and Wise Creativity

Baptism can be viewed as a ritual that invites us into a process of wise creativity. We are called to live in the midst of the world. It is important to note that a baptism is not a purely spiritual or intellectual act. It is embodied, involving actual water, the hands of fallible human beings and is performed in the context of a living community. The promises made in baptism express a calling to an embodied life lived among God's people, eating and drinking, praying with words, learning the Creed and the Ten Commandments. Scripture is to be placed in actual hands. Christ is to be proclaimed not just in thought, but also through spoken words and deeds. Similarly, the others and the world baptism calls us to care for are all embodied. Our baptism calls us, like Christ, to an incarnate life of faith. All of this reminds us of baptism's message of how God's holiness participates in the ordinariness of our world.

The promises made in baptism give us an outline of the Christian life, yet it leaves it up to each of the baptized to create the way in which they will live out their calling. The wide variety of stories in scripture and the different characters in a community all point, not towards a dogmatically confined Christian life, but rather to the invitation into the creative possibility of Christian living.

Our baptism does not leave this as a creative free-for-all. The first half of the promises,

> to live with them among God's faithful people,
> bring them to the word of God and the holy supper,
> teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments,
> place in their hands the holy scriptures,
> and nurture them in faith and prayer. . . (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 228)

is a guide that sets out how our life can be a life of learning God's wisdom. Some elements like the scriptures and the Ten Commandments act as guides for how we should live. The Ten Commandments are too broad to be prescriptions; instead they can me seen as marking the outer boundaries of our actions. As such they act as a set of norms that allows us to recognize when our way of life has results in moral anomalies (such a murder, lying, failure to rest) indicating a need to recreate our way of life while the commandments directly, or in their inverse, point towards the good which we are called to seek. Likewise, the stories and perspectives of scripture are too varied to be simply prescriptive. Instead they function by providing new contexts, relationships and a shared experience that provides us with perspectives from which we can see our world and lives. God's faithful people embody all of this as they live as guides for life, as they give new insights and perspectives along with warnings for us to pay attention when moral anomalies appear in our life and world. In prayer, trust, the Word and the holy supper we are called back to the very source of the good, so that we may know and experience the source of and ultimate end of the good with which wisdom ultimately seeks to unite us. All of this is to be a guide, to help us develop wisdom as we create the manner in which we will fulfill the calling that is contained in the second half of the promises:

> . . . so that your children may learn to trust God,
> proclaim Christ through word and deed,
> care for others and the world God made,
> and work for justice and peace. (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 228)

Baptism also provides the means of containing the risk of living out the experiment of a life of faith. Carol spoke about the uncertainty of a transformative experience in terms of, "the space of being held by God." This is what baptism gives us. The reconciliation to God that happens in baptism is understood as an act of grace. As such, it enacts God's love and the eternal salvation that is given to us, no matter what success or failure we have in life. This gives us the freedom to take the risk of experimenting with our lives without having to fear the loss of what is of ultimate importance in our lives. This being held is not intended as a safety net in which we can just rest.

Baptism is a calling is into a life of transformative wisdom. As the story of Father Joe teaches us, it is a calling into the dynamics of the world and its communities, and it is a calling into relationship with God. Ultimately it is a calling to discover that God the Father who created reality with God's wisdom and the Spirit who creates through us and leads us to live lives that discover God's wisdom is one. In this we are transformed. We are transformed as we have the humility to receive the grace that comes in Christ which allows us to experiment with our life and which ultimately dwells in us to recreate God's world according to God's wisdom. This is not a journey we undertake on our own.

Chapter 4: Context

We began by looking at how transformation happens through the transformation of our perceptions. This was then expanded to include how this transformation in embodied and embedded ways of life. Slowly our focus has been expanding. We now move to focus on how transformation happens through dynamics within a context. Context is defined here as the circumstances and relationships in which human life occurs. This includes the physical, biological, social/cultural, historical and spiritual environments that we are apart of. The concept of context directs us to focus in on the dynamics that include, but are also beyond a particular individual.

Even when our focus was on transformation through a particular way of life it was impossible to separate this out from the broader context that a way of life is a part of. It is a part of our nature as humans that we live in, think through and shape our world within a context greater than ourselves. For example, our thoughts are not experienced as nor shaped only by the firing of neurons. As Michael Polanyi has pointed out, "all human thought comes into existence by grasping the meaning and mastering the use of language" (Polanyi and Grene 160). Even the questions we ask conform to "the theory of the universe which is implied in the vocabulary and structures of the language" (Polanyi "The Stability of Beliefs" 221; Mitchell 64). Language, as Hauser, Yong and Cushman point out, is contextual. It is learned, constructed and used in interaction with the society in which it lives. It relies on a faculty of language that has biologically evolved in response to the natural world over millennium (108-113). Our context also sets the norms that shape how we live. As O'Connell argues, "we are a function of our groups. We live up to - or down to - the standards of the groups to which we belong." (146).

Our culture is also a part of a physical context which is an integral part of who we are. The physical world sets out the possibility of relationships, provides the molecules that make up our body and biological structure while providing the bases for life. As Fulkerson has shown, the physical setting, how people are brought together, is also a language in itself (200). Even our spirituality is contextual, since Christian spirituality is understood to be about our relationship with God, who is in us, but ultimately beyond us. Together, our social, biological, physical and spiritual relationships and their interdependence define our context. Since our thoughts, our lives and our very being is embedded in a context, if we are to understand transformation we must understand it in relation to its context and the transformation of the context itself.

A Contextually Shaped Way of Life

One of the significant ways that contexts influence transformation is how they shape a way of life. The power of a context to shape how people think and live has been recognized by sociologists stretching back to Marx who noted that, while not determinative as people can shape their contexts, the means of production still shapes not only how people live but even how they understand their lives (163-176). Those who look at moral questions have noted this same insight. They have recognized that it is not enough to look simply at behaviors, one must also look at the social structures that have shaped that behavior (Peterson 61).

One of the ways that contexts shape us is in their ability to define what is culturally of value. When Carol discussed what led to the transformation of organizations this was one of the key points to emerge; that it was not just a shift of individual values that transformed companies or organizations, but as she describes it, “No it is a culture . . . a shift in the

environment. Everyone doesn't buy on. A shift of what is okay to talk about, what is a legitimate reason to slow down or speed up a project. What is of value, it really gets to values, what is of value to this organization."

Both Doug and Carol also discussed how the culture of risk avoidance and quickly punishing anyone who has taken a risk and failed, prevents innovation and transformation in business environments. The use of a context for transformation was also seen in the Kairos Dialogue day where the tendency of oil industry and environmentalists to avoid dialogue was overcome by creating a context that put forward and enacted dialogue as a central value. This was done in how the day was initially framed, through the design of the format of the day, and even through personal interventions with the main speakers (Andersen; Tom).

In the stories of transformation, contexts also transformed people's way of life by allowing particular aspects of a person's identity to be expressed differently because of the unique environment in which they were found. One of the most striking examples of this was in Doug's story of his childhood transformation from gang leader to wanting to be a pastor. Doug described how, in his move from Montreal to Como, he found himself in a context where what he had done in the past was suddenly looked down upon.

> I was drawn in to a different milieu, and I developed a different sensibility. As I think about it now I was adjusting, I always want to be 'in.' In my first life I was the leader, the 'in' guy. When I get to Como, when I think back, I was just adjusting to, not in a negative way. I always look at all my intentions, even when I was a gang leader, I protected my gang. I was a good guy. It wasn't sort of nasty motives. It was just trying to be somebody; right from the beginning. In Hudson, it was the same it just grew into wanting to be a Pastor.

What we see in Doug is how his core identity and the value of wanting to be "be somebody" and to look after others, was initially expressed as a gang leader in Montreal. For Doug the

context shifted, but his basic identity remained the same. This resulted in the way of life that was required to realize these values also changing. Similarly Father Joe described how his "childishness was present in the beginning as a seed" that "stayed with me in my academic career." In his academic career, he was in an environment that promoted the opposite of childishness, a strong ego. His childishness, becoming a little one before the Father, "flowered in the forty years I had been a friar," that is, when he shifted to a context that allowed and promoted this aspect of him to flourish.

The power of context to transform a way of life was also found by Colby and Damon. Not only did they find that the moral exemplars that they studied were shaped by their context, they also found that these exemplars would even intentionally create or change their context so as to continue to develop their moral commitments and perspectives. Likewise, Patterson found that some of the key sources of influence used by those who want to bring about change are contextual: it might take the form of peer pressure or an intentional change of the physical design of the environment to support new behaviors. As Gigerenzer has shown, the power of particular environmental patterns, combined with our moral heuristics is such people can be led to both good acts or mass murder even when they recognize this action as wrong. What can be seen in all of these is that contexts can bring about change in how they function paradigmatically, by bringing together elements into patterns, out of which particular ways of life are more likely, or more able to develop, while at the same time pushing the possibility for other forms of life into the background. A part of wise creativity that leads to transformation must then include the wisdom of how to shape a context so that a way of life that embodies the good is more likely to be created.

Gaining Wisdom Through Contexts and Dialogue

Our context plays an important role in shaping our perception along with our way of life. This was an insight captured by Polanyi when he wrote, "But if linguistic and cultural frameworks change with time, and if language and culture provides the framework through which we see and interpret the world, then in an important way when one lives serves to constitute in large part how one sees the world" (Personal Knowledge; Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy 171, 324; Mitchell 88). This was also clearly seen in our stories of transformation. For Mary, it was her continued involvement in the church context that created the crack through which she began to perceive God as loving. Carol's perception was shaped in traveling to Nigeria and seeing the effects of oil exploitation there. Her perception was also transformed as her context shifted when she got sick. George recognized how the sun could be used to dry tailings while he was in New Mexico's heat and his perception was transformed by actually being in Uganda. Similarly he came to see the impermanency of life when he came to his home farm and personally discovered that his childhood home had been plowed under. In each of these examples, the person's experience of a particular context helped them gain wisdom by changing how they perceived the wider world.

Contexts can even be intentionally created to convey particular perceptions. This is in part how I witnessed IFWRLS bringing about transformation. This was seen, for example, in the inclusion of Latin America for the first time as a part of the summit. As Karen described Bishop Julio's comments on this:

> Well suddenly everyone sitting there understands in a clear way that the MDGs, and particularly their lack of fulfillment, has an impact on people in Latin America. People would have known that in their head, but that simple comment suddenly transforms how people then see Latin America, the people of Latin America, and the need to fulfill them there. We focus on Africa, As Bishop Julio says, for good reason, but suddenly there is a huge transformation there of the world's views of the MDG's in Latin America.

The same significance of inclusion also occurred in the inclusion of people from Africa, and youth in the IFWRLS.

This was the case not only in what the IFWRLS conveyed to its participants, but also in what it conveyed to the broader Canadian and international contexts. In bringing religious leaders from a variety of faiths together around the issues of poverty, environmental sustainability, peace and security, the summit itself expressed the moral significance of these issues, demonstrating not only that these were a shared concern, but a concern that was significant enough to supersede other differences. A similar perception was shared by Karen Hamilton as she stated, "Another part of the hoped for transformation, though it wasn't originally articulated this way, was for the world governments to understand, even more strongly than before, that the faith communities are on the ball, they are watching, that they care about these issues, they are involved, will continue to monitor and will continue to push.

In our stories of transformation one of the ways that context could be shaped to deepen wisdom stood out: dialogue. Perceptions are always limited. While our perceptions allow us to see certain aspects of our world, they do this by blocking out most of reality. As discussed earlier, this obscuring is built into the very dynamic of revealing and concealing that is inherent in perception. It is also, as Berger describes, a product of the uneven distribution of knowledge within our society (42-46) and of the distortions of our perspectives. Dialogue creates the possibility of transformation because it creates the opportunity for us to gain wisdom, not only though our own perception, but through the perception of another who perceives things differently from ourselves and thus is able to potentially reveal what has been concealed.

The public shaping of perceptions through dialogue was one of the central ways that the IFWRLS sought to realize transformation. One of the most poignant examples of this developed from Retired General Romeo Dallaire's speech at IFWRLS. He described how during the genocide in Rwanda his convoy was stopped by a commonly used tactic for creating an ambush, a small child stand in the middle of the road. When the ambush did not come and the child had run away, they decided to investigate. They found the child in a hut, surrounded by the murdered and decomposing bodies of his family. Dallaire then described looking down into the eyes of this small boy, and seeing that his eyes held the same look as his own son's when he had left for Rwanda. "Every human is human and not less" was the phrase he concluded this story with, which then became the refrain for the rest of his talk. This recognition of our shared humanity, the ways in which we violate this shared humanity, became prominent in the ongoing dialogue of the summit and one of the themes present in the summit's final statement.

Transformation happened in this by what Gadamer described as the fusion of horizons, dialectic and conversation. Earlier I looked at how his concept of horizons can help us evaluate our frames. Gadamer's development of this concept to show how horizons can fuse can now help us better understand how dialogue leads to transformation. In a fusion of horizons, the horizon of our understanding and prejudices are tested and reformed as they encounter the horizon of the subject with which they engage (306-307). Gadamer understood that when we are opened by the questions we hold, what can emerge through conversation/dialogue and translation is an expanded understanding of the subject of conversation, as the horizons of those in dialogue fuse (383-389). The first element that we can recognize in this dialogue is how, despite differences, there was the recognition of commonality. This happened first in Dallaire's recognition of how this boy possessed the same humanity as his son, and then again at the summit, where, although

it was filled with people from cultures and religions from around the world, there was enough commonality in our shared humanity to perceive what Dallaire was trying to reveal and to dialogue about this. As Gadamer recognized, despite the differences between human cultures, there remains a degree of commonality in human experience, tradition and a shared world such that communication and connection is possible (Striver 88).[36] Dialogue thus created a particular context where people who did not have Dallaire's experience could imaginatively enter his experience, seeing with him the humanity in a child's eyes in the midst of a campaign of death that sought to destroy that humanity. What was created in this exchange was a shared feeling, which rested on people's empathy, their ability to seek to understand and share the feelings of another. This shared feeling for our common humanity, and the tragedy that occurs when humanity is destroyed, then became a central insight that helped shape the development of the dialogue.

Gadamer also recognized that for a fusion of horizons there needs to be difference and distinction between those horizons if it is to lead to a testing, reforming or expansion of our own horizons (305-307). In addition to all the difference between the participants of the IFWRLS, there was also clearly a difference in Retired General Dallaire's perspective. There were few in the room that had direct experience of genocide and there was no one who had the experience of commanding a UN force in the midst of genocide. No one could fully know his experience or perspective. This difference does not mean that there needs to be conflict. By bringing in Dallaire's perspective into the dialogue our shared perspective was expanded, so that from each of our own perspectives a shared perspective was created. Dallaire's contribution was to highlight the importance of our shared humanity and our willingness to discount and destroy

[36] See also Benhabib who address the problem of incommensurability through the recognition of how people are *epistemic contemporaries* (135) and how people can overcome radical difference through translation and familiarization (137-138).

another's humanity. In the dialogue this contribution resonated with the shared religious perspective of the "golden rule," that shared humanity entails a moral responsibility to treat others as we would have them treat us (Summit 2). This dialogue with Dallaire led the summit to condemn genocide, the use of child soldiers, our failures to prevent these horrors while helping us focus on our opportunity to address these issues in the future. The importance of affirming our shared humanity was also recognized as a part of the heart of the other issues that we faced.

A part of how this dialogue was transformational was in how it helped each of the participants to gain insight into their own distortions and blind spots. What was equally important was that because the people who gathered were already working to find out how they could be a force that built peace and security, how this shared dialogue created a shared vision from which people could act together was also a part of the transformational potential of the summit. This shared vision and action developed as people's horizons fused together to shape the statement from the summit to emphasize our shared humanity (Summit). According to Esther, in this process of dialogue the perspectives of the participants were expanded in a way that was hoped would shape what they would share, and how they would influence the contexts that they led.[37]

The Kairos Oil Sands dialogue also highlighted the power of dialogue, particularly how dialogue can demonstrate common concern despite assumed differences. As Tom described it,

> So I wanted to get people from both sides of the issues, if there are two, or rather various sides, give them an opportunity to hear people who hold a different point of view. Face to face where they would have to be polite and listen and hear another person's point of view. . . The second thing I wanted to do, I wanted to test out, that if we have these discussions we can learn something. We can change our point of view we can adapt. We can see the other point of view and see that they see some of the problems that we see,

[37] The scope of possible influence can be seen in that collectively the leaders at the summit represented at least 800 million people. Three of the larger religious NGOs (Salvation Army, World Vision and Catholic Relief Services) have revenues of $ 1.6 billion annually. For a fuller analysis of this and the impact of these summits, especially on global governance, see Steiner. Quoted with permission.

> that they are not ignorant of the range of issues or difficulties. Neither side is ignorant. They weigh different responses differently.

The distortion that this dialogue had sought to overcome was the concealment of the common concerns shared by both sides of the oil sands debates. It worked. Tom described the reaction of the oil industry retirees that he had encouraged to come, "They were great. They all thought it was an excellent event and they had learned something. The learned that these 'hippy weirdoes' were concerned about the same things that they were." What was also striking, was that by the end of the day the two main speakers, who stood on opposite sides of the issue, were beginning to describe ways that they could see working together to find solutions to the challenges that were raised.

Dialogue does not just take the shape of a formally created exchange. One of the descriptions of the power of dialogue to bring about transformation came from Carol's portrayal of the coming together of two lives that embodied two different ways of living and two different contexts: one in Yemen, the other in the corporate towers of Calgary:

> You come in with pre-conceived notions. We were invited into Yemen to train professionals. . . You have defined roles. And there is mutuality. You learn from others. Then you step out of that role. And say, It is much deeper than that. This person who is now my friend . . . I am watching her relate to her sons, and I am relating to my own sons in my own environment. And what we are experiencing is similar. And what we can talk about is similar. And there was a lot. Some people would assume that there is very little, but there is a lot, a lot. And there wasn't . . . And the learning for them is they have a better grasp . . . They may not have a better grasp about women in the work place, but they have a better grasp then we do about how to talk about gender equality and faith. They have learned things that we haven't learned. And we have learned things that they haven't leaned. And if you could somehow put that all together that would be very powerful. It would be. . . and it was transformation. I actually, I think I am pretty *avante garde* in gender equality . . . I have always worked, been a lawyer, a VP of an oil company. . . Some people's view is that in a work place a woman would be welcomed in because she is masculine . . . I know I was when I worked downtown. In lots of environments, I was rewarded because of my masculinity, not my femininity. I only figured that out through that mirror process, when somebody else threw it up at me. . . I don't think you can learn except through dialogue and engagement.

In this case, the vast difference between these two forms of life found commonality in questions around raising sons and gender roles, enabling someone who considered herself to be *avante garde* to see her own blind spots.

Another way that dialogue functioned was as people moved between contexts and brought these contexts into an internal dialogue. This was a part of how travel was transformative for people, especially when they brought the perceptions that they gained away from home back home. This was captured in George's experience of coming home from Uganda:

> The most difficult part was when I came home. I left all that behind and came home and saw that I had to continue life where I am. I had a kind of guilt in my mind because the kind of lifestyle I had here was so different from what I was leaving behind in Africa. I felt sorry for kids, for families, for whole communities. I wanted to understand what sort of things I can do to continue helping people. . . There was so much that I needed to be grateful for. Things that I didn't deserve. . . It was overwhelming when I came back. There was so much disparity it the world. Between what I left behind and what I am coming back to. And some guilt. Why do I deserve this? Thinking about some of the gratefulness of the people of Africa.

In this case the context of Uganda opened George not only to the disparity, but, as he described, to gratitude and goodness in relationships. The significance of this comes when we recognize how our perspective is embedded in a context. As we interact with a new context this creates a new pattern in how we live and experience the world. The dialogue happens when we must bring together these different contextually embedded lives into our ongoing life. For George this resulted in a shift in his perception of what had previously been familiar, a desire to address the disparity, and to grow into his valuing of relationship and gratitude.

A story that brings out the profound impact that dialogue can have is the story of how Doug was transformed, moving from being the head of the coal lobby and thinking that "climate change was a joke," to being the head of IECE and trying to eliminate atmospheric carbon

emissions from coal power plants. This dialogue primarily occurred, as mentioned earlier, between Doug and the two physicists who then worked with him to develop IECE. The first thing that this story demonstrates is the power of dialogue to overcome distortions.[38] In this case it was a giving of reasons, a better argument, that could be understood and accepted from within Doug's own worldview and its sense of morality that expanded Doug's perspective from seeing climate change as a "joke" to seeing the amount of carbon we were putting into the atmosphere as "unconscionable."[39] This change happened despite the reality that this change of position could challenge his interests and role with the coal lobby and his ongoing work in the coal mining industry. This is interesting because there are so many others in similar situations who refuse to be either convinced or moved by similar arguments. What seems to have allowed Doug to be transformed by this dialogue was first of all his willingness to engage in the dialogue at all. At several points he could have ended the dialogue, but instead he followed up this opportunity with e-mails and even a flight to Los Alamos. The second element appeared to be his commitment to rationality and science along with his commitment to act morally. These provided a shared basis for the conversation between Doug and the physicists while giving sufficient value to what was raised in the discourse so that Doug was willing to act on what it revealed. These commitments plus his desire to lead and be open to opportunities combined so he could seize the serendipitous revealing of both a problem and the opportunity before him, even if it meant eventually leaving a part of his old life and views behind.

This story also demonstrates the importance of being oriented in dialogue towards the subject of the conversation and its place in the wider context instead of towards the particular

[38] A fuller development of how discourse can overcome distortion and be applied in the morality and politics can be found in the work of Jürgen Habermas (Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethis) and Seyla Benhabib.

perspective of the other.[40] In Doug's conversation with the physicists they were able to overcome their differences by focusing, not just on understanding or refuting the perspective of the other, but focusing on carbon emissions and their effects. This conversation could happen because they shared the language of and a commitment to science. Still, it was the subject that science helped reveal, that bound together and directed their conversation. Doug described his initial perspective as, "before this moment of clarity I was in complete denial of global warming. I had considered it to be a joke." The physicists brought a very different perspective that saw the reality of climate change as very significant, and saw solutions in terms of the nearly complete elimination of carbon emissions. If their discourse was simply a matter of two different opinions, there is no reason for either perspective to prevail. Instead they were orientated towards understanding the actual effects of carbon emissions. By focusing on an aspect of our world that exists beyond just their perspective, this allowed them to overcome their differences and jointly perceive and act on the physical and moral consequence of the quantity of carbon that we are releasing into the atmosphere.

Finally, this story shows dialogue's ability to bring together the gifts and capacities of different people. The physicists brought their scientific way of life that had given them the ability to more accurately perceive the physical reality of the world, along with the ability to develop technical solutions to problems. What they lacked was an ability to raise the needed funding. Doug on the other hand participated in a context and way of life that provided him with the ability to raise the funds, but he needed a clearer understanding of the reality of carbon emissions and the knowledge of how this could be addressed. Their dialogue was transformative in that it created a context where these gifts could be brought together to address the other's

[40] For a similar model of how differences are overcome in conversations by finding a common language and by being orientated towards coming to an understanding of the subject see Gadamer 384-389.

needs and enabled them to create a new reality in our world, IECE, which could have a greater impact than either could have individually.

The Power to Create

When we are faced with any particular moral problem one of its important dimensions is the scale at which that moral problem occurs. This is one of the implications that the concept of framing has on our understanding of morality. For example, climate change may seem like a blessing to an individual farmer on the prairies of Canada as it produces more rain and longer growing seasons. The moral challenge only emerges when one steps back and takes into account the global consequences of lost species, mass starvation, mass migration, the effects on oceans etc.. Since climate change has global impacts, it is only when our frame includes the scale of this global perspective that it is appropriate to make moral judgments. A narrower frame would exclude significant aspects of this reality from our perception.

The scale of a moral challenge also determines the scale of response that is morally significant. This was the insight Doug had when he called the proposal he was hearing from other industry representatives "nonsense." For an action to be morally significant it has to be able to affect the scale at which the moral problem is occurring. This doesn't mean that action at other scales is not morally good. It is still good to drive less or for churches to get solar panels, since these represent actions at the level at which people have responsibility (the ability to respond) and because these smaller actions can be a part of a larger solution. Moral significance, as defined here, thus only happens when action is taken that can affect the moral problem on the scale at which it occurs and has impact.

This presents a problem. For transformation to occur we need the capacity to act in ways that are morally significant in order to realize that good. Power is the ability to act. A part of the wisdom of the community organizing tradition is the understanding that power itself is largely neutral. What is not neutral is how power is used and how it affects people. Power can be used for evil and to maintain an unjust status quo. Power is also essential if we are to change our society and seek justice (Jacobsen 38-49). Any transformation, because it involves change, must have its own degree of power so that it can creatively shape a situation and its existing power dynamics.[41]

One of the ways that power was seen to function in the stories of transformation was in the economics of money. Money has power in its ability to be used to make things happen, but also in terms of its relative distribution and the costs associated with things. This distribution of money and costs represents the distribution of power within an economic system. Money was an important part of several of these processes of transformation. For the IFWRLS to happen there was the need to raise the equivalent of $200,000. IECE had to raise large sums of money so that it could do the engineering work required to prove, present and build a zero emission coal power plant. It was only Doug's fundraising that allowed the concept to be proved.

Financial economics also played a role in delaying or even stopping processes of transformation. What prevented the implementation of dry tailings technology until recently was that at the time that George first developed the process the cost of the chemical, along with all of the other processes for mining and extracting oil from the oil sands, was not affordable due to the market value for oil at the time. This technology is only being developed for implementation now that oil is around $100 a barrel and the cost of reclaiming tailings ponds has been factored

[41] Since the use of dialogue above is highly dependent on Gadamer's conception of dialogue it is important to recognize that Gadamer's failure to address issues of power is one of the central critiques leveled against his work. For more on this see Striver.

in. Likewise IECE was not able to progress to implementation because they were unable to raise the billions of dollars necessary to bring the technology from being proven to being implemented.

The IECE story is also important because it forces us to think about power in broader terms. When Doug articulated its failure, it was not just the amount of money required that blocked it, rather he saw it in terms of missing an opportunity and not meeting with the right person. Further:

> They spend a billion dollars a month building these coal plants in China and it would only cost, say $5-6 billion dollars to redesign the whole system. No one wants, no one will take it on. Everyone wants to make small changes little by little. It is like when I was in the room with those forty people. Everyone wants to make small changes, little by little. They don't want to start changing the whole system, because that is a huge risk. There is no risk in the billion dollars a month being spent. Because they will know that there will be payback.

Finances were not the ultimate block. The cultural value of risk avoidance was a greater block because it directed funds to areas where there was predictable payback and thus away from a riskier redesign of the system. This value of avoiding risk, and looking for a predictable payback, gave the existing structures a kind of inertia and protected the status quo from anything more then gradually introduced small changes, even when an overhaul of the system is both what is needed and what is possible. This shows that a cultural value can be a source of power that is more powerful then money.

Another type of power is cooperative power – the ability to combine the capacities of weaker groups into a unit that has enough power to creatively bring about transformation[42]. This was a part of what gave the IFWRLS its power. The declining influence of religious

[42] The importance of combining to create power is a key feature of models of community organizing. See for example the work done by Ganz 18-20.

communities on people in power has become widely recognized by those who work in religious advocacy. With the IFWRLS this began to shift. As Karen describes it:

> But we have the governments paying attention. . . before the summit we met in Ottawa and we got an appointment with the Prime Minister's office. . . in terms of the interfaith leaders summit there was some transformation of the government's understanding of the interfaith landscape in Canada. I was there talking about the summit. As I went down the list of all who were involved in it. You could see the government representatives, being all subtle and elegant and diplomatic and all, paying more and more attention and they started writing things down. So you know you are impacting how the government perceives things when they start writing things down. This is what probably led us to getting the grant.

What is important is that it was only when they recognized the breadth of the communities involved in the IFWRS and thus the political power that its members brought together that there was sufficient power so that even the Prime Minister's staff literally took note.

It is not just sheer numbers that can give power. Bringing people together also generates power when it leads people to combine their gifts as a team. One way that teams can generate power for transformation is the opportunities they create for dialogue. For example, George continues to work on the oil sands through an ongoing but informal process that brings together representatives from heavy oil companies. New technical opportunities are shared amongst the group. This sharing of technical knowledge then gives each company a greater capacity than they would have on their own. This includes knowledge that could reduce the environmental impact of the oil sands. While he would not tie this process to any single advance, George did identify this as a part of the process that is transforming the oil sands industry. A similar dynamic is seen in the relationship between Doug and physicists involved in IECE; it was only when they came together as a team that their different power combined to bring about a creative process of transformation.

The combinations of skills, knowledge and resources together generate power, but it is also generated by the dynamic of the team itself. This was what Doug identified as critical for his

success in developing coalmines:

> . . . it was so much about the team. Like, we can do anything. Don't tell us we can't make a mine here. If we find the coal, we can make the mine. It is hard to look back. I know intuitively that there are other people who could have done it, but I know from working with others that most others would have failed. Most people would have lacked that; it is an esprit de corps that develops around a team. We thought of ourselves as the biggest and the best coal explorers in the West. We were out competing, we were like a football team, out competing against others who were less well organized, less committed, who were more just doing a job. I know if you talk to the guys involved, we were not just doing a job. We were creating things. So that was really good.

In other words, there is also an element of power that is created when a group develops not only a way of interacting but also a certain spirit amongst them that creates the power to accomplish what could not otherwise be accomplished.

Transformation in Relationships

The element of power existing in an *esprit de corps* points us toward an important aspect of transformation. When we see the good as something that exists in the midst of the world in its relationships, and we see ourselves as embedded within that world and having the ability to reshape that world by our actions, this means that transformation can happen through how we create and reshape relationships so that the good is experienced in them. This aspect of transformation was also captured in George's story. In his travels to Uganda he described encountering, in his relationships with people, generosity, openness, acceptance, goodness and genuineness. This had a double effect. By encountering these things in relationships in Uganda, he was then able recognize the absence of these things in relationships back in Canada. At the same time these relationships acted as kind of mimetic mirror, in which there was an opening to and a imitation of a positive model that invoked the same goodness in George.[43]

[43] For a fuller development of how mimetic desire can lead to goodness see René Girard "The Goodness of Mimetic Desire."

What was prominent in George's story was that his environmental concerns also developed out of encounters with others. George described how his environmental awareness grew:

> Living on a rural farm where you are living off the land, you get in tune with the earth and the life around you. So every living creature is a pleasure to encounter. Whether it was a ground owl or a meadowlark around the fence or the lynx strolling along the hill as you walk across the pasture to catch a school buss. Coyotes, lurking around the post looking at me in the face; seeing wild life, very close encounters, interesting moments. Probably, establishing a relationship, a connection with other living creatures. Later on in life, seeing where we are not taking great care of or protecting that environment for animals. We seem to ignore their habitat. There is constant destruction of habitat. You see creatures probably approaching extinction. So you say I am going to be missing out. I am not going to be seeing these grouses or perhaps I am not going to see ground owls any more. You can think about encountering other animals in life. Sometimes it can be quite a rewarding experience in life, some times frightful. They are there.

What became clear in George's description of relationships in Uganda and with nature is that it is not just the existence of a relationship, but the quality of the relationship that developed his awareness. When I asked him about his seeing God in nature he told me a story:

> My first time encountering Javelinas north of Mexico. I am alone walking though the woods. Here are a herd of these javelinas with tusks walking though the woods. And I am wondering what they are going to do with me. Probably chomp a big chunk out of my leg off. They just walk right by me. Then I wonder why I was so afraid (laughs). It seems to me, Harmony! There is harmony in nature. Maybe what we are doing in our human activity is disrupting that harmony.

What is significant about "connection," "generosity," "connection," or an experience of "harmony," is that they are not something that can exist in one individual alone, rather they are things that are created and exist only within a relationship, through the quality of that relationship and by our participation in that relationship. What is transformative is not just realizing a static good within our world, but rather realizing a goodness that is present, created and perceived through the quality of interaction in a relationship.

The significance of what is created within a relationship was also captured by Father Joe. I had asked him about the significance of listening and opening, specifically our being open to

reality, but he corrected me, adding:

> It is probably correct to say that listening allows us to be open, but it is more than an openness, it becomes relational. And the relationship that we form with ourselves, or with another or with God can always grow and deepen. And that is where the whole love element comes into it. Because we know that we are loved by God unconditionally. How do we respond to that love? And as I respond to the love of God for me that is usually how I respond to other human beings. Because I am being transformed by the love of God or grace, grace comes in and I am changed and it makes it easier to love you and other people. So it is very transformative.

In redirecting me to relationality, Father Joe directs us to see how the moral, in this case love, is revealed but also created in relationships. Grace and love are not elements that can independently exist on their own or within just one individual, rather they are created and realized between persons and with God.

What is also important is how the quality of a particular relationship can result in a transformation that can be transferred into other relationships. Father Joe draws a strong parallel between our response to the love of God and our response to the love of others. The mechanism seems to be that the love of God for him transforms him while giving him the capacity to love others. In addition to this, as I observed him in his role as a spiritual director, is how the love experienced though him also facilitates the transformation of his directees, helping them to develop their capacity to love others. Together this creates the potential for a chain reaction of transformation.

That the transformative capacity of a context depends on the quality of its internal relationships shows up in the other stories of transformation as well. For example, in both Esther's description and in my own experience of the IFWRLS, it was not so much the content of what was presented at the summit as it was the development of relationships and the quality of these relationships that the summit made possible that was transformative. These relationships added value to the perspectives gained from each other and created the possibility for future

shared work. These relationships do not just need to be with other people. For example, Carol and George both described transformative experiences that occurred through the quality of their relationship with the non-human natural world. For example for George, as noted above it was the experience of harmony and also connection. For Carol it was the experience of the earth after harvest and how it gave her a "jolt of wow . . . it made me stop what I was doing and it was really cleansing, it shifted any heaviness from you and it was energizing, it make you feel hopeful and positive and joyful . . . I was a child. I still feel it some times . . . it is very transformational at times"

Mary's description reveals the spiritual dimension of how the quality of a relationship can be transformative and how this transformation can be transferred even out of a particular situation. She talked about how, when people are able to share their story, or in small groups when there is a close bond and people can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit, "you just leave the session a different person then when it began". That the presence of God becomes apparent in the midst of relationships should give us pause. One of the insights of Trinitarian theology is that it recognizes the importance of the relationality within God. Mary's description directs us toward the possibility that the presence of God, and thus also the good that we seek to realize in transformation, is not a static reality that we realize or law that we follow, rather God may be present in the dynamics and quality of the relationships. As Mary described it, "Everything is relationship. God wants to have a relationship with us. God wants us to have a relationship with others. He wants others to discover their relationship with God. It is all relationship. It is all love."

We can now see some of the ways that transformation happens at the contextual level. We can see that transformation happens as particular contexts shape both our form of life and our

perception. Through discourse and dialogue transformation happens as our perception is expanded as our horizons fuse with those with whom we are in dialogue. It is this expanded perspective that gives us wisdom, allowing us to more fully perceive the dynamics and morality of our world while at the same time expanding our perception of our creative potential to shape our world. Contexts also raise for us the question of the level at which significant moral action needs to take place. This leads us to see how power plays a role in transformation, as it is created, not just by money, but by the coming together of people who bring together gifts, perspectives, resources, values and individual power, that, when combined, can have the power to creatively transform our world. We have also seen how transformation occurs in how we create and shape the quality of relationships that are a part of one's context.

The Context of Baptism

When we look at the level of context, we are primarily looking at the wider network of relationships beyond just the individual. One of the core assumptions of this paper is that all goodness comes from God. One of the central foci of baptism is on the context of the relationship between the one baptized and God. Through the acts of washing, cleansing, adoption and calling, a baptism transforms by revealing and enacting this relationship as a relationship of loving grace between God and the baptized. In this, baptism reveals the greater context of transformation to be the loving relationship between God and us. In Mary's words, "It's all relationship. It's all love."

There is also a problem in this. Baptism reveals God's side of this relationship to be one of love. When we look at the contexts we live in, and our role in these relationships, they are often far from loving and good. They are marked by sin. This is the primary tension within

baptism. In the act of baptism a relationship of love between the baptized and God is enacted. Yet on the human side of this relationship the transformation pointed at by baptism is not yet fulfilled. This is why it is significant that the baptism does not happen just between an individual and God.

When I was taught to baptize, it was stressed that, except for extraordinary circumstances, a baptism should always happen in the context of the community of faith that the baptized will continue to be a part of. This connection to a community of faith is stressed in the ceremony itself. The community is present when: there are parents who bring a child to be baptized and promise to raise them in the faith; in the sponsor's promising to "nurture these persons in the Christian faith." (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 228); and as the assembly promises to "support *name/s* and pray for *them* in *their* new life in Christ" (228). In that a baptism requires another person to pour the water and to speak the words of God, the community is essential to the baptismal ritual itself. The ordination of this person who performs the baptism and the form and content of the baptism itself also place the baptism in the context of the greater universal church.

By placing the baptism in these relationships, the baptized is placed into relationships with others who have been baptized. In their baptism, these Christians made promises that together act to create a context that can facilitate the ongoing fulfillment of the transformation promised by baptism. As Moe-Lobeda argues, it is through the practices of Christian communities that Christ is known and transforms the community into the active love of Christ (115). The promise "to bring *them* to the word of God and the holy supper" (ELW 229) calls the baptized to worship and the community to carry out worship involving Word and Sacrament. According to Moe-Lobeda, in the Holy Supper, this communal nature of worship and the church

is both created and made explicit as the faithful are brought together for mutual love and solidarity (114-132). As *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* describes this, "The sharing in one bread and the common cup in a given place demonstrates and effects the oneness of the sharers with Christ and with their fellow sharers in all times and places. It is in the Eucharist that the community of God's people is fully manifested (Churches 12)." At the same time it models and enacts a way of life where: the ordinary elements of our world are revealed as Holy and filled with God's presence; where we recognize that what we receive is from God; and then share equally in what we receive.

As the baptized is brought to the Word within worship, they are also transformed as the Word shapes our perceptions and paradigms through which we see God and the world. This happens in a context of ongoing dialogue. One element of this dialogue happens between the baptized and the Word. This develops as they engage the Word over a lifetime and reflect on it, as they experiment in their own way of life and gain a greater understanding of their life. This dialogue also occurs with a community, as the baptized learns from and discusses with the community the word that they are learning together.

The church's role of formation is most explicitly named in the promise "to live with *them* among God's faithful people" (228). While the church context of this promise is obvious, its function is not until we also look at the broader structure of the baptism and how this points us towards how the church can become a context for a living dialogue. The church is made up of others who are baptized. This means that it is made up of people in whom God's Spirit has come to dwell, and who have also been called to function as both priest and royal, "proclaiming Christ through word and deed" (228) and "caring for others and the world God made" (228). In dwelling amongst God's people the baptized is called to live in the midst of these relationships of

love and God's presence, which are present in the midst of the gathered baptized community. As Zizioulas writes about the early church's understanding of baptism, baptism was a birth into a new set of relationships, and it was these relationships within the church, which were understood both as the body of Christ and the communion of the Spirit (28-29). This points to how the *esprit d'corps* of the church, as the Spirit of God and a spirit of Love, plays an important component of the formation process.

In a baptism, the church is reminded not only that the baptized has now been adopted as a child of God and given the calling to be God's presence in the world, the community is also reminded that they too have been adopted and called in their baptism. Baptism reminds the church that it is not only a guide and model, but also that actual embodiment of God's presence as they concretely share Christ with and care for the baptized. In this the church becomes the potential site of a holy dialogue. This happens as each person lives out their calling and comes together with each other to create a kind of living dialogue in which each life proclaims a particular aspect of Christ and in which each person within a community of faith provides their own particular element of care and proclamation.

In this dialogue, there is the chance that one person will pick up where another's limits have blinded them and prevented them from caring. The commitment to this role is then expressed in the gathered assembly's promise "to support (name) and pray for *them* in *their* new life in Christ" (228). This can only occur if the community hears how that baptism and the baptism of all believers calls for the ongoing transformation of the community of faith itself so that it can be a community of mutual formation.

The calling of baptism does not stop at the limits of the church. Another important statement made by the assembly is found in the final welcome, "We welcome you into the body

of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 231). The image of the body in this captures well how lives, values and gifts must be brought together to work at broader social levels. A body does not have the power to live, function or affect without each of its elements working together. In this welcome, what is recognized is that, while it is the individual who is baptized and called, they are called to a mission that is shared. Furthermore this mission is not confined to the church, but rather given "to all the world."

In the stories of Carol, Doug, and George the power of people who were baptized and formed by the church who then go out into the world, and in worldly roles live out their baptismal calling is seen. In doing so these people were able to be a part of a transformational process that they likely could not have participated in if their role was explicitly a function of a church organization. Power was developed in these cases in their work with secular organizations and people. While the Christian identification may not be explicit, this does not mean that living out the transformational call present in baptism is not implicit in this work.

In the stories of Mary, Father Joe, the Kairos Dialogue and the IFWRLS what we see is this call to shared mission being lived out explicitly as church. In this case the church itself becomes the context in which teams have come together to share resources, perspectives, relationships etc., in order to have sufficient power to create transformation. Whether it is implicit or explicit, what is enacted is the same calling to share in word and deed God's calling and mission. What we can begin to see in this is how baptism directs us toward a series of transformative contexts. The first is the context of love between the baptized and God. Baptism also turns us toward the context of the church. While this context is marked by sin, baptism calls

the church to become a context of formation and transformation for all of the gathered baptized. The calling of baptism is also beyond the church, in a mission to reshape the world.

Throughout the baptism, words like mercy, love, grace care, justice, peace and trust (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 228) are used to describe the quality of the relationship between us and God and the quality of relationships that we create with others. What this reminds us is that what we are being transformed into is not the realization of some static state of being good, instead what baptism is calling us into is the shaping of the dynamics of our relationships so that they have these qualities. In the Christian tradition the core quality of the relationship that we are called into is love. As Mary says, "It's all relationship. It's all love." We are reminded in baptism that God is the source of this love, whether it comes through created reality or through Spirit-inspired human culture. The Trinitarian nature of God also reminds us that these dynamics are not separate, but ultimately one. This moves us to look not just at how transformation happens through our perception, our way of life and context, but to how these come together and are integrated as one movement of transformation.

Chapter 5: Integration

So far, we have looked at how transformation happens at the levels of our perception, way of life and context. At these different levels we have seen how we are transformed as we gain wisdom, as we are opened within our culture to perceive the patterns and moral significance of our world. We are also transformed through our creativity, as we act with wisdom, in response to what we perceive in order to use our life and our shared power to realize the good in our world and its network of relationships. When we look at these stories of transformation, what is also clear is that these levels and processes do not function independently, but rather that transformation happens through a continuous process of interaction and integration that shapes both our perception and how we create the world we live in.

When we look at the IFWRLS its transformative power really begins to emerge when we examine how it integrates these levels of transformation. The creation of the IFWRLS began as a perception of what was possible to create. Its creation focused primarily on the formation of particular contexts where people who lived the way of life of a religious leader could come together interact, and together engage in dialogue. This dialogue crossed differences of religion and nationality, but was framed around a common focus on issues of justice. This was transformative in itself, as these different elements came together to create the summit, creating in our shared world an interfaith voice and cooperation concerning fundamental issues of justice. The IFWRLS was also intended as a contribution to the transformation of our larger national and global context. This occurred as it shaped perception by demonstrating to our world and its political leaders interfaith cooperation and concern over issues of poverty, environmental sustainability, peace and security. The summit also sought to be a body that held the leaders of the G8 countries accountable for promises that they had made.

This integration of different levels of transformation can also be seen in how the IFWRLS sought to affect the wider world though its participants. This happened as the perceptions of participants were shaped by the dialogue, the context of dialogue and the relationships that were formed. It was then hoped that this process of transformation would also be carried around the world, as these changed perceptions would shape how these leaders would live and use their power to shape the contexts in which they led. The success of this was seen in Canada both in the now ongoing dialogue between Canada's political leaders and the Canadian delegation to the IFWRLS and in the work currently being done to create a permanent interfaith partnership (Andersen; Eshter).

We can also see the bringing together of multiple elements and levels of transformation in the organizational transformation described by Carol concerning the oil company she had worked for in Nigeria:

> And we worked out a plan of how we can approach this, methodically, clearly, honestly. It was dealing with corruption, dealing with the Canadian Government, dealing with the Nigerian government, dealing with partners doing gas flaring. . .
> R: Where do organizational values come from?
> C: They come from everywhere, from within organizations, from people, from outside influences. . . . The real question is what crystallizes them. . . They really need to be spoken . . . walked - there needs to be consequences. . .
> R: What was different?
> C: The ease we could talk about non-technical considerations, the budgets were different, where we spent our man power was different, what had value was different. People's understanding of our responsibility . . . it was just a total shift of how we thought about projects and our own vulnerability was different. We risked losing projects. It was a shift in what we spent our time on and dollars on.

In this we can see integration happening in multiple ways. Contextually it involved the integration of the newly developed perception of above-ground risks, in how the company related to the numerous players it was involved with. Internally the integration of this transformation occurred by: integrating the company's internal dialogue in "the ease we could

talk about non technical considerations"; in a shift in how the companies power was used in how "the budgets were different, where we spent our man power was different"; what was seen perceived as significant shifted in "what had value was different" even the thought process were integrated in terms of "how we thought about projects." This was integrated into the way of life of people and crystallized as values were, "spoken . . . walked – there needs to be consequences."

Carol also made a key remark, "values come from everywhere . . . The real question is what crystallizes them." In other words it is not just that different elements are shifting or transforming, there needs to be the actual coming together and combining of these elements to form a new entity or pattern. Likewise with the IFWRLS each of the leaders on their own likely already valued issues of justice and interfaith dialogue, otherwise they likely would not have participated. Transformation happens when these disparate elements and people came together, integrating with each other at the summit, in the process creating a new entity in the world, with its own unique power that would not otherwise exist without that integration.[44]

The significance of integration was also prevalent as a theme of personal transformation. For Carol, her transformation involved the coming together of a context that made her sick, which forced upon her the new way of life of lying on a couch for months which facilitated the changing of her perception. Carol spoke of the importance of this integration:

> And I grew because I lay on a couch for eight months. I didn't have any choice. Either you have to figure out this space . . . and what you feel like, mentally and emotionally, not physically. It also allowed me to break down all those pieces. When you are running hard. Your emotional, spiritual, physical, intellectual self, you get all mashed together. You can't really, when you are really tired, pull these apart. My body isn't functioning, but everything else is, and this is how I feel. And it allowed delineation of those aspects your being. That was helpful. . . To be able to understand and feel what spiritual nourishment felt like, what emotional nourishment felt like. . . It allowed me to make delineations. . . It allowed me to make better discernments.

[44] In community organizing literature this is called the power of combining or power to, see Ganz, 19

What Carol helps us see in this is that even our self is not a singular entity; integration within our self involves the complex coming together of multiple factors. Her description teaches us that integration is not a process of mashing together, but rather one of delineation, of knowing the different elements and what each of these elements are able to contribute when brought together.

For Mary, the process of transformation involved the coming together of not only a new perception of God, but also her taking on a new way of life that involved prayer, a changed relationship with God, work as a spiritual care giver, spiritual direction and the entering into the contexts of classes, relationships, working in a church, connecting with nature etc. It was through the interplay of all of these factors, as well as what she described as the work of the Holy Spirit, that her process of transformation occurred. Mary's story lifted up the integration of one's own history into one's current perception and practice. Mary described how:

> It has taken most of my life to get there. There was one point when I was meditating and I got to a point that I never thought I would. I got to the point where I wouldn't change one thing in my life going back, because I am who I am today. I never thought I would ever, ever say that, but it is just a wow.

This integrated history has become a lived paradigm for Mary that has allowed her to be open to God's presence and joy. She also described how it allows her to empathize with those she cares for, by allowing her to recognize what a person feels as well as being able to recognize what might help that person move through their pain.

In Father Joe what we see is the importance of integrating internal and external processes of transformation:

> I had to learn though various levels. At a human level, while at the same time I was experiencing somewhat the same thing in the adaptation of how I wanted the Father to be a total part of my life. And so the human aspect taught me a lot about the divine aspect. But it was the divine aspect that helped me to gradually, gradually evolve into the actual human experience that I was going through. Which I didn't find 100% easy. . . . The two

> are simultaneous. I cannot say that I love God if I do not love the people that I see, because he is unseen. And scripture tells us that "Do tell me that you love God, who you do not see, when you do not love your neighbor who you do see". It is all relational. The whole thing is relational. The core of the relationship is the giving and receiving of love. Whether it is vertical or horizontal or towards myself.

This integration of internal transformation and external transformation was a theme shared by other stories of personal transformation. For Father Joe his personal transformation was connected to how he related to the other brothers, counseled people, and acted as a spiritual director and preacher. For Carol her personal process of transformation led her to create a non-profit organization. For Mary her process of transformation was integrated with her work in a church and in her development as a spiritual director.

Others who have studied moral formation and moral exemplars similarly acknowledge the importance of integration. O'Connell, in his book on moral formation argued that moral formation involves the coming together of one's experience; shaping value preference, concrete life experiences, social realities and group dynamics, mentors, modeling, and relationships (100). Colby and Damon found that:

> Moral leaders such as Sakharov and Gandhi show a unity of the self that we find remarkable as well as informative. There is little separation in Sakharov's writings between his moral life, his personal life, and his professional life. Unlike most people he does not compartmentalize his concerns. . . One of Gandhi's close supporters described Gandhi's "irresistible" quality this way: "He said what he believed and put into practice what he said, so his mind, spirit, and body were in harmony." . . . Personal concerns became inseparable from moral ones. (17)

Colby and Damon even argue that it is integration that sets moral exemplars apart, as they write: "Moral exemplars do not form their self-identities in a wholly different manner from other people. The unusual feature of our exemplars' personal development is the strength of this integration and the extensiveness of their moral engagements." (301).

That transformation involves the integration of multiple levels should come as little surprise. As humans we are not simply one thing. We are not just spiritual, physical, biological, psychological or social, but rather we are the coming together of multiple factors in the midst of multiple relationships. More importantly, what we see is that our wisdom is not just something held within our own minds, it is also a part of the way in which we live, the contexts we live in, the dialogue we engage, and in the different parts of our self and our history. From this we can begin to see that our wisdom rests not just within a hermeneutic circle, but rather within a hermeneutic system or system of perceptions that we participate in and shape, but that also stretch beyond the individual. These systems involve: our neurons and how they are shaped by our genes and how they interact with our environment; our culture and how it shapes our perception; and our way of life and how it shapes the possibilities we have for encountering knowledge. We can also see that our creativity participates in networks of power and influence that not only shape us, but through which we shape our world. Transformation and the wise creativity that leads to transformation thus happens in the coming together and the integration of these systems and networks. This presents a serious challenge for our understanding of transformation. In this complexity no one piece determines transformation.

No One Piece Determines

The process of transformation can be tenuous. One of the important themes from these stories was that transformation was not determined by a single factor. There were multiple factors that could shape or prevent transformation. Doug, for example, developed his views on carbon emissions even when his context, being president of the coal association, could have pushed him like others in that context to reject this problem. Sometimes a factor that might result

in transformation is simply ineffective, as when Mary described how going to church when she was young had no impact on her for the rest of the week. Transformation can happen in one context, only to be blocked or reverted in another. For example, Tom described how, during the Kairos Dialogue, Don Thompson began to change his description of the integrity of Dr. John O'Conner (who had first raised issues of high cancer rates at Fort Chipewyan) only to revert to denigrations of Dr. O'Conner at a later date. Likewise the work of George on dry tailings and Doug on IECE were stopped by financial factors, despite the fact that many other factors were pushing this work forward.

One of the ways that we can look at the indeterminacy of any one factor for transformation is to turn this into a question of which factors have a greater or lesser probability of bringing about change.[45] While this question is beyond the scope of this work, what is significant from these studies is the emergence of two realities. There are factors that influence change/transformation, but there is no single factor, or even a set of factors that can completely determine or predict change. As Carol stated, "you can't change people unless they want to be changed." This inability to completely determine change is not only a part of human and divine freedom, but also, as we have described, reveals that there is a creative element in the way that we perceive, how we shape our way of life and the way we bring together the many influences of our context. This means that transformation cannot be determined, not only because of the complexity of a world which brings together multiple influences into a situation, but also because human freedom and creatively are factors that shape and limit these influences. This also points us towards the power of integrative experiences.

[45] See, for example, the studies quoted in Patterson.

The Power of Integrative Experiences

George described the power of integrative experiences when he spoke about the effect travel to Uganda had on him, "You are in the picture instead of looking at the picture . . . I think that there is a greater mental awareness about where you are. All the senses come alive. You can see, touch, feel, and sounds, you can hear people. You can experience happiness when someone smiles". Carol vividly captured this, emphasizing the way in which these integrative experiences involve our whole being, giving us a more comprehensive wisdom, which in turn allows greater possibilities for creativity:

> . . . I integrated all that stuff. It wasn't just me reading a book or a financial statement and going wow we are in Columbia and there are . . .guerrillas on the ground. It was me on the ground, with the guerillas on the ground, with people blowing up trucks. That actually looks very different than a textbook. When you integrate all of that in your being and you know the consequences of that, at every level. It is very different, than looking at it as an abstraction. And I think it is also then irrefutable. . . . All parts of me are having trouble with what we are doing here . . . It just become stronger. . . When it is your thinking mind only, it is very linear, that is how we think. And what can be created is very different than when you get rid of that way of being and you start to, I don't think you think with your whole body. I think you know with your whole body, and your mind, and your soul and whatever language you want to use. It is just a more, comprehensive wisdom. I think that is powerful. . . When you are in the experience itself. Those are the creative spaces, which I think are the transformative spaces. I think that creativity happens with all of those things working together. . .I don't think putting brainy people around the table is going to be as creative as people on the ground in crisis. It is not a beautiful place to be, but it is a place that you are a lot more creative then normal.

One of the important points made in this description, one made in contrast to a linear thinking model, is that in an experience there is a much greater range of sensing faculties that inform our perspective. The power of this can be understood if we use the models of opening and of dialogue. Since each opening creates its own possibility of perceiving the patterns of our world, each sense faculty creates an opening for gaining wisdom and thus transformation within our hermeneutic systems. When these faculties come together we can imagine them as a kind of

dialogue, with each faculty adding to the picture and creating a richer picture. Since this perception involves different aspects of our self, this allows the possibility that these different aspects of our self will be affected by the experience. This not only creates greater porosity for the gaining of wisdom in a situation, but as Carol argues, it also allows for greater creativity.

George highlights another key element of being in the picture. As he describes it, "You can experience happiness when someone smiles." It is not just the bringing together of our own personal faculties that is important in integrative experience, but also the bringing together the relational element between ourselves and the context. As was noted in the section on context, not only do relationships allow dialogue between people, they also create the opportunity for a transformative aspect within the relationship itself. Relationships provide a unique frame for our perception. One can imagine that the significance of trucks blowing up changes once you have gotten to know the people who drive those trucks.

Integration can also stretch beyond the specific situation. Carol described it: "Then it is not in my opinion as a lawyer, then shit, it is my opinion as a mother, as an opinion as a partner in this company, as a Canadian citizen, in a million different ways." Each of us holds multiple identities. Each of these identities marks both a part of who we are, and a set of relationships and roles we have with others. When these are brought into an experience, along with our senses, our bodies and relationships, then the transforming possibility is stretched even further, as these identities and their relationships bring in their unique sets of perspectives, values, knowledge and possibilities for creation.

So while on the one hand the diversity of elements involved in any transformation means that any of these elements can override potential transformation, on the other hand in these

integrative experiences there is a transformative power that is created when these many elements come together.

Incrementality

That the creativity of our transformation happens in the context of multiple factors and influences leads to another theme present in the stories of transformation: transformation as incremental. Mary, David, Father Joe, Carol, Esther and George in different ways all describe the incremental nature of transformation, even while some expressed the expectation that transformation could or should be more sudden. This gradual nature of transformation was also found in Colby and Damon's study of moral exemplars. They write, "It is not that the exemplars have undergone qualitatively different processes of change. Rather, they have experienced, deeply and intensively, many moral goal transformations over long stretches of their lives. In this regard they are unusual" (303).

When we look at all of the multiple factors, internal and external, that come together, with each one having an influence, each one being influenced, we can begin to understand why incrementality is often an important element of transformation. In these systems each change involves a shifting of multiple factors and relationships. It simply takes time for a new perspective to change a way of life. This way of life can then lead to a change of perspectives. It can then take more time for these to influence and be influenced by a person's contexts, which is also made up of a web of perspectives, forms of life and power. Together this forms a web. Each change requires a shifting of this web. Each shift can then open up new possibilities or threats to transformation.

This is one of the reasons why transformation requires, as Esther described it "consistency and persistency." The integrating of all of these elements simply requires time and ongoing energy because it is complex. Carol captured this well:

> Most change, 99% of change is incremental and 1% of change is exponential, or transformational. To understand every single step in the change process that leads up to a transformation is also really important, so that people can understand how and what was the straw that broke the camel's back and also to be able to see in the place that they are today, and the place they want to be. I think that is what holds a lot of people back. They see where they want to be. But they haven't a clue how to get there. So, barring transformational change, they don't think that it is possible. So I think My job is breaking it down into 100 steps. You will want transformational change at some time, but it is only going to happen with incremental steps. So tomorrow start with step one and to feel some value in that. There is worth in that. We like big bang stuff, but we don't like little stuff. We don't observe it.

One of the important points developed here by Carol is not only that transformation is incremental, but that we must turn our attention to the steps that lead to transformation. This is one of the points developed by K. Patterson . She argues, relying particularly on the work of Anders Ericsson, that the critical difference between top performers and others is found in how they practiced. Top performers focused on the specific skills that they needed to develop, especially on where they were having problems, while mid-level performers usually focused on the end result that they wanted to achieve and were happy when their performance was "good enough" (118-129). The importance of this for transformation is that it is often easy to focus on where we want to be, instead of how we get there. As Carol points out, a focus on the end, because it can lead us to believe the goal is too big or cause us to miss the steps needed to get there, can actually result in our missing possibilities for realizing transformation. This effect is then compounded by the fact that transformation is usually incremental and slow. When we keep the end in sight but focus on the process, on the individual steps that need to be accomplished and mastered, the process of transformation is made both manageable and achievable. As the

study of practice shows us, it may even help us realize transformation both quicker and to a higher degree than if we focus only on the end we want to realize.

Integrating our Self within the Ocean of Relationships

The significance of integration so far has helped us to see the importance and complexity of the numerous factors that come together in the process of transformation. This is made even more complex when we take into account how all of these factors have their own dynamics and how as theologians Clayton and Simpson argue, at new levels of organization patterns emerge that cannot be explained by their constitutive parts (64-87). We do not live in a static world. We live in a world of continuous change and complexity. The problem with Carol's description of one hundred steps is not only that rarely are those one hundred steps clear, but that as we take those steps their pattern seldom remains the same.

This creates a challenge for gaining wisdom that can lead to transformation, especially in a world that emphasizes direct effects and results. The complexity of the world makes it difficult to draw direct causal relationships between actions and transformation. As Esther describes it:

> The overt focus from the beginning was to get the G8/G20 to step up to the plate around the MDGs. Will we ever know the effect of the Inter-Faith Leaders Summit? Unlikely. So I couldn't offer assurance of that going in. But I knew that. I asked Dr. John Kirton, Director of the G8/G20 Research Group that question right at the beginning of our process. "Would we", I asked, "ever know the effect of our interfaith engagement on the G8/G20, specifically and concretely?" He said, "No, you won't but believe me, there will be one." Dr. Kirton has worked in this area for many, many years, as the leading G8/G20 researcher in the world. He also speaks very highly of the Jubilee campaign, the campaign, to cancel third world debt. He talks about the huge impact it had and the fact that Tony Blair spoke to its impact. . .

George similarly describes the impact of the group that he brings together to discuss new ideas concerning heavy oil: "A lot of things have happened over the course of the year. This may have

been a part of that. Whether this has been a direct result of that, it may be a part of the transformation." In both of these comments people have recognized the possibility of these processes being a part of creating transformation. Yet when we cannot determine direct cause and effect how can one determine what is effective action or the impact one has?

A part of the challenge of this comes because patterns emerge that are greater than what can be explained by its constitutive parts. The questions of environmental sustainability, global poverty, peace and corporate responsibility that were addressed by these processes of transformation are problems that emerge because of the coming together of a vast array of actions which on their own cannot explain these emergent challenges. What is interesting is that it is not just the problems emerge from this complexity. Life giving possibilities, what Doug referred to as "serendipity," also emerge.

What we can begin to see is that in the complexity of the world and of ourselves with their emergent realities, the modern desire for understanding cause and effect, with its implied hope for control, simply does not easily work. This does not mean that we avoid thoughtfulness, careful study or research. What our stories suggest instead is that we shift the focus of how we understand our role within this complexity. In the stories of transformation, we see people working towards transformation within the unpredictability inherent in complexity by moving away from the modern concept of the centrality of the self as a subject. What we see instead is a de-centering of the self and a shift to an emphasis on relationships. This shift is beautifully captured by Father Joe:

> The core of transformation is the love of relationships, the love of God, the love of neighbour, and the proper love of self. And we have them in various degrees. And we have to see them through prayer. We have to see how we have to improve our relationship with God. How we have to improve our relationship with others, and how we have to improve our relationship with self. And I think that the dying to self becomes very important. I have to get out of the limelight and allow someone else to shine. And

> that is not a negative thing at all. . . Rejoicing with others in their growth and their transformation. That is what I see is spiritual direction, it is the soul of the other growing, and deepening in its relationship with God. I only have to rejoice in that. And it fills me with joy when I see people growing in their relationship with God, because then it also shows up in their relationships with others.

In this, the role of the individual is not removed. Rather the individual is placed within a larger context, and the particular contribution that one can make through the relationships one participates in is recognized. George captures this in his description of how his environmental awareness and his work on the oil-sands fit together,

> I know that humans will exploit the resources anywhere in the world. And Canada has some resources that other people want. I know that they will be exploited no matter what. So I hope that my contribution is that I can make it less destructive. Find ways in which we can be constructive in land use and water resources that I am involved in.

This recognition of how we are integrated into process larger then our self expands our understanding of creativity. Creativity happens not only through our imagination, our actions, or in how we bring power together. Creativity occurs as a part of a larger process in which we participate and play a role. This can then free us to de-center our own roles and hand our work over to a process greater then one's self. This is how Doug describes the ongoing life of IECE:

> And you know IECE hasn't gone away. We published it all. You know I just got an e-mail yesterday. A university guy, asking me if he could interview me about my IECE experience. You don't know. That is the good part. You don't know what your role is. Perhaps my role was to go around the world and put it in the archives around the world. And there are people who went to a conference, and recorded in many scientific journals. And some day someone will go why didn't they complete that. It was a whole solution.

What this opens up is the turn from transformation as a product of what one does, or the direct influence one has, to seeing transformation as a process in which one has a unique role through the way one participates in and makes connections as a part of the relationships of our world.

This leads us to again see the importance of wisdom for understanding how one can work for transformation. Carol captures this well:

> "I asked different questions. What is your unique role. What is before you that you can't see. . . My awareness and my ability to discern people showing up with particular questions. I have an amazing network. . . because I discern so much, because I can see where I sit in all these things, because I can see relevance in all these things. . . It is energizing. When you are in flow more often, when you know you are doing what you can uniquely do. It is just so positive."

For Carol, once we de-centered our self and focus on patterns of transformation greater then our self, wisdom develops through discernment, in which we seek to see how one fits in the patterns around oneself. She described this discernment as involving: looking for what she can't see; encountering questions; developing relationships; and trying to perceive how theses are all significant to each other. It is out of this discernment that she cultivates the wisdom to see the role that she can creatively play within her network of relationships.

Transformation thus involves a kind of wisdom that focuses, both on how we fit within the patterns that are around us and how we can act within these patterns. Our role develops when we, in the words of Doug, "see opportunities" that these patterns create for us and then creatively act in response.[46] The recognition of patterns is not just something we do on our own. As with Carol's development and use of her network to understand her world, it is also a function of the systems of perceptions that we participate in.

At the end of his interview Father Joe finished with these words. "Thanks be to God that I have been able to feel the transformation in my own life and hopefully been helpful in others. I leave it up to God however he wants to use me." In this there is an interesting mix of passivity, activity and ultimately the leaving of it all up to God. One could dismiss this mix as the product

[46] The importance of recognizing patterns in complex situations is also stressed in Frances Westley, Michael Quinn Patton and Brenda Zimmerman, Getting to Maybe : How the World Is Changed (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2007). See especially 55-91.

of a long monastic life. Interestingly enough a similar mix is found in Carol, who has also been formed by faith, as well as by the global corporate and non-profit world:

> My own sense of faith, and not just faith in God which has always been there . . . but the faith that, the lack of control, I let go of all control. The transformation of 'you can set goals for yourself and work towards them.' I pretty much, I have notions, but they don't come from me, and I work along certain plans, but they are not my plans. As much as I create process, I do I love process but I don't really think I design any of it. It is me, being constantly aware of where I am at in the universe and what it is I am to do. It was transformative for me not in terms of my faith in God, but in terms of my unique role on this earth.

This leads us to begin to see how we interact within this complexity of relationships. Instead of placing human interaction at the centre, what we see is people have a creative wisdom that guides how they play their role in the midst of patterns much greater than themselves that come together in our world. These are patterns which they integrate into their own transforming actions. The best analogy that captures this is my own transformative experience of surfing.

When one is learning to surf one begins by focusing on all the things that one must do. Teachers teach you how to paddle, how to stand up, how to turn and get out of the way. Once you get in the water it quickly becomes apparent that you are faced by forces much greater then yourself. You can paddle, stand up or do whatever you like on your own, using all your ability, only to watch helplessly as waves pass by you or as you are yelled at by those you just cut off moments before you are tossed head over heels with your board crashing into you. You only begin to surf when you begin to realize that you are in the presence of something much more powerful then your self. Yes, you need to paddle like mad, but only when you recognize the pattern of a mounting wave that is getting ready to crest -- not for your neighbour, but for you. You stand up, but only as you begin to feel your board being carried by the rushing water, lifting you up and then starting its slide down the watery slope. You balance upon the moving board by

using a body that is the product of millions of years of evolution, by responding to the subtle curves of an ocean created billions of years ago, pulled by a moon almost 400,000 kilometers away and pushed by winds one cannot even see. Its crest shaped by an ancient shore. It is only when all of these elements integrate, that a few transforming moments are created when you ride a wave. And when it is over, you paddle out to try again.

Like the surfer, looking for the next wave, reflecting on what they could improve as they paddle out to try again, what we come to see in these stories of transformation is that transformation does not lead people to some perfect state. Instead we see people growing into a deeper ongoing process of transformation. In each of these stories we saw people turning to participate in complex patterns that were larger then themselves. In this, people did not control the larger pattern, instead they played by integrating their role with the different elements that came together for a brief movement of transformation. Like a surfer recognizing a cresting wave, what we saw was people having the wisdom to be open to and recognize patterns that were happening in their world and focusing its significant features. This wisdom involved not only their perception, but also how they had shaped their lives to be attentive to their world and how their dialogue with a broader context could help them see beyond their own blind spots. In these stories people did not just watch the waves, they were creative and surfed them. They used their perceptions to recognize the patterns of our world and perceive what was possible. They acted to shape the patterns that they participated in, affirming the good that they saw by shaping actions and relationships to develop that goodness. Like a surfer paddling they developed and used power and like a surfer balancing on a wave, when the good was realized it existed in the nature of the relationships themselves. What was realized was not permanent. Transformation did not

lead people into to some teleological good. Instead it led them out again, to swim and ride the great ocean and waves of God.

Baptism - Transforming Faith

It is baptism that reminds us that our transformation happens in the ocean and upon the waves of God. In this paper, we have seen how baptism sets out a pattern for transformation in which we are invited into the life of the Trinity: Christ, in grace, creates a world by bridging the divine and human reality within us; God's Word is spoken over the water to remind us of God the Father's continuing creation and presence in reality; the giving of the Holy Spirit empowers us and acts through human culture so that we can be God's loving and creative presence in the world. We have seen how baptism calls us to perceive the brokenness of the world and be turned to God and the goodness of God. In our baptism we see how transformation happens as we are then called to a way of life that is open to God's love and is an expression of that love through our calling as priest and royalty as we proclaim Christ and work for justice and peace. Our baptism also sets us in a context of transformation: by revealing the context of God's love in which we live, by placing us in a church that is called to be a community of formation, and by calling us to mission both through and beyond the church.

All of this comes together in one act of baptism, as a person is brought, water is poured, words and promises are spoken, the Spirit is given, and a calling is proclaimed. Much as God is three *and one*, the unity of the act of baptism sets out transformation, not as separate elements, but as one integrated act and life. Baptism acts as a reminder of the ancient biblical wisdom, which emphasized the essential unity of the person (Thiselton 46-47; Käsemann 135), the importance of the community of believers, and the fact that all of creation is involved in the

process of redemption and transformation.[47] Baptism thus enacts the integrative element of transformation.

This integration holds the baptized in several tensions. There is the tension between the salvation realized in the act of a valid baptism and its fulfillment that stretches out throughout and ultimately beyond the life of the baptized. An individual performs a baptism, yet in reconciling us to God it accomplishes what no human can do. In a baptism the grace of God comes to a particular individual, yet it introduces this by recounting the history of salvation of which the individual is a part (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 230).

In placing its fulfillment beyond one's life, in making God the primary actor and acknowledging the universal history of salvation, baptism turns us from just the individual to the much larger patterns of our world in which the baptized participates. At the same time in baptism it is an individual, in the midst of a community of people who we baptize, who is called in baptism by God and given God's Holy Spirit. The individual is thus not run over by the larger process of transformation, instead they are brought into relationship with it and invited to surf in God's love. The fulfillment of baptism is then lived as one is integrated into these larger processes of God's transformation of our world and the ways in which God's Spirit is working within people and their culture.

In these stories of transformation what we witness is the integration of these realities through particular lives. What we see is the transformation of individuals as they have come to see themselves, God and their role in the world in a new ways and shift into the realities that they now perceive. At the same time we see these same individuals participating in the larger transformation of our world, tackling issues as large as carbon emissions and as intimate as

[47] For a biblical emphasis on how all creation is involved in God's redeeming love, see John 3:16, Romans 8:19, Revelations 21:2 and Northcott.

another person's spiritual journey. In these lives we see how these are not separate processes. Mary spoke about how it was as others began to come to her that she was led to go deeper into her own healing, how in her ongoing care of others she experienced God's presence and grace. For Doug the transformation of his perception of the problem of carbon was tied to an effort to address carbon emissions from one of its largest sources, coal. The lives of these baptized persons integrated the transformation of the world and the transformation of their lives

In not one of these stories did someone speak about their process of transformation as being complete. Though IECE had ended, Doug continues to work on projects that have their roots in that effort. Mary continues to delve deeper in her faith while expanding her role of caring for others. Father Joe continues to pray and grow in his being little before the father while continuing to take time to lovingly guide the spiritual life of others. George continues to bring together heavy oil producers to find technical solutions while continuing his commitment to the faith he into which he was confirmed. Carol continues her work in corporate responsibility and bridge building, while discerning her role in many larger processes of transformation. In the lives of these baptized Christians, their baptism was an event, but an event that points us towards its ongoing fulfillment, a fulfillment that each of these people has opened their lives to be a part of.

The challenge that baptism places before us is for us to look at these processes, not simply as human efforts to bring about change, but rather as processes of transformation in which God is the primary actor. In this baptism points beyond our selves by reminding us that it is God's wisdom, which was spoken at creation, that we are invited to learn and that it is God's Spirit which moves amongst all the baptized and blows over all creation that creates through us. In this we are invited to adopt an expanded perspective that realizes what the theologian Torrance wished for, that there is:

> such a shift in the focus of our vision that, instead of looking at the universe in the flat, as it were, we look at it in a multidimensional way in which the universe as a whole, and everything within it, are found to have meaning through an immanent intelligibility that ranges far beyond the universe to an ultimate ground in the transcendent and uncreated Rationality of God (Torrance 23 quoted inS. Patterson 26).

One of the great insights of Gutiérrez is how he expanded the concept of 'hermeneutic circle' to include how liberation happens through a process that begins with *commitment* and the encounter/experience with Christ (*spirituality or prayer)* and then moves to theology and action. Together this makes up the life of faith, of following Jesus (35-54, 136-137). This calls us to see how our hermeneutic circles, and the hermeneutic systems they are apart of include the experience of God in the midst of our world as a part of our integration of our vision and life. In this we are still invited to use science and other forms of knowledge to gain wisdom about the patterns and structures of our world, but we are invited to open our perception wider to perceive and experience the presence of God within our lives and world. As Keating teaches us, the practices of prayer are intended to help us perceive the presence and action of God in our world (14, 17-18). This perception becomes a part of the transforming process. As Louth, writing about the Eastern Orthodox Fathers reminds us, "To see God is to encounter him and be transformed in the process" (222-223).

In none of the stories of transformation was the perception of God confined to a pristine contemplative exclusion of the world. Gutierrez's dynamic is between prayer and *action*. Our perception of God's presence happens in the midst of the world and leads us to action in the world. This is captured in the Orthodox understanding as the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew writes:

> Orthodox Christianity is a way of life in which there is a profound and direct relationship between dogma and praxis, faith and life. This unity of faith and life means the reality of the eternal truths lies in their experiential power, rather than in their codification into a set of ideological constructs" . . . "Moreover, one cannot fully appreciate the way in which

> theological doctrine and spiritual life were perceived as two sides of the same coin by the early Christians, as well as by the Orthodox as their contemporary successors, unless one is able to appreciate the profound connection, intimate friendship, and mutual respect that developed between the likes of Anthony of Egypt (known as the father of monasticism") and Athanasius of Alexandria (one of the early and staunch defenders of the orthodoxy of faith)." (Bartholomew 5).

This integration of holy vision and worldly practice shifts our focus from doctrines of baptism toward baptism's call to have the paradigms of our faith open us to perceive God's presence and action in the world and how we can act as a part of God's creative transformation. Since this involves us in the world, it is not an invitation to act according to some notion of perfection, but rather to allow our life to become a kind of living experiment, where our eyes remain open to perceive the brokenness of the world, while at the same time daring to live lives that both attest to and discover the life of God in the world.

This paradigm of transformation brings us to a changed understanding of the baptized life to one that integrates our invitation into the life of the trinity and our invitation to live lives in the midst of the world. The sides of this that become integrated in our life are captured in the writing of Bartholomew Patriarch of Constantinople. As individuals we are transformed and in this transformation we come to embody God in the world:

> Humanity stands at the center of creation, serving as a bridge and a bond between greatness and lowliness, between sacredness and fragility, between heaven and earth. As such the human person acts as a mediator. Yet the way of mediation, otherwise know as the process of deification (divinization, or *theosis* in Greek), is long and arduous. It is what the Church Fathers call the journey from the divine image, as a gift from above, to the divine likeness as the realization and fulfillment of this initial endowment. (Bartholomew 128)

This is not just an individual journey, but a journey into the love that is lived as a part of a community: the community of God and the community of our world. As Bartholomew writes:

> Now, if as humans we are formed in the image of the Trinity, then it follows that everything which has just been said about God should be applied also to humankind. We are called to reproduce on earth, so far as this is possible for us, the same perichoresis, or reciprocal movement of mutual love, that is in heaven uniting the three persons of the Trinitarian God. This we seek to do not only on the level of our interior life of prayer, and within the immediate circle of our family and friends, but also more broadly on an economic and political level" Our social program is the doctrine of the Trinity, a God in communion , a social God. Every form of community – the work place, the school, the city, even a nation – has as its vocation to become, each in its own way, a living icon of the Trinity. (133)

At the heart of transformation, what baptism helps us see is the action of the triune God brining us into the very life and love of the Trinity. It is the process by which we become a part of God's love as we are reconciled to God by the grace through Christ, as the Holy Spirit creates through us, according to the wisdom found in the creator's creation. This is the transformation that the waters of baptism invite us into so that we might live God's love for the world.

Conclusion

Creative, Loving, Wisdom

We can now step back and begin to see the broader paradigm that has begun to emerge along with some of the possibilities that it opens. One of the possibilities this work suggests exploring is a shift in how we approach ethics. Currently there are many different models for ethics, each with their own central question. Deontological ethics asks 'what are the central rules, duties or obligations one should follow.' Teleological ethics asks 'what is the good that is the desirable end to be achieved.' utilitarian ethics asks 'how do we seek the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people.' virtue ethics asks 'what is the character of the moral agent.' The question of transformation moves the focal question of ethics toward *how* people, individuals or communities come to know, move toward, and in their relationships, create the good. The stories of transformation studied suggest some elements worth exploring for such an approach.

When we look at transformation as an approach to ethics through the stories presented here, one of the things that emerges is that people have different understandings of the good. George spoke about 'harmony'; Mary spoke about love; Father Joe expanded on love and described it as that which allows us to grow into the fullness of life; the IFWRLS, baptism and many of the authors cited here spoke about justice. There are two important things to note in these descriptions. The first is that these words are usually understood in ways that focus on a pattern of relationships. Similar to approaches that focus on right relationships, the focus is on the ongoing patterns that are enacted and the quality of the relationships that make up that pattern. The second thing to note is that these words are open-ended. There are many different definitions for and understandings of words like love, justice, harmony and fullness of life. It is the resistance of these words to final definition that points toward their open nature. Descriptions

of good or evil are not used absolutely, rather descriptions of things like God's presence, a loving Father (Mary) or corporate responsibility (Carol), point towards what people have experienced as good and to the creative wisdom by which have achieved this. Above-ground risks (Carol) or darkness (Mary) stand as warnings that help us to see how we may cross into what is evil. These descriptions thus function by opening us to perceive the morally significant patterns of our world.

The stories presented here also suggest that a focus on transformation would involve a focus on how paradigms, such as Carol's use of above-ground risks or Mary's paradigm of God as a loving father, and how they are lenses that we can develop and use to help us have to wisdom to recognize the moral patterns of our world. The challenge that these lenses face is in the distortion of our perception and the need to overcome this distortion. This calls us to what Gadamer called *bildung* or formation, "keeping one self open to what is other – to other, more universal points of view" (17). We see this in Doug's willingness to open himself in dialogue to the problem of carbon emissions. In opening us up to experience, the variation of descriptions of the good function precisely by not limiting the good to a set definition, acting instead like Gadamer's understanding of the question as that which "is to open up possibilities and keep them open" (299). This was seen for example in Doug's use of serendipity, in keeping him self open to the possibilities around him. At the same time, Doug's focus on carbon emissions and on IECE as a solution also shows the importance of framing as a part of a transformative ethic, that is in limiting and shaping our focus to what is of value and to where we can make a difference so as not to fall into the distortion that happens when our perceptions are overwhelmed.

What we have seen here is that approaching ethics with a focus on transformation would invite us to focus on the world that is created in the coming together of human culture and the

greater reality in which we participate. This presents us with the challenge of wisdom. Much like in George's creation of dry tailings, wisdom involves the perception of the patterns of our world, their significance, including moral significance and how one can act within these patterns to realize the good. Wisdom must also be connected to creativity in how one practically shapes one's perception and actions in order to bring about transformation. From the perspective of baptism, this wisdom seeks a harmony with the patterns of God's presence in the world, and ways of seeing how God can work through us to shape our world.

From these stories of transformation we also learn that a transformative ethics would need to focus on our way of life and how it opens us to encounter and discover the wisdom of our world. Whether this way of life is lived in a monastery as with Father Joe, or involves travel to Africa as with George, our way of life brings us in to contact with and gives us a chance to perceive the dynamics of the world and gain wisdom. This happens as we practice openness, encounter disruptions, develop relationships, enter new environments and develop habits that allow us to discover the patterns of our world and their implications for life. Our way of life also gives us the opportunity to creatively shape our world. Much like in the creation of the IFWRLS or in George's creation of dry tailings technology, there is a need to focus on specific processes that allow people to creatively transform our world.

Our stories also show us that a transformational approach to ethics would treat our lives as a living experiment. We are forced by our very being in the world to live out some version of what we consider good. In seeing life as an experiment, we are encouraged to risk seeking out new ways to realize the good; while we are also encouraged to use the way we live as an opportunity to discover the moral patterns of our world as the dynamics of the world encounter,

resist, shape and open up our lives.[48] This would allow us to move from a simple openness to an actual discovery of what is good. In our baptism we are reminded that we can dare to experiment because we are held by grace, and that it is God who seeks us and lives through us as we experiment.

A transformational approach to ethics would also have to take into account our contexts. Whether it is in an individual's spiritual direction or trip to Nigeria, what was seen in these stories of transformation is how context provides a unique opening for perceiving our world. The opportunity to cultivate wisdom comes in the bringing together of these different perspectives through discourse and dialogues such as the one Kairos attempted to create concerning the oil sands. These discourses create the possibility of having other people and contexts reveal what has been distorted or what lies beyond our own perceptions. A transformative ethics would need to focus on how contexts are transformative in their development of creative power. As the development and then road blocks that IECE faced show us, this power is needed if we are to create the ability to realize the good and to address moral challenges that happen on a scale beyond that which we are able to effectively shape on our own. As George showed us in his encounter with generosity in Africa, and in the midst of the relationships that make up that context, there is also the power to create what is good. It is at this contextual level that we begin to see the transformational challenge of the church that baptizes: to create a context that shapes people's way of life and perception, while empowering its members in mission to realize the good in our world both through the church and beyond it.

A transformational approach to ethics would need to focus on processes of integration. Integration brings together the elements of the self, history, internal and external relationships, and ultimately show how our lives are a part of a larger process of transformation. Processes like

[48] For a development of a similar approach with a focus more on the social dynamics see Tillich.

the IFWRLS shows us how transformation happens when we intentionally bring together faith communities so that individuals, relationships and the communities they are a part of can together be changed. In the complexity of so many elements, no one piece determines the course of transformation. This is why integrative experiences that bring together many of these aspects have such power, as we saw when Carol was forced by her illness to lie on a couch for 8 months. In bringing together many elements into one experience there is the possibility to affect a broader range of what makes us who we are, giving strength and breadth to our transformation. A transformational approach to ethics would need to look at how such integrative experiences can be created and used. Such an approach to ethics would also need to look at how any particular transformation is integrated into much larger processes of change and transformation, for example, in the way that the IFWRLS saw itself as integrated into processes that involved grassroots activists and G8/G20 world leaders. In each of these stories, we saw the importance of having people de-center themselves and find ways of seeing how their own transformation could be integrated into much larger processes moving us toward what is good.

Ultimately our stories of transformation point toward an approach to ethics that would focus less on creating statements of right and wrong and more on working to use our perception, our way of life and how we work in networks of relationships to gain wisdom in order to 'surf' as one creative transformative element in a sea of change.

Baptism – Transforming Waters

Ultimately what we surf in is not just human or material relationships; the gift of baptism is that it opens us to perceive that we ultimately surf in the midst of the relationship of the Triune God. Our baptism directs us to how this occurs as we surf within the dynamics of this world,

guided by wisdom and living creatively. Baptism reminds us that we live as a broken people; we live in sin. At the same time, in baptism we remember how God created by speaking God's Words over water and how, in the incarnation of Christ and the giving of God's Spirit God overcomes sin and continues to be present in our world and our lives. It is this dynamic between sin and God's presence that creates the need and possibility for transformation. The calling of wisdom is a calling to perceive the wisdom of God that gave shape and that continues to shape creation, as God works for transformation and renewal. Wisdom is not just about perception, but also application. Wisdom is thus also about how we will act, how our lives will become a part of God's action that allows the Goodness that comes from God to be realized. In the ever-changing complexity of our world this is not a fixed pattern of actions, rather it is always a creative act. For the wisdom of God is not a confining set of rules, but rather the wisdom that creates, and thus allows space for creativity.[49] The creativity we are called to is an act. It is an act in which we imagine what is possible and bring together the elements of our world in order to recreate our world so that brokenness can be overcome and the Goodness of God expressed. Because this is a creative act, it is a risk. It is also an opportunity for discovery not only of the patterns of our world but of the wisdom of God that formed the world and the love, harmony and justice that God intended to be the shape of our lives and world.

This understanding of transformation also begins to open for us an expanded understanding of theological ethics. If we were to take from this understanding of transformation a model of the Christian life, the question before us would not be how we can develop either a representational understanding that corresponds with reality or a coherent system of thought. The complex and dynamic nature of God and the world, and the confines of our own perception, steer us away from seeking any such knowledge. The understanding of God's presence in the world,

[49] For the development of a similar point see Patterson, 71.

and God's creative work through us, encourages us instead to seek theological knowledge that acts as a paradigmatic imagination and frame for our perceptions so that we can see the patterns of brokenness as well as God's presence in the world and God's calling to work through us. As Hauerwas writes:

> A Christian does not simply 'believe' certain propositions about God; he learns to attend to reality through them. This learning requires training of our attention by constantly juxtaposing our experiences with our vision. This means that there is an unmistakably pragmatic aspect to the Christian life, not in the sense that 'it is true because it works', but because it is always being tested by our encounter with reality. We adhere to a reality whose depth we do not know, for we cannot comprehend its manifold richness. Such comprehension comes only as we grow in our understanding of God and his relation to the world. (46)

The challenge and question of theological ethics from this perspective would be one of formation and transformation. It would hold as its question 'how do we shape our lives and our church contexts so that our culture can become open to God's presence working in us and through us in the midst of God's world?'

At my daughter's baptism, surrounded by the congregation I serve along with my friends and family, I stumbled over the words. Looking into my daughter's eyes as I poured water over her head, speaking ancient words, there was one insight that I could not escape. It was not I who was doing the baptizing, but rather Christ who was living through us. The water, these actions, my daughter, the assembly, were transformed into the Holy by God.

Our transformation happens as God lives through us; the same God who is present in the Created world. As our perception, our way of life and our context transform us, the harmony, beauty and love that we live in is the relationship between these movements of God. In God's incarnation and reconciling love the transformation that we are brought into is nothing less than the dance, and relationship between us and God's own self, lived out in the relationships that

make up our world. The question of transformation is not then simply the question of how we can be better people or communities. It is instead the question of how our lives become open to and caught up in the creative dance of the triune God. In the end transformation does not just help us to better understand baptism, it is our baptism that reveals to us the grace-filled wonder of our lives as they are transformed by God and as we become a part of God's transformation of the world in love.

Implications for Praxis

A part of the purpose of this work has been to develop a perspective that can help guide and shape my ongoing *praxis*. Areas where this is already happening are in the focus on discipleship and a relational model of leadership development at Advent, the congregation I serve, and through my work building MAC-G (Metro Alliance for the Common Good*)*, which is a Calgary wide community organizing initiative.

The concept of *paradigmatic imagination* focuses on how we perceive the patterns of our world and imaginatively create new patterns. This concept was used in the work on discipleship as we focused on working with people to identify patterns in their life that have helped them grow in their faith. These patterns were used to create an overall paradigm of discipleship that is now being taught with a focus on how it is practiced.

The concept of *framing* challenges us to clarify our question and then make sure the frame we use is appropriate for the question that is before us especially in terms of its focus, limits and porosity. This has begun to shape my *praxis* in terms of identification of the question of discipleship as the primary question before Advent and as I help people to see the significance of this in their own lives. We have used the paradigm process above to shape the discipleship

program's limits. We have also tried to make this frame porous by treating it as an ongoing experiment.

The concept of *affirmation* directs us toward asset-based approaches that emphasize people's gifts and existing values. We have begun to use this approach at Advent, as we have begun to use a relational model for leadership development. This has focused on meeting one-on-one with others in order to listen for their gifts, values and passions. We then connect this to concrete ways people can serve and grow in their discipleship and leadership. This model is also a part of our community organizing effort, MAC-G, which is being built through the process of identifying our shared values and interests while building the organization's power via the gifts different people bring.

The concept of *experimental living* directs us towards particular forms of life that can open us to perceiving the world and encountering its dynamics. This concept has been used to try to create intentional disruptions and clearings, for example through congregational and leadership retreats. The importance of encountering new insights, through relationships, and then using this to shape how we function has been a key component of our relationship building initiative at Advent. The concept of a *living experiment,* with its model of action and reflection, has become a part of our discipleship program. This occurred first by identifying the program as an experiment and by treating its documents as drafts. We then created several points of evaluation, both for the documents we created and the program as a whole with a focus on how people have experienced this initiative. These have included reviews by staff, small group leaders, a mid year review and a planned year end review. Each of these review points are then being used to refine and redirect this initiative.

The use of *context to shape perception and forms of life* will be used as we now begin a process of reshaping the shaping of liturgy at Advent to find ways in which it can be developed further as a context that deepens our discipleship. So far we have experimented with bringing in outside speakers to expand our perspective and by creating conversation/dialogue times during the service. We are also seeking out opportunities to have people enter into new contexts, by serving at an inner-city shelter, "Inn From the Cold," outdoor experiences, retreats etc. *Dialogue* has been an ongoing part of my *praxis* and will be used as a means of identifying the issues that MAC-G will address. The creation of MAC-G is explicitly an effort at power generation through the bringing together of different people, perspectives and resources. The recognition of the importance of the *quality of relationships is* a part of the reason why Advent is focusing on a relational approach to leadership development. The focus on quality was built into how we trained our council for this approach, especially in how one focuses on listening, especially for how that person is a gift.

The concept of *integration,* that is, the bringing together of multiple elements to create a new pattern is being used in the discipleship program in a focus not only on personal spirituality, but on how this is lived in our families, in the church and in the world. *MAC-G* is an integrative entity in that it is the coming together of different faith communities and community organizations, with their perspectives, resources, issues and relationships in order to create a new entity that can engage some of the larger political processes developing in Calgary. The importance of *integrative experiences* is helping me to begin to explore how we can lead people into such experiences, as a part of our discipleship program. So far this has taken the form of weekend and evening retreats. We are also looking at possibilities for how we can use travel experiences for this as well. The *incremental nature of transformation,* along with the realization

that transformation happens in the midst of larger processes and relationships in which we *surf*, has led towards a planning that supports the slowness inherent in transformational processes while pointing towards the need to develop an approach that can be aware of the overall larger process and break this down to concrete action steps to be focused on in the current moment. This will be done at Advent as we have set out our long-term goals and then set out concrete steps that will get us to these larger goals.

Finally, the relationship between *baptism and transformation* found here has shaped the discipleship focus at Advent by functioning as the key theological background for this initiative. In particular the Trinitarian nature of how baptism transforms has been used as we have directed people to be attentive to God's presence and wisdom in creation, how we can place Christ at the centre of our ministry, and how the Holy Spirit is working within them. The promises in the baptism ceremony have also been used to guide and set out the categories for how we describe the life of a disciple. We have also been intentional in defining and using the church as a context for transformation.

Questions for Further Study

One of the other key purposes of this work was to begin to identify areas and questions for further study. Some of the key questions that have emerged are as follows:

Paradigmatic Imagination – In the research for this paper one of the insights that emerged was the many levels at which paradigms function besides just the conceptual. I was able to briefly look at how they exist as a part of our forms of life and contexts. In addition to this it is apparent that they also exist as a part of our psychological and biological structure. Together these seem to create a hermeneutical or perceptual system. How all of these work together is an

area worth exploring. This could build on approaches that already use an integrative model such as the bio-psycho-social-spiritual model used in such fields as psychiatry or in the embedded/embodied approaches to the cognitive sciences.

Frames - One of the key areas for further exploration is the process of *framing*. Considerable research has already been done in this area, such as the work done in psychology by Kahneman and Tversky as well as in Gigerenzer's work in ethics about how frames are connected with heuristics. I am interested in exploring how maintaining focus or developing a sense of value happens in the relationship between interpretive and embodied systems.

Affirmation – This is already a major focus of appreciative inquiry and asset-based approaches. One of the key questions that emerged for me is the question of value 'stickiness' – namely what allows other values or patterns of action to adhere to existing values. It became clear that when a new perspective was built on an affirmation of a person or community it seemed more likely to stick. What other factors encourage values or perspectives to stick?

Wise Creativity – One of the key questions for further research at the organizational level is how organizations can build effective practices that allow them to know what is happening in their environment and develop ways they can recombine the resources they have to transform the environments they participate in. In particular I am interested in how small organizations like churches, which often lack the funds for official research divisions or much power to force change, can engage in this.

Living Experimentally – One of the key questions that arose for me is, what patterns of life are common in people who are able to bring about paradigm changes? In addition, what are some of the common forms of life or faith practices of those who have been transformed in their

faith and have transformed faith communities? Which ones help people to be open to perceiving and adapting to anomalies?

Contextual Shaping of Forms of Life – The core question from this is, what are some of the environmental elements that promote transformation of people and organizations? What contextual factors limit such transformation or result in transformation failure?

Dialogue – Another significant concern that arose for me is the degree to which staged dialogues are effective for long term transformation. Specifically, it would be interesting to know if either the Kairos Dialogue or the IFWRLS changed the long-term practices of its participants.

Power - One of the interesting elements that emerged is the possibility for the creative use of power to transform even larger social processes. Much like David's use of a long range sling shot to kill a much more powerful Goliath, it would be interesting to look at the successful creative use of different forms of power to address large social problems or counter powerful opposition.

Relationship – One of the intriguing notions that emerged is that a part of the power of relationships is what is created in their midst. This notion became apparent to me both at the IFWRLS and when I participated in the Snowmass Inter-Spiritual dialogue.[50] It became apparent that the primary success of the dialogue was in the love that had developed between the participants. This presents a potential model for ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.

Integration – As mentioned above, one of the challenges that integration presents is the incremental nature of transformation, which requires a focus on the incremental steps of a transformative process while one, at the same time, participates in much larger process of change. This raises the question of how one can develop personal and organizational models that

[50] Originally this was to be included in this work, but was excluded because some of the rules concerning that dialogue would have made inclusion too difficult.

bring these two focuses together. While I have been exposed to governance models that promise such a process, I am yet to see one that works well. This leaves the question of what models can work well.

Distortion – Addressing distortions is already a major focus for psychological, sociological and political theory. Here it has been seen how contexts, dialogue, forms of life and our paradigms create openings through which it is possible our distortions are overcome. This remains far too broad, especially considering all of the evidence that shows the resistance of even distorting paradigms have to change. The next step would be to look at specific cases where people were able to overcome distortions, to look at possible specific causes and then to see if these can be replicated in either clinical or social practice. At the psychological level this is already a part of the work done around cognitive- behavioral perspectives; further research could be done in terms of neurological, social or religious processes

The next steps in my personal research into transformation will likely take two foci. Near the end of my research the understanding of humans as embedded and embodied within the world, and the related concept of hermeneutic systems, increasingly came to dominate my thinking. I would like to focus on how such an understanding would shift our approach to spirituality and to transformation processes. The other focus would be to look with more depth into a specific process of transformation in order to better understand the factors that shape such a process. This could be done either in examining the discipleship initiative at Advent Lutheran that is now happening using several of the concepts developed here or, at a much broader level, examining some of the work done by faith and inter-faith communities to address issues like climate change. Specifically, the growing interfaith justice movement, a part of which was examined here, could be especially interesting since it is in its early stages of development.

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