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**STEVEN MATTHEW MATTSON**

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

Ph.D. degree in Curriculum, Teaching, and  
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A CHANGING METAPHOR: INSTRUCTIONAL REFORM AS EVANGELISM

VOLUME I

By

Steven Matthew Mattson

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Teacher Education

2003

## ABSTRACT

### A CHANGING METAPHOR: INSTRUCTIONAL REFORM AS EVANGELISM

By

Steven Matthew Mattson

Many scholars have attempted to make sense of the long and often disappointing history of American educational reform. Some reforms present greater challenges than others. Reforms that comport well with current school structures and assumptions are often successful, but those that challenge the "grammar of schooling" are markedly less so. Reformers often seek to make fundamental changes in schools, but these "deep reforms" present problems that seem intractable.

With the intent of developing a new perspective on the problem, and following Donald Schön's (1993) thinking on generative metaphors, this study proposes *instructional reform as evangelism* as a generative metaphor for thinking anew about the problems and possibilities of instructional reform. Based on reviews of instructional reform and evangelism (including religious conversion), the study makes a case for the plausibility and appeal of the metaphor. The metaphor is plausible because of many parallels between instructional reform and evangelism-conversion. The metaphor has appeal because it comports well with the personal nature of teaching and emphasizes the inter-relationship between individuals and their community. In a sense, evangelism is a people-and-place-changing "technology."

The generative potential of the metaphor stems from salient differences between the two domains. From those differences, the study distills seven "evangelical principles of reform," which provide a heuristic for viewing past, present, and future reform efforts. The seven evangelical principles are: 1) The Ecclesial Principle, 2) The Principle of Human Dignity and Freedom of Conscience, 3) The Creedal Principle, 4) The Magisterial Principle, 5) The Pastoral Principle, 6) The Incarnation Principle, and 7) The Evangelical Principle. Because of the three reforms, and concludes that the metaphor has generative

potential to expose strengths and weaknesses of reforms. The *instructional reform as evangelism* metaphor helps those concerned about reform gain a more balanced understanding of the problems of change.

The study concludes with a discussion of the role faith, hope, and love play in the process of instructional reform and how thinking of *instructional reform as evangelism* might help make reforms seem, even to teachers, like good news.

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To my parents, who taught me to love learning and gave me the gift of faith.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

If nothing else, this long, long effort of mine has taught me that my personal efforts in the writing have been the fruit of the many relationships that have graced my life. It is fitting to reflect on those who have shown me the way in my life and work.

I begin by thanking David Labaree, my dissertation director, and Suzanne Wilson, my committee chair, for the witness of their personal and professional lives. I am humbled by their investment in me, during my years in the classroom, in other research and intellectual settings, and their continued investment in me as a thinker to this day. Their assistance to the "end" of this road has been remarkable. Their example of what it means to teach, to respect ideas and thinkers, and to push in helpful ways has shaped who I have become (and who I will continue to become). I count myself blessed for having spent time learning with and from them.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to David for encouraging me to pursue this rather unorthodox study. He said it himself; it's an "odd dissertation." Nevertheless, he saw in it an opportunity for me to pull together two "sides" of my life: my professional interest in educational policy and my deep commitment to faith. His confidence in my ability to do the work, his encouragement, and his helpful observations made me believe that the study was worth doing and that I would finally be able to get it done.

Suzanne has been among my greatest supporters from the start. Her generosity and hospitality (thanks for the wonderful meals!) have given me a model for what it means to grace others' lives. She also (along with Darryl Pettway, Connie Orr, and Lorene Tomlin) helped me navigate the administrative waters so I could finish up this semester. I thank her for the various gifts of support she has given me and for the useful reminder that "you get what you give." Well, if that's true, she must get a lot.

I am also very grateful to the other members of my committee, Gary Sykes and Steve Weiland, who were thoughtful and interested critics of my work. Their keen

insights into the merits of the metaphor as well its implications and limitations helped me think about ways to continue to develop my thinking. Gary served as my academic advisor, taught me about educational policy, and introduced me to Donald Schön's work. Steve's breadth of reading, work with the Jewish Studies program at MSU, his fertile imagination, and sense of humor helped make mine the best committee imaginable.

Deborah Ball, of the University of Michigan, was a committee member at the time of my proposal, and I thank her for her early suggestions. More importantly, I thank her for the way she models what it means to listen well and frame good questions that help others learn. I thank her also for my work with the Math and Teaching through Hypermedia Project, of which she and Magdalene Lampert were principle investigators. I learned a great deal in that brief time about the complexities of teacher thinking.

This study grew out of work I did as a research assistant with the Educational Policy and Practice Study (EPPS). The principal investigators for the study were David Cohen, Penelope Peterson, Suzanne Wilson, and Deborah Ball. They gathered around them a wonderful community of researchers that helped me think deeply about the challenges of change in schools. I am grateful for the many conversation I had with Carol Barnes, Jennifer Borman, Ruth Heaton, Nancy Jennings, Sue Poppink, Jeremy Price, Angela Shojgreen-Downer, James Spillane, and Karl Wheatley.

At MSU, I was especially blessed to have great companions during my coursework and preparation for comps. Carol Barnes, Sue Poppink, Dirck Roosevelt, and Kara Suzuka have been friends and colleagues from the start of my program. Sarah Theule-Lubienski joined us during our preparation for comprehensive examinations. Our study together and our many conversations around good meals were a gift to me.

Thankfully, I have found a similarly supportive network of relationships at the University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary, where I am studying for the Roman Catholic Priesthood. I was sent to study at Mundelein Seminary by Carl F. Mengeling, Bishop of Lansing, in 2000, and am grateful for his wisdom in sending me to

learn in such a beautiful, humane, intellectually engaging, and spiritually enriching place. I owe thanks, too, for his continued encouragement to finish my dissertation.

I thank the priests of the Diocese of Lansing for their example and their service to the people of south-central Michigan. In particular, I thank Monsignor Robert Lunsford for his witness of what it means to be a priest, his example of ongoing spiritual and intellectual formation, and his wise counsel as my spiritual director. Fr. Lawrence Hennessey, of the Archdiocese of Chicago, has served me well as my spiritual director at Mundelein. He combines deep intellectual engagement, spiritual wisdom, and great generosity in his work. He repeatedly encouraged me to complete my dissertation, and I thank him for his gentle prodding. I thank also Fr. Matthew Fedewa, of the Diocese of Lansing, who baptized me as an infant, and whose witness of faithful service and his encouragement of my vocation and my studies have been inspirational.

I also thank the men from Lansing with whom I have studied at Mundelein: Frs. Dr. Peter Clark, James Conlon, John Fain, Roy Horning, and Jeff Njus, as well as seminarians Jason Parzynski, Jeff Poll, Bob Roggenbuck, Gordon Reigle, and Mike O'Brien. They and all the other Lansing seminarians have helped me by the example of their lives, their good humor, their encouragement, and their undying commitment never to let me take myself too seriously.

I thank Jeff Njus for allowing me to live at Emmaus House with him while he was on his pastoral internship during the summer of 2001. He encouraged me to keep working on my dissertation and gave me plenty of opportunities to take breaks for good food and conversation. I am grateful, as well, to Frs. J. Munley, Karl Pung, and Jerry Vincke, directors of seminarians for the Diocese of Lansing, and to Jane Sessions, from the Office of Seminarians, for their endless support.

I thank the friends I have at Mundelein for the many ways they enrich my life. I single out three who have been another "support group" like the one I had at MSU. Dr. Steve Roberts, Brian Welter, and Ed White have pushed me to think hard about

theological, pastoral, and spiritual questions; have helped me imagine what my life as a priest might look like; and have joined me for many evenings of good food, good drink, and good conversation. I am grateful for the gift of their friendship.

Other good friends have provided gentle nudges of interest that helped me maintain (at least a little!) momentum in my work. In particular, I thank Doug and Dawn Routledge for their friendship, their encouragement, their wonderful hospitality, and their witness of service in rural youth ministry. Paul and Casey Conner are good friends, and their gentle prodding to get the work finished, along with their prayers, were more important than they know. I thank my other friends who wondered (sometimes aloud) if my work on this was ever going to end.

Surely the most important encouragement has come from family. My parents, Mort and Jan Mattson, were my first teachers about life, love, and faith. My debt to them is more than I can ever repay. I thank them especially for their example of self-sacrifice and for their encouragement that we, their sons, maximize the gifts God gave us. I also thank my three brothers for their friendship and their encouragement. I thank my youngest brother Dan for his generosity, sense of humor, and his example of perseverance in graduate school. My older brother Dave, his wife Nancy, and their five children, as well as my brother Jim, his wife Kara, and their seven, have all been faithful "prayer-warriors" for Uncle Steve. The prayers of my wonderful nieces and nephews helped me persevere. I could never ask for a more supportive family.

Finally, I thank God, who is the giver of all good gifts. Without this "great cloud of witnesses," I would not know what it means to engage deeply in intellectual life, what it means to be a friend, what it means to embrace a vocation, or what it means to have faith, hope, and love; in short, I would never have been able to write this dissertation. My dissertation bears the mark of those who have been God's messengers to me, in their words and the witness of their lives. To be sure, none of them is responsible for any shortcomings of this work. But if there's credit to be taken, I give it all to them.

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## Chapter 1

### Searching for Answers to the Challenge of Reform

Many scholars have attempted to make sense of the long and often disappointing history of American educational reform efforts. The criticism of educational reform has come from both within education and without. Educational reform is often described as pendular or cyclical by scholars and teachers alike. And, often, reforms fail to make much difference in schools. In 1971, Seymour Sarason (1971) employed the proverb, *Plus ça Change . . .*, saying it captured the theme of his book, *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change*. Nearly two decades later, Sarason (1990) wrote *The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform*. The book was partly a testament to the accuracy of his earlier work, since his message was little changed. But his tone was a bit more emphatic. One might even say Sarason warmed to the role of educational "prophet," pronouncing his stern message in hopes of averting the "impending doom" he claimed was imminent.

Sarason's has been a persistent voice criticizing educational reformers for failing to learn lessons from experience. But criticism of educational reform is not solo work. There is a chorus of diverse voices and perspectives that range from unflattering portraits of the personalities who are drawn to teaching to sympathetic descriptions of the challenges involved in teaching in "adventurous" ways. Despite the diversity, the conclusions drawn by critics and students of policy implementation are surprisingly convergent.

Among other things, these scholars tell us that reform success is related to both the implementation process and the content of reforms. They go on to offer findings and recommendations for what kinds of teacher supports are most helpful, which reforms are most successful, and why. On this latter point, Tyack & Cuban (1995), for example, provide a helpful distinction between reforms. They argue that reforms aimed at adding

programs to schools, ones that build onto what schools already do, are usually quite successful, while those that challenge the "grammar of schooling" are markedly less so.

Despite a poor record of success with these latter reforms, there have been recurrent calls for schools and teachers to teach in radically different ways, to challenge and change the grammar of the school. Teachers are repeatedly told to make their classrooms places where they function as "facilitators" rather than lecturers, where their students collaborate more than compete, where they engage in investigations rather than rote memorization, and analyze problems critically instead of dutifully recite facts. According to Tyack & Cuban (1995), these "grammar-challenging" instructional reforms have made little headway in schools

#### ONE INTERPRETATION OF REFORM FAILURE

David Cohen (1988) analyzes the disappointing history of calls for more progressive pedagogy. In his essay, he surveys a list of oft-cited reasons for failure of reforms aimed at what he calls "adventurous teaching." These include impediments due to school organization, the conditions of teaching, flaws in the reforms themselves, and incentives (or lack thereof) for making changes. He calls these "external barriers" (Cohen, 1988, p. 9). Though Cohen agrees that those factors play a role in the limited success of ambitious reforms, he offers a different explanation--one that focuses on the "inside" of reform. In his view, the biggest barrier is the content of the reforms themselves, or the sorts and degree of changes they require teachers to make.

Cohen argues that this kind of teaching makes great demands on teachers and students alike, demands few, it seems, have been eager or prepared to make. This kind of teaching, he says:

... invites teachers to open themselves to the great problems that lie at the heart of their work. It invites them to frame a pedagogy that embraces uncertainty, that increases the risks of learning and teaching, and that enhances their vulnerability to students. Such work has been done, and can be done more. But it runs against the grain. (Cohen, 1988, p. 40)

This teaching runs deeply against the grain, extending to the very foundations of teaching practice.

The pedagogical and epistemological assumptions of adventurous teaching are radically different from those under-girding traditional teaching and learning. For example, these reforms assume a different view of knowledge. Knowledge has traditionally been viewed as an inert substance, to be given or transmitted to students from teachers. Some recent reforms are premised on a different view of knowledge. Instead of something inert and transmissible to students from teachers, they view knowledge as being actively constructed by human beings. Because of this difference in assumptions, these reforms entail major epistemological realignments, not just adjustments in practice. They open up a new epistemological world for teachers, one that challenges nearly universal assumptions about teaching, learning, and knowing.

The instructional practices that reformers wish to eliminate contain views of knowledge, teaching, and learning to which many parents, teachers, and students have deep loyalties. In many cases, reform ideas and practices are an imposition on these loyalties. (Cohen, 1988, pp. 17-18)<sup>1</sup>

Cohen understands why teachers would have a hard time making this shift. The changes demanded by new visions for practice and the attendant epistemological assumptions ripple through the classroom, calling into question nearly every aspect of life there. Though Cohen seems to affirm the vision of John Dewey and other reformers, he is critical of their disparaging stance some critics take toward teachers whose practices they hope to change. He states that teachers have very good reasons to resist the more uncertain and risky pedagogical world advocated by ambitious reforms. At times, not

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<sup>1</sup> Tyack & Cuban (1995) also hit hard this theme. Again, in reference to the "grammar of schooling," they argue that changes that violate teacher, student, and parent assumptions and beliefs are less likely to succeed.

Educators have often responded to flurries of reform imposed from the outside--often inconsistent in philosophy and program--by hunkering down and reassuring themselves that this, too, shall pass. We have explored some institutional reasons for this reaction. The hold of traditional practices on teachers and students is strong, often with good reason, and the public tends to share traditional culture beliefs about what constitutes a "real school." (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 135)

much more than the advocates of reform seems to be arguing for the changes, and almost everything else seems to be arguing against them.

### DEWEY AS PROPHET

Cohen paints a portrait of Dewey and his fellow academics preaching the good news of better education to the masses. He and other "prophets" of reform worked to spread the message, but there was little evidence of repentance and baptism into the new faith. Few teachers seemed to have ears to hear. Cohen puts it this way:

... Dewey and the other left-wing Progressives resemble nothing so much as early missionaries in a strange land . . . . The word can be powerful, especially among those who live by ideas: academics at the great research universities, the left-wing Progressives, and most current critics of traditional instruction. But much historical experience and many studies reveal the very modest effect that uplifting doctrine, whether scientific or revealed, has on practice. It is not surprising that many pedagogical reformers have seemed to cry in an academic wilderness. (Cohen, 1988, p. 21)

Whether the problem was a faulty message or hard-hearted hearers, the point for Cohen is how to help teachers today grapple with the difficult calls for change that are reminiscent of Dewey's early cries for reform. Cohen hopes reformers will take seriously the profound challenges of teaching, and the added layers of complexity that calls for ambitious teaching entail for teachers in their classrooms. The challenges of teaching are great, but they are greatly amplified in the more risky and uncertain realm of the "adventurous teaching" he describes.

However we choose to make sense of it, the image Cohen paints is striking: Dewey as Elijah, crying words of repentance, announcing the coming of the kingdom. It is compelling because it is not merely a clever picture devised by Cohen to make for interesting reading. Dewey and his followers did, in fact, offer teachers a lofty vision of teaching that departed markedly from current practice. And they offered it in religious terms, with the zeal of evangelists.

## REFORM AND DEWEY'S NEW FAITH

Dewey was a zealous reformer with a vision. He viewed education as a new form of religion, and his work of reform was in many respects a call to repentance and conversion. Note his language at the end of Dewey's (1897/1959) "My Pedagogic Creed":

I believe that every teacher should realize the dignity of his calling; that he is a social servant set apart for the maintaining of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth.

I believe that in this way the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God. (p. 32)

To highlight the central role of education and teachers in the maintenance and improvement of society, Dewey drew on religious language. More than just rhetorical flourish, however, Dewey's religious language reflected a particular perspective on education, one that amounted to faith. Furthermore, his was no generic belief in education.

The kind of education of Dewey's faith had novel contours. Many already professed a belief in education, but Dewey wanted change. So he served as apostle of a new faith, spreading his good news. Using language of prophet and evangelist, Dewey called teachers to repent and embrace a new vision for themselves as teachers and the institutions in which they served:

Worship of education as a symbol of unattained possibilities of realization of humanity is one thing; our obstinate devotion to existing forms--to our existing schools and their studies and methods of instruction and administration or to suggested specific programs of improvement--as if they embodied the object of worship--is quite another thing.

The first act evoked by a genuine faith in education is a conviction of sin and act of repentance as to the institutions and methods which we now call educational. This act must apply not to this and that, here and there, but to the idea which runs through all of it. (Dewey, 1922, pp. 320-321)

Language of conviction, sin, and repentance had a power in his time. And Dewey used it, exhorting teachers to follow his version of the "way of the cross." He called them to follow a heroic path that demanded repentance, courage, risk-taking, and faith in

education to help attain the "possibilities of realization of humanity."

For Dewey, this language was not just persuasive. He took "education as religion" seriously. We can see this in *A Common Faith*, where Dewey (1934) elaborated his vision of experience-based education as a new secular faith. Abandoning many of the millennial aspirations of Protestantism, Dewey preferred a secular faith that drew guidance from scientific inquiry. Even so, he did not want to abandon the religious fervor and temperament of the millennialists who preceded him.<sup>2</sup> Such passion was important to the work of reform and the improvement of society.

#### HISTORICAL TIES: RELIGION AND EDUCATION

This coupling of religion and education did not start with Dewey. Mass public education has long-standing and strong ties with Christianity, and especially Protestantism. Many before Dewey had drawn on religious passion and imagery in the cause of education. He followed men who were emboldened by the vision of the kingdom. For example, Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, early common school advocates, saw their vocation as participation in the work of Christian faith. They considered their reform efforts to be the real--kingdom--thing. Phillip Hammond (1980) describes their beliefs about education and their vocation:

Barnard and Mann referred to public education as the "Ark of God" and the "Ark of the Lord." Education for Barnard was a "holy cause" and a "Christian crusade"; teachers were "the chosen priesthood". (Hammond, 1980, p. 74)

This vocational perspective was evident into the next century as well. In fact, many early twentieth century educators saw their work in those terms. Most of the early promoters of public education were Protestant, and were often as evangelistic about education as they were about their faith.

Leadership in public education was often seen as a *calling* similar to that of

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<sup>2</sup>The "millennialists" were those who were seeking the coming Christian Kingdom or the "thousand year reign of Christ" or the "millennium," and worked to realize it through social programs of various kinds.

church missionary, and in teachers' institutes superintendents were sometimes as interested in converting to religion as in evangelizing for schooling. Their belief in an "All-Seeing Eye"--god witnessing all human behavior--invested even the commonplace with cosmic significance. (Tyack & Hansot, 1982, p. 16, emphasis in original)

Educational leaders often saw work in public education as a vocation, one that promised **great** rewards for the nation, and for themselves as they poured their lives into it.<sup>3</sup> **C**onfident that the work was worthy of investment, some seemed enraptured by the image **and** the promise. And they served.

The early efforts of Barnard and Mann, among others, reveal the extent to which **public** education in this country had strong roots in Protestant millennialism, and how **much** religious language and vision served to inspire many of public education's earliest **proponents**. Dewey followed them, but differed with his predecessors theologically. He **did not**, for example, believe that the kingdom of God that Jesus promised would literally **come**. Even so, Dewey believed that progress toward fuller (though never "full") **humanity** could be achieved through the experience-based education he advocated so **passionately**.

Cohen's picture of Dewey and other reformers working as missionaries or **evangelists** of a new pedagogy seems accurate, and fits Dewey's context and times. **Dewey** employed religious language to convey both his passion for the changes he **envisioned** and the challenges society would face in attempting to achieve them. Dewey **called** his hearers to repentance, courage, even to faith in a new education.

#### AN ENDURING METAPHOR

It is interesting to ponder whether Dewey would have used such language today. In **former** times, language of faith seemed natural, but in this more secular and pluralistic **age**, **some**--perhaps especially academics--might view the language and practice of

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<sup>3</sup> See **Hansen** (1995) for a recent study of teachers' sense of teaching as a vocation, in this sense.

evangelism as quaint, if not somewhat dangerous. Talk of missionaries or evangelists today often conjures up images of religious fundamentalists and zealots--strident, dogmatic, and sometimes violent. Nonetheless, it is sometimes still used.

Though there may be a general reluctance on the part of educational reformers today to think of their work in religious or evangelistic terms, there are places where the language is being used. Some reformers speak about reform work in evangelistic terms. For example, Steven Leinwand, in a Sunday morning address to participants of the 1994 A Silomar Math Conference (California Math Council-North), challenged his hearers to be "missionaries" of the math reforms. His message was inspiring, zealous, and fast-paced, and had the feel of the most stirring of Sunday morning sermons.

It's not simply advocates for change who employ spiritual language. Participants at professional development workshops sometimes use religious language to describe their experiences. Participants testify to "seeing the light," "being converted," of having "religious experiences" at workshops and summer institutes. These responses are rarely, if ever, the explicit goal of professional development programs. Nevertheless, they reveal how pervasive religious language is in our culture.

There is a long history of connection between Christianity and public education in the United States. In some respects, that association is a result of the history of the rise of public education on this country. But there seems to be something more to the enduring power of the metaphor than simply historical ties. In the context of instructional reform, there are deep similarities between the processes of evangelism and reform. Both seek to transform the ways persons live. Both offer sets of ideas and ideals for persons to embrace and apply in their lives. Both feature "prophets" and "the people" they call to conversion.

#### Evangelism as a "Generative Metaphor"

The question this study asks is what might be gained by taking the metaphor

*instructional reform as evangelism* seriously. In other words, how might thinking of reform as evangelism be helpful to reformers and students of reform as they seek to understand the challenges of implementing (especially deep) reforms in classrooms? To that end, we develop what Schön (1993) calls a "generative metaphor." Doing so will allow us to view the process of instructional reform from the perspective of the domain of evangelism along with its associated commonplaces, such as faith and conversion.

This study will consider what can be learned about instructional reform by thinking of it in terms of evangelism. More specifically, it asks what the metaphor *instructional reform as evangelism* can teach us about the challenges and prospects of educational change. We will investigate the plausibility and merits of the metaphor, then consider what the metaphor might mean for the work of reform. Before getting to the metaphor at hand, it may be well to spend some time talking about metaphors and clarifying what Schön means by "generative metaphor."

## BRIEF REVIEW OF METAPHORS

The study of metaphor is contested territory, and there are plenty of interesting issues to investigate. Disagreements about the definition of metaphor, the accuracy and usefulness of the metaphorical-literal distinction, how humans "process" metaphors, and whether metaphors are artifacts of language, thought, or both, are all interesting questions. And each testifies to the lack of consensus in the field.<sup>4</sup>

Instead of tackling such issues, we will review some of the prominent views of metaphors, ranging from the classical "comparison" or "substitution" views of Aristotle and to more "interaction" views of Richards, Black, Lakoff, Johnson, and Schön. Despite important differences in perspective and terminology, these views of metaphor overlap in

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<sup>4</sup>The interested reader should consult Ortony (1993) for a survey of competing viewpoints and perspectives on the relations between metaphor and thought. The introduction, by Ortony, offers a nice summary of the competing viewpoints of scholars in the field.

important ways. In this chapter, we will consider diverse views of metaphor, and then sketch out an approach for the remainder of this study. Together, these various authors provide some orienting questions and suggestive approaches for thinking about how to develop the metaphor *instructional reform as evangelism*.

### The Classical Comparison or Substitution View

Aristotle's is the archetype of the "substitution" or "comparison" view of metaphor.<sup>5</sup> According to that view, one idea is substituted for another or is "implicitly compared" with it. For example, the metaphor "man is a wolf" can be seen as a substitute for a series of literal statements about man--ones that would make clear how man is like a wolf. In that way, we implicitly compare men to wolves. In fact, we call men *wolves*, substituting the latter label for the former.

Aristotle's "substitution" view has dominated discussion of metaphor well into this century, and its lasting influence can be found when we look in the dictionary. This is what Aristotle wrote in *Poetics*:

Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy. (Aristotle, 1457b)

The word *metaphor* is defined as "A figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another, thus making an implicit comparison." The comparison or substitution view of metaphor is common, but not without rivals.

### *Tensive View of Metaphor*

In his seminal work, Ivor Richards (1936/1965) noted serious limitations to the contemporary understanding of metaphors, and argued that part of the confusion resulted

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<sup>5</sup> Black (1993) argues that the comparison view is a special case of the substitution view.

from ambiguous conventions for referring to parts of metaphors. To help eliminate the confusion, Richards offered terminology to distinguish between those parts. He applied the label "tenor" to the idea or thing being "described" by the metaphor, and used "vehicle" for the idea or thing to which the "tenor" was being compared or the way the tenor was being cast. In the metaphor "man is a wolf," for example, man is the tenor, and wolf the vehicle.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to his attempts to define metaphorical terms more precisely, Richards highlighted the importance of "unlikenesses" or "tensions" in metaphors. The focus of study of metaphor had long centered on similarities between the subjects in metaphors, often discounting the importance of dissimilarities in interpretation of metaphor. Richards (1936) did not deny the importance of similarity between the tenor and vehicle, but argued that often the dissimilarities--or tensions--were as important to understanding metaphors as were the similarities.

In general, there are very few metaphors in which disparities between tenor and vehicle are not as much operative as the similarities. Some similarity will commonly be the ostensive ground of the shift, but the peculiar modification of the tenor which the vehicle brings about is even more the work of their unlikenesses than of their likenesses. (Richards, 1936/1965, p. 127)

Richards's view of metaphor is often called the "tensive" view because of his attention to the role of unlikenesses in the way hearers interpret metaphors. On his view, unlikenesses provide impetus for thinking differently about tenors and vehicles, and often result in new meanings from metaphor.

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<sup>6</sup> Richards' terminology, though common, is not universal. Black, for instance, uses "primary (or principal) subject" instead of "tenor" and "secondary (or subsidiary) subject" instead of "vehicle" to describe the two parts of metaphors. Other scholars use "topic" for what Richards calls the "tenor," and "figure" for "vehicle." Richards' efforts helped clarify points of debate, and has furthered the study of metaphor. Nonetheless, in this work, it is unnecessary for us to embrace his vocabulary or one of its competitors.

Though we will not employ the labels throughout the remainder of this work, it may be helpful to note that "instructional reform" in the metaphor of record is, in the various vocabularies, the "tenor," "topic," "primary subject," or, to use Layoff's construct, instructional reform represents the "target domain." Likewise, "evangelism" is the "vehicle," "secondary subject," or the "source domain."

Metaphorical tension not only helps yield new meanings, it also makes metaphors compelling. A metaphor whose tenor and vehicle are nearly identical will have little power and resonance. On the other hand, when metaphors combine ideas that have significant unlikenesses, when tensions are heightened, there is power in the image created.

As the two things put together are more remote, the tension created is, of course, greater. That tension is the spring of the bow, the source of the energy of the shot . . . (Richards, 1936/1965, p. 125)

Of course, power isn't everything. Unlikeness or tension, by itself, is no virtue.

**And** Richards admits that there are limits to the usefulness and appropriateness of **tension**. He argues that metaphors should be not just strong, they should also be apt.

**Continuing** with the metaphor of bow and arrow, Richards warns:

. . . we ought not to mistake the strength of the bow for the excellence of the shooting; or the strain for the aim. And bafflement is an experience of which we soon tire, and rightly. (Richards, 1936/1965, p. 125)

**Tension** is good, bafflement, bad. So Richards argues for a balance between tension and **similarity**, between power and aptness. In suggesting such a balance, Richards echoes **Aristotle**, who placed similar constraints on metaphors:

Metaphors, like epithets, must be fitting, which means that they must fairly correspond to the thing signified: failing this, their inappropriateness will be conspicuous. (1405a)

**And, again:**

. . . the metaphors must not be far-fetched, or they will be difficult to grasp, nor obvious, or they will have no effect. (1410b)

**According** to both Richards and Aristotle, metaphors should seem apt to the hearer, but should **not** be boringly familiar. At the extremes of far-fetchedness and familiarity, metaphors lack salience or relevance.

#### Another View: Interaction

Like Richards, Max Black (1962) sought to move beyond the traditional views of

metaphor as comparison or substitution. He did not want to displace those views, but to supplement them with another--one he called the "interaction view." His work followed that of Richards, and extended it. Both believed that some metaphors do more than just help us understand the tenor (or principal subject) better. Sometimes, metaphors result in changed perceptions of both the vehicle and tenor.

To use their terminology, the domains or concepts at play in metaphors "interact" in the minds of the makers and hearers of metaphors. Richards (1936/1965) states the claim this way:

. . . in many of the most important uses of metaphor, the co-presence of the vehicle and tenor results in a meaning (to be clearly distinguished from the tenor) which is not attainable without their interaction. That the vehicle is not normally a mere embellishment of a tenor which is otherwise unchanged by it but that vehicle and tenor in co-operation give a meaning of more varied powers than can be ascribed to either. (Richards, 1936/1965, p. 100)

On this view, metaphors create new meanings as the parts interact, and these meanings are distinguishable from the vehicle and tenor.

Building on these ideas, Black (1993) clarified the notion of interaction. Using "primary subject" in place of Richards' "tenor" and "secondary subject" for "vehicle," Black articulated his view of how parts of metaphors interact:

In the context of a particular metaphorical statement, the two subjects 'interact' in the following ways: (a) the presence of the primary subject incites the hearer to select some of the secondary subject's properties; and (b) invites him to construct a parallel implication-complex that can fit the primary subject; and (c) reciprocally induces parallel changes in the secondary subject. (Black, 1993, p. 28)

In this elaboration of how metaphors interact, Black drew on work he had done years earlier. Both primary and secondary subjects exist in domains of experience, he argued, and each resides in larger networks of ideas or objects with its own set of implications. Early on, Black (1962) called these "systems of associated commonplaces." He later (1993) renamed them "implication-complexes," but the idea was largely the same. Metaphors don't just point us to one aspect of similarity between two subjects, but to a *set* of relations between them.

We interpret metaphors by drawing on our understandings of these implication-complexes. Specifically, we use our knowledge of secondary subjects (and their associations) to help us understand aspects of primary subjects. The secondary subject's system of associated commonplaces influences interpretation of the metaphor as hearers transfer associations from the secondary to the primary subject. Hearers draw on the systems of associated commonplaces (or implication-complexes) of the subjects of the metaphor as they try to make sense of the metaphor.

On Black's view, interpretation of metaphors proceeds as we attempt to map connections between the two subjects of the metaphor. To do this, we draw on "associated commonplaces" or "implication-complexes," to "fit" the two subjects together. As an example of how this process of interpretation works, Black applies it to the metaphor *man is a wolf*:

The effect . . . of (metaphorically) calling a man a "wolf" is to evoke the wolf-system of related commonplaces. If the man is a wolf, he preys upon other animals, is fierce, hungry, engaged in constant struggle, a scavenger, and so on. Each of these implied assertions has now to be made to fit the principal subject (the man) either in normal or in abnormal senses. If the metaphor is at all appropriate, this can be done--up to a point at least. A suitable hearer will be led by the wolf-system of implications to construct a corresponding system of implications about the principal subject.<sup>7</sup> (Black, 1962, p. 41)

For Black, these "implication-complexes" or "systems of associated commonplaces" function as both marks of a metaphor's aptness and tools for its interpretation. Hearers who can make sense of the metaphor will have to be aware of "commonplaces" about wolves, and be able to "fit" them to men. Otherwise, they might find the metaphor inappropriate or be confused by it. If hearers lack an understanding of the "current

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<sup>7</sup> Black (1962) does not explicitly state what he means by "suitable hearer," though he admits that other cultures may have different "standard beliefs" about wolves, and their interpretations of the metaphor "man is a wolf" would differ accordingly. In this culture, however " . . . literal uses of the word [wolf] normally commit the speaker to acceptance of a set of standard beliefs about wolves (current platitudes) that are the common possession of the members of some speech community . . . . A speaker who says 'wolf' is normally taken to be implying in some sense of that word that he is referring to something fierce, carnivorous, treacherous, and so on. The idea of a wolf is part of a system of ideas, not sharply delineated, and yet sufficiently definite to admit of detailed enumeration" (Black, 1962, pp. 40-41).

platitudes" about wolves, or, *a fortiori*, have no familiarity with wolves, they will be hard-pressed to make sense of the metaphor *man is a wolf*.

Further highlighting the systemic, relational elements of metaphorical association, Black offered an alternate way to think of metaphors. He argued that metaphors point to "models" of primary subjects raised to consciousness by secondary subjects.

Every implication-complex supported by a metaphor's secondary subject . . . is a *model* of the ascriptions imputed to the primary subject: Every metaphor is the tip of a submerged model. (Black, 1993, p. 30)

Metaphorical expressions are surface manifestations of models of primary subjects patterned after implication-complexes of the secondary subjects. In other words, secondary subjects (with their set of associations and implications) function as models for primary subjects of metaphors. For example, in the metaphor *man is a wolf*, the secondary subject (wolf) serves as a model for the primary subject (man).

Interpreting metaphors is not a mechanical, linear process, however. The "commonplaces" or "complexes" hearers draw on to make sense of subjects are neither static nor rigid. Hearers interpret metaphors in light of implication-complexes, and these interpretations, in turn, contribute to the alteration of those (and other) implication-complexes. In this way, metaphors become a part of implication-complexes and the interpretive process itself. Implication-complexes are dynamic rather than static, and are shaped and modified by metaphors themselves.

In his discussion, Black highlights two major ideas. First, the subjects (or vehicles and tenors) of metaphors, like subjects considered separately, exist within networks of (culturally-influenced) associated commonplaces or implication-complexes. This means that individuals understand all subjects in light of other, related ideas.

These networks of ideas are culturally shaped, but not uniform across members of cultures. Each individual has idiosyncratic understandings that are bounded somewhat by the "horizons of meaning" of their socio-historical life-world. Black does not address the issues of idiosyncrasy explicitly, but they are implicitly present in his observations about

what he calls a suitable hearer.

Second, hearers interpret metaphors in light of the *two* implication-complexes of the subjects of the metaphor that they hold. As they encounter metaphors, hearers attempt to "fit" or "map" aspects of the two implication-complexes across the metaphor's domains. Hearers attempt to view the secondary subject as a "model" for the primary subject. If they can successfully do so, Black argues, the metaphor will make sense to them. If they cannot do so--if, say, they are unfamiliar with one of the subjects and its implication complex, or the "map" across the domains doesn't seem to fit--hearers will doubt the aptness of the metaphor or fail to understand it.

Black does not argue that readers come with fixed sets of implication-complexes with which they must figure out "maps" between the subjects of the metaphor. Instead, their interpretations of metaphor are influenced by the context of the metaphorical utterance, as well.

Richards' description of the interpretive process is less fully-elaborated than Black's, but is consistent with it. Richards anticipated the work of Black around the interpretation of metaphor:

Let us consider more closely what happens in the mind when we put together--in a sudden and striking fashion--two things belonging to very different orders of experience. The most important happenings--in addition to a general confused reverberation and strain--are the mind's efforts to connect them. The mind is a connecting organ, it works only by connecting . . . (Richards, 1936/1965, p. 125)

Richards' descriptions of the mind "connecting" ideas lack theoretical and technical sophistication, but are evocative, nonetheless. The words paint an image of mental work, in which the mind attempts to "put together" the subjects of metaphors. On his view, the mind is about "connecting," and that's the way it deals with metaphors.

### *Context and Interpretation*

In fact, "connection" seems especially important in metaphors because they bring together ideas from different domains. Metaphors present hearers with two subjects that

may or may not seem to "fit" one another. Working to see how they might "fit," minds will attempt to "connect" them. When hearers struggle to make such connections, as often happens with metaphors, their minds look for cues from the discourse to assist in the effort to interpret, to make "connections."

Richards argues that hearers can often find sufficient cues in the broader context of metaphors. And this is true even when the "connection" seems "impossible."

. . . what seems an impossible connection . . . can at once turn into an easy and powerful adjustment if the right hint comes from the rest of the discourse.  
(Richards, 1936/1965, p. 126)

Richards is here stating something both obvious and surprising. First, the context of metaphors helps hearers make connections between the subjects in the metaphor by providing interpretive "hints." In this way, context helps us understand all utterances and texts, not just metaphors. Indeed, no interpretation occurs in a vacuum. All interpretations are shaped by culturally mediated experiences and perspectives--or "horizons of meaning"--that constrain possible interpretations (Fish, 1980; Gadamer, 1960/1989; Ricoeur, 1981).<sup>8</sup>

Second, metaphors sometimes "bring together" two very different subjects or domains, and some metaphors seem to demand "impossible connections." Richards, however, argues that these connections are not always "impossible," even if they seem so on first blush. He claims that contextual clues can support such "connections." In these instances, the context of the metaphor can be *key* to their interpretation.

Richards gives an example of the way an "impossible connection" can be made, given the right context. He quotes an author on language who writes that "the symbol *house* . . . can hardly ever have the same reference as, let us say, *bread*" (quoted in

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<sup>8</sup>Each interpreter has interests and experiences that influence the possible "connections" they can make when they encounter text of any kind. Their interpretations are informed by common "implication-complexes" as well as idiosyncratic associations individuals hold because of their unique histories and experiences.

Richards, 1936/1965, p. 126). Richards responds, offering an example of this "impossible connection." He quotes a line from Gerald Manley Hopkins' poem, "The Drummer Boy's Communion": "Low-thatched in leaf-light housel his too huge godhead." Richards goes on to argue that "There is no strain, surely, in speaking of the bread here as the little house, housel" (Richards, 1936/1965, p. 126). Why? The "connection" makes sense in light of the rest of the poem. Hearers interpret the metaphor in light of the broader context.

Hopkins' poem employs religious imagery that helps inform the reader's understanding of bread and house as they are "connected" in the poem. In the Eucharist, the bread becomes the body of Christ. As such, the bread "houses" his body. Without this broader context, hearers, like Richards' interlocutor, may have quickly denied that "bread" and "house" could successfully be coupled in metaphor.

Minds will work to interpret metaphors, Richards argues, because that is what minds do. To aid their interpretive work, hearers are forced to look to context. In addition to the context of the metaphorical utterance, hearers will draw on the meanings they associate with each of the metaphor's subjects in their attempts to "connect" them.

Though Richards is convinced that hearers will *predictably* work to connect the metaphor's two subjects or ideas, the connections they will make between the tenor and vehicle of metaphors are not easily *predicted*. There are many ways minds could connect two subjects in a metaphor.<sup>9</sup>

. . . (the mind) can connect any two things in an indefinitely large number of different ways. Which of these it chooses is settled by reference to some larger whole or aim, and, though we may not discover its aim, the mind is never aimless. In all interpretations we are filling in connections . . . . (Richards, 1936/1965, p. 125)

One reason the interpretations hearers may give metaphors are not predictable is because

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<sup>9</sup> Individuals could "connect" two ideas in a host of ways. Plausible interpretations, however, are not infinite. They are bounded by the contours and constraints of speech communities. (See Fish, 1980).

interpretations are shaped by the understandings, interests, and commitments of individual hearers.

Still, authors of metaphors can attempt to constrain or aid particular interpretations by placing metaphors in a context that helps limit the range of possible interpretations. Black (1993), for example, argues that associated commonplaces or implication-complexes can be altered and influenced by the context of the metaphor, and often are. Authors, he claims, can even induce alterations of implication-complexes by spelling out more fully the sorts of associations they are attaching to a subject in a metaphor before they employ it:

Reference to "associated commonplaces" will fit the commonest cases where the author simply plays upon the stock of common knowledge (and common misinformation) presumably shared by the reader and himself. But in . . . a piece of sustained prose, the writer can establish a novel pattern of implications for the literal uses of the key expressions, prior to using them as vehicles for his metaphors. ( . . . a naturalist who really knows wolves may tell us so much about them that *his* description of man as wolf diverges quite markedly from the stock uses of that figure.) Metaphors can be supported by specially constructed systems of implications, as well as by accepted commonplaces; they can be made to measure and need not be reach-me-downs. (Black, 1993, p. 43, emphasis in original)

Whether authors choose to explicitly offer alternative meanings (or associations) for the subjects of metaphors or "naturally" provide interpretive hints in the discourse that help hearers make sense of metaphors, the context matters. The context of metaphorical utterances influences--whether directly or indirectly--the interpretations hearers give them.

In summary, Richards and Black argue that interpretation of metaphor is informed by (at least) three things: 1) the conceptual context of each subject considered separately (i.e., we interpret things in light of implication-complexes); 2) the interplay of the two implication-complexes, as hearers seek to "fit" or "map" aspects of the secondary to the primary subject; and, 3) the discourse context of the metaphorical expression or utterance.

## Metaphors: Interpreting Across Domains

Richards and Black both argue that metaphors demand or invite a kind of "mapping" across two domains. And they are not alone. That view is dominant in literature about metaphors. It goes back at least as far as Aristotle, who argued that the heart of metaphor is applying a name and understanding of one thing to another, drawing connections and transferring meaning between the parts of the metaphor.

And it extends through the work of George Lakoff (1993) today. He adds his voice to the others, supporting the claim that metaphors draw on networks or systems of relations across domains. He defines metaphor as "a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system" (Lakoff, 1993, p. 203), and argues that such transfers depend upon and help constitute cross-domain mappings: "it is via such mappings that we apply knowledge about (x) to (y)" (Lakoff, 1993, p. 208).

Lakoff further claims that the maps we create reflect consistent parallels across domains. When we apply the knowledge about source domains to target domains, we do so in keeping with the *cognitive topology* of the source domain. Lakoff calls this the "Invariance Principle":

Metaphorical mappings preserve the cognitive topology . . . for the source domain, in a way consistent with the inherent structure of the target domain (Lakoff, 1993, p. 215).

Lakoff argues that metaphors depend upon and draw attention to parallel structures in two domains. His Invariance Principle says that "sources will be mapped onto sources, goals onto goals, trajectories onto trajectories, and so on" (Lakoff, 1993, p. 215). Each domain has its set of relations that work in parallel ways to those in the other domain. Metaphors maintain the order and sequence of these relations.

Lakoff makes strong claims. He states that whenever "one looks at existing correspondences, one will see that the Invariance Principle holds . . ." (Lakoff, 1993, p.

215).<sup>10</sup> His ideas are reminiscent of Black's argument that secondary subjects of metaphors function as models for primary subjects. Black and Lakoff agree that connections between parts of each domain parallel those of the other.

These authors agree that metaphors function to "connect" two different domains. They differ in the terms they use, but they agree that metaphors awaken or create insights drawn from comparisons between--or the interaction of--two "domains" or "subjects" in metaphors. Some think of metaphors as drawing analogies or building models, others, raising "implicit comparisons" or causing "interaction" between two subjects. But all share the conviction that there are two domains at play in metaphors, and metaphors depend upon some kind of "structural correspondence," "cross-domain mapping," or parallel "cognitive topology." On each view, metaphors transfer characteristics or understandings from one domain to another. Such a view of metaphor makes sense in light of the etymology of the term. The word *metaphor* comes from the Greek *metapherein*, which, translated literally, means to "carry over" or "transfer."

Though some of these authors argue more forcefully that novel metaphors "create" new meanings, others agree that metaphors are "creative" in some sense. Metaphors "create" new meanings as associations with the vehicle are transferred to the "tenor" of the metaphor. Sometimes, subjects interact and result in new understandings of both the vehicle and tenor.

Aristotle argued that metaphors provide something that "ordinary words" do not: ". . . ordinary words convey only what we know already; it is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh" (*Rhetoric* 1410b). Metaphors sometimes yield thoughts and images hearers have not previously had. At other times, they provide different ways of viewing things hearers have seen before, but without the new associations metaphors bring to mind. Novel metaphors don't always provide these sorts of new insights, but

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<sup>10</sup> For a fuller discussion of the Invariance Principle, consult Lakoff (1993).

they often do.

### Generative Metaphors and New Meanings

Donald Schön (1993) highlights the way metaphors can "create" new meanings or ways of seeing the world. He develops a definition of what he calls "generative metaphor," Drawing from the Greek meaning of the word metaphor, he states that "generative metaphor" is the "'carrying over' of frames or perspectives from one domain of experience to another . . . " (Schön, 1993, p. 137). Through generative metaphors, he says, we are invited to apply one way of thinking about an idea or process to another. Summing up, Schön argues that "generative metaphor"

. . . refers both to a certain kind of product--a perspective or frame, a way of looking at things--and to a certain kind of process--a process by which new perspectives on the world come into existence (Schön, 1993, p. 137).

Generative metaphors provide new ways to see and can help orient hearers differently to the issues and ideas found in the metaphor.

To help demonstrate what he means, Schön offers an example of a generative metaphor. He describes how manufacturers of synthetic paintbrushes struggled to duplicate the way natural brushes spread paint. After many failed attempts, a scientist investigating the problem suggested a new way to "see" the paintbrush. In doing so, he offered a new metaphor for the paintbrush. He thought of paintbrushes as pumps. Thinking of the paintbrush in that light helped the scientists solve the synthetic paintbrush problem. With new insights created or fostered or uncovered by the metaphor, the manufacturers were better able to emulate the sort of paint transfer afforded by natural brushes.

The paintbrush example shows how this generative metaphor created new ways to see an already familiar, concrete object. In short, it provided a new way to see the paintbrush--as a pump. The new way of framing the problem of painting resulted in new insights about painting and paintbrushes. It was not an instance of a more familiar

process illuminating a murkier one. Instead, it was thinking of one process in light of another familiar one that produced the insights.

. . . in their redescription of painting, both their perception of the phenomenon and the previous description of pumping were transformed. What makes the process one of metaphor making rather than simply of redescribing, is that the new putative description already belongs to what is initially perceived as a different, albeit familiar thing; hence, everything one knows about pumping has the potential of being brought into play in this redescription of painting. There is, in this sense, great economy and high leverage in this particular kind of redescription. (Schön, 1993, p. 141)

In this, we can see how Schön's argument is consistent with the "interactive" views of Richards and Black. The metaphor resulted in reconceptions of the processes of both painting and pumping.

Schön's concern is primarily the way social policy-makers frame social problems, but his argument transcends those concerns. He demonstrates the ways novel "generative metaphors" can influence the ways humans frame questions and problems. Metaphors provide new frames for problems, and can provide insights into possible solutions.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) make a similar point. They agree with other authors that novel metaphors help us see things anew. More importantly, they say, metaphors help us orient ourselves to act differently in the world. In their analysis of metaphor, Lakoff & Johnson push beyond issues of understanding and truth, and consider questions of action:

Though questions of truth do arise for new metaphors, the more important questions are those of appropriate action. In most cases, what is at issue is not the truth or falsity of a metaphor but the perception and inferences that follow from it and the actions that are sanctioned by it . . . . We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we in part structure our experience, consciously and unconsciously, by means of metaphor. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 158)

This idea that metaphors influence actions as well as understanding is also present in the work of Richards:

A "command of metaphor"--a command of the interpretation of metaphors--can go deeper still into the control of the world that we make for ourselves to live in . . . (Richards, 1936/1965, p.135)

Metaphors shape perceptions of the world and provide a frame for thinking about what to do. Humans understand the world in light of metaphors, and those understandings of the world influence the choices and actions that they take in it.

### Novel (Generative) Metaphors: A Caveat

Generative metaphors can seem liberating as they open up new ways to think about and live in the world. But new understandings are not necessarily accurate, benign or helpful. Partly because of their imaginative promise, generative metaphors can be seductive. Almost as if under a spell, humans sometimes push metaphors too far, applying them in awkward if not procrustean ways. Metaphors can seduce hearers to see things from a particular perspective, and, based on that perspective draw conclusions that are unwarranted. Generative metaphors have potentially powerful benefits, but they spell potential danger as well. They can help people make sense of complex problems and can serve to simplify problems in ways that make particular, metaphorically prescribed, solutions seem obvious.

A situation may begin by seeming complex, uncertain, and indeterminate. If we can once see it, however, in terms of a normative dualism such as health/disease or nature/artifice, then we shall know in what direction to move. Indeed, the diagnosis and the prescription will seem obvious. This sense of the obviousness of what is wrong and what needs fixing is the hallmark of generative metaphor in the field of social policy. (Schön, 1993, p. 148)<sup>11</sup>

Schön (1993) continues, stating clearly his word of warning: "In so far as generative metaphor leads to a sense of the obvious, its consequences may be negative as well as positive" (p. 148). As a check against believing the "obvious" too uncritically, he recommends that policymakers and analysts become more attentive to the ways they are

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<sup>11</sup> Schön's piece is particularly aimed at illuminating the importance of the ways that metaphors set the problems that social policy is aimed at remedying. My use of the generative metaphor is at a different "level." I am thinking about the approaches taken to change the activities of practitioners, almost regardless of the content of the change. The generative metaphor I am considering has to do with the process of reform, rather than the particular ways we frame the social problems the policies are intended to redress.

using generative metaphors in the framing of problems, to see whether the metaphor clouds or illuminates issues.

## SUMMARY AND PLAN

As stated above, this study is intended to investigate the metaphor *instructional reform as evangelism*. Given Schön's (1993) definition, this metaphor counts as an example of "generative metaphor." This metaphor provides a new way to see instructional reform, and throughout the rest of this work, we will be investigating and explicating it. In keeping with Schön's warning, we will consider both its potential to illuminate and its danger of clouding the issues of instructional reform.

But first things first. From the survey of metaphor that we have just completed, we can find an overall rationale for the various parts of this study, and guidance for an outline of what remains. Whether we adopt an Aristotelian or "interactionist" view, the importance of understanding the two domains of instructional reform and evangelism is clear. All of the authors we have surveyed talk about the importance of the metaphorical transfer of meaning from one domain to another. To understand such transfers, we need an understanding of the two domains in question.

Therefore, the next three chapters will be used to elaborate--to use Black's terminology--the "implication-complexes" of instructional reform and evangelism, and will be based on studies of the two domains. What do we know about each? Chapters 2 and 3 will take up questions of instructional reform and teacher change, and Chapter 4 will take up questions of evangelism and conversion. Chapter 4 will go beyond merely explicating commonplaces about evangelism, and will include some alternative ways of conceiving of evangelism.

Though many of the authors we have surveyed argue that metaphors often work on unelaborated implicative-complexes, it will be useful in this sort of constructive work to make explicit the conclusions that are being drawn about the nature and process of

instructional reform, and then to elaborate clearly some findings from the "implicative complex" of the vehicle--that of evangelism. Therefore, as we "develop" the metaphor, we will discuss the similarities across the two domains of evangelism and instructional reform. As we do so, we will enumerate points of contact that tie the two domains together.

Though he argues that exhaustive explication of metaphors can be tiresome and boring, Black (1962) states that specification of the grounds of metaphors can be helpful. This seems especially correct when the speaker provides new "associations" for one or the other "subject" of the metaphor.

. . . "explication" or elaboration of the metaphor's grounds, if not regarded as an adequate cognitive substitute for the original, may be extremely valuable. A powerful metaphor will no more be harmed by such probing than a musical masterpiece by analysis of its harmonic and melodic structure. (Black, 1962, pp. 45-46)

In developing the metaphor, an explicative approach will allow us to consider aspects in which the two domains share common ground.

As important as the similarities are to establishing the aptness of the metaphor, the unlikenesses will prove, as Richards said, to be the "spring in the bow." We will find that the unlikenesses between evangelism and reform offer new insights into the work of reform. The "spring" of the bow will usher in new understandings of reform, issuing new insights into the promise, possibilities and problems of instructional reform.

In addition to documenting similarities between the two domains, in Chapter 5 we provide reasons why the metaphor is both apt and attractive. Based on the development of the metaphor, we then nominate seven "evangelical principles of reform" that provide a heuristic frame through which reformers and students of reform could view past, present, and future instructional reform efforts. In Chapter 6, we investigate how the seven principles can help us gain insights into three different reforms, "testing" the metaphor and evangelical principles against three reforms. In Chapter 7, we will nominate some limitations of the study, areas for future work, and draw some

conclusions about the virtues of reform that surface from the implication-complex of evangelism.

As we saw above, the metaphor *instructional reform as evangelism* has genealogical roots in the thought of John Dewey. My intent in the remainder of this work is to explore and explicate the metaphor to see whether it makes sense in light of what we know about teaching, reform, and teacher change. And, if it does, to ask how this way of seeing reform might be of benefit to reformers, scholars, and teachers in the field. In short, the remaining chapters are intended to demonstrate the plausibility and possibility of the metaphor, to test its descriptive accuracy and prescriptive helpfulness to problems of instructional reform.

As we have seen in this chapter, metaphors open our eyes to see things anew. Metaphors also help us orient ourselves differently toward the world, as we make plans and act in it. Throughout the rest of this study, we will investigate whether evangelism can help us understand and "experience" educational reform differently. The next step is surveying what we know about instructional reform and evangelism. It is to those tasks that we now turn.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Content and Contexts of Instructional Reform**

Reform is common, and calls for reform are commoner still. Successful implementation of reforms, on the other hand, is much less constant. There is nothing surprising about the claim that successful implementation of reform is less common than reform itself. Whether by experience or logic, we have come to expect that implementation is the difficult part of reform. Calls for reform, like criticisms, are easy to make. Accomplishing reform, like constructively addressing criticism, is much more difficult.

One major reason why reform is often difficult is that teaching in schools is very complicated work. And because reform aims to change teaching, reform complicates things, at least in the short run. Though some reforms might ultimately make things easier, change is rarely easy. And the process of change is naturally most difficult when reforms entail major revisions to the core of teachers' work.

In this chapter and the next, we will explore reform. We will begin by asking what reform is, and how it works. Who reforms whom, and why? Where do reforms occur, and how do contexts affect what happens? What sorts of reforms succeed and which ones struggle? By answering those questions, we will gain a sense of the territory of reform as well as an understanding of those who travel there. We will note reform's well-worn pathways and more treacherous terrain as we develop a map of the domain of instructional reform.

To gain a sense of the complexity of instructional reform, we will view it from several perspectives. We will first consider definitions of reform in order to map out the domain of instructional reform. After we consider these "ideal" perspectives of reform, we will shift the focus to "real-world" reform, to learn how it is understood and experienced in the field. In the next chapter we will investigate the process of reform,

with special attention to findings from studies of instructional reforms as they have been worked out in practice.

## REFORM DEFINITIONS

As a starting point, consider the dictionary definitions of *reform*. Because we are interested in both the process and the effects of reform, we will consider *reform* as both a verb and a noun. Webster defines the verb *reform* this way: "1 a: to amend or improve by change of form or removal of faults or abuses b: to put or change into an improved form or condition." The second definition of *reform* as a verb is: "to put an end to (an evil) by enforcing or introducing a better method or course of action." *Reformed* is defined as "changed for the better." Webster defines the noun *reform* in two ways. The first definition is "an amendment of what is defective, vicious, corrupt, or depraved;" and the second is "a removal or correction of an abuse, a wrong, or errors." The definitions clearly convey the idea that reform means improvement.

Dictionaries provide static—and ideal—meanings for words. In this case, the dictionary's *reform* seems a tidy, effective, and positively successful affair. In contrast, practitioners commonly experience reform as messy, uncertain, and frustrating. Though the dictionary reform is successful, "real reform" frequently is not. This does not mean that the definitions are wrong. Dictionaries convey meanings people have come to give words, so the dictionary definitions of *reform* have real value. The fact is, people do generally think of reform as a process of change that makes for improvement. If we sometimes qualify *reform* with *failed* or some such adjective, the word *reform*, taken on its own, still implies improvement. Reform rhetoric reveals the same assumption, filled as it is with promises of progress and successful change. The idea that reform is improvement is deeply ingrained. Indeed, one can hardly imagine a reformer stating that a reform was *intended* to make things *worse*. Reforms are aimed at improvement, even if they sometimes miss the mark.

Reforms are promulgated and undertaken to make things better. Hence, they are essentially value-laden. Every reform is based on values and beliefs that bolster claims that the reform will make things better. Reforms assume that reform practice(s) or action(s) are superior to those they are intended to improve or replace. For this reason, reforms are inextricably linked with values and estimates of what is good (or at least *better*). For that reason, reform is inherently normative.<sup>12</sup>

Reform advocacy and criticism are also essentially normative. Authors and advocates of reform take a normative stand when they recommend reforms. Critics of reform or reform proposals make counter-claims, which are also normative. A critic might, for example, doubt that a given reform can accomplish what it claims, or complain that a reform is not the best, most effective, or most equitable way to improve things. Whatever the claims and counter-claims about reform, however, reform advocates and critics speak in normative terms.<sup>13</sup>

Concomitant with the normative nature of reform is the intentionality of reform. Reforms, as we have said, advocate particular courses of actions over others. The advocacy is targeted, intentional, and this intentionality distinguishes *reform* from *unplanned change*. Some unplanned changes in schools yield improvements, but reforms are intentional rather than serendipitous.<sup>14</sup> Reform is planned change that is intended to

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<sup>12</sup> It may not be possible to trace the "normative genealogy" of a particular reform, but at some level, reform is based on values. Because reform implies improvement and improvement is inherently value-laden, reform is normative.

<sup>13</sup> This does not mean that advocates and critics speak exclusively in normative terms, just that criticism and advocacy are normative enterprises. Advocacy and criticism are both often bolstered by positive claims based on empirical data, but the appeal to data is animated by values that drive the advocacy and critical projects. Obviously, political pressure also comes into play, and the rhetoric may not reflect truly held convictions about the reform in question. Nonetheless, even if the debate is disingenuous, the rhetoric of reform will be normative.

<sup>14</sup> Improvements can, of course, occur in social contexts without the stimulus of reform. At this point, we are working out a definition of reform, creating a distinction between reform and unplanned change. From that perspective, we see that the chief mark of reform is good intent rather than successful improvement. That does not mean that reform intent is *actually* more important than reform effects, just that the central difference between unplanned change and reform is intentionality.

improve some particular states of affairs.

## STEADY WORK OF REFORM

Educational reform, we are told, is steady work (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988). Indeed, the history of schooling in America is filled with myriad programs of change intended to modify or mend teaching and learning in schools. In fact, it would be difficult to find a time in the last century when the states and federal government were not proposing reforms of various kinds to "fix" schools, teachers, or the children they serve.

Reform is more than just a common occurrence in schools. Many of the reforms themselves are quite common too. Though each educational reform has distinctive characteristics, many reforms are variations on familiar reform themes (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). As an example, consider the seemingly perennial debate between whole language and phonics, and the reforms that traded places throughout the century. Or consider the repeated reforms that have been aimed at moving classrooms from teacher-centered to child-centered pedagogy.

Reform cycles sometimes contribute to the skepticism (even cynicism) with which teachers and parents greet reforms. Some teachers accept the periodicity of reform cycles, patiently enduring periods when reforms they dislike are in vogue. Soon enough, they suspect, the reform tide will turn, the pendulum will swing back (Huberman & Miles, 1984; Slavin, 1989). Perhaps wisely, perhaps cynically, teachers sometimes take a "philosophical" stance toward reform, concluding with some confidence that "this, too, shall pass" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 135).

Of course, educational reforms are not limited to those that periodically reappear in schools. The varieties of reform one could investigate is nearly limitless (Sykes, 1996). Educational policies address every conceivable dimension of schooling practice, and reforms are aimed, at one time or another, at most every policy in schools.

Educational policies and reforms range from compulsory education statutes to core curriculum guidelines, from educational finance provisions to teacher certification requirements, from desegregation plans to charter school arrangements, from voucher proposals to textbook adoption procedures, from class size limits to mandated assessment measures, from national standards to greater decentralization, from athletic competition rules to standards for classroom pedagogy, from collective bargaining agreements to programs for Title I instruction and Head Start, from performance standards for all students to those of "developmentally appropriate practice," from programs to encourage teacher professionalism to accountability measures. The range of topics addressed by educational policies and reform is wide, the number vast.

Instructional reforms can be categorized in many different ways. Regardless of how we categorize them, though, one thing is certain: the number of reforms directed at schools is large. Some reforms call for minor adjustments to instructional practice or administration, others entail major overhauls of the organization and delivery of instruction in schools. Some reforms are recycled from the past, others are brand new. A few of these policies are easily monitored, but many are not. Some are relatively unproblematic, others remain hotly contested by educators, politicians, and citizens alike. Some instructional reforms come and go with regularity. Mostly, however, they seem to come. And they pile up in schools.

## REFORM CONTENT

One defining characteristic of reform is reform content, which we divide into two basic categories. First, reform content refers to the set of beliefs and practices advocated by a given reform, including descriptions and images of reformed practices. Second, reform content refers to the guidance about how to enact or implement the changes in districts and schools.

## Subject Matter of Reforms

Reform content in this first sense would include reform plans drafted by reformers, along with documents or statements used to communicate and/or advocate for the reform. It would also include professional development materials used to convey the ideas and practices to administrators, teachers, and others involved in the reform process. Examples of reform documents are state curricular frameworks, "reformed textbooks," speeches, articles, books, audio, or video tapes describing reform ideas and/or practices, principles of reform movements, manifestoes and resources drafted by educational reformers, and the like. Each of these types of materials communicate the content of reform in some way.

Reform documents have their origin in sets of ideas that give shape and contour to reforms. Because the commitments, values, and beliefs of reformers shape reforms, their ideas can help us understand the content of reforms they are recommending. Reforms often grow out of particular ways of seeing the world. For this reason, the ideational surround of reforms can help us understand the content of particular reforms (Cohen & Garet, 1976; Lindblom & Cohen, 1979; Weiss & Cohen, 1991). For example, a huge literature has developed that describes whole language philosophy and practice, all of which would help us discern the reform content of a whole language reform.

In most instances, however, the most relevant materials for understanding the content of reform are those materials that are explicitly tied to reforms. In other words, it is easier to discern the content of a particular reform from a state's "Curricular Framework," its "Goals and Objectives," other reform legislation, or professional development training manuals, than it would be to discern it from literature about the

broader reform movement (or reform philosophy).<sup>15</sup> For example, documents tied explicitly to a reform in language arts instruction could provide insights into the "reform content" of that reform in ways that treatises on whole language philosophy never could.

Even if we restricted our search for reform content to those documents "tied" explicitly to the reforms, some reform documents would conflict with others. For example, two authors of a set of curricular standards might disagree about one or more aspects of a reform. Or a reform textbook might not be entirely "consistent" with an adopted curriculum framework.<sup>16</sup> In cases such as these, the conflicts reveal disputes over reform content. The content of reforms is always contested, to some extent, because content of texts must always be interpreted. And that means that reform content is never static or fixed.

### "Pedagogy" of Reforms

Second, reform content refers to the guidance provided regarding ways to enact or implement the changes advocated by a particular reform.<sup>17</sup> The materials in this category include professional development guidelines, accountability or hierarchical structures for disseminating or spreading reforms, and ways to support the various reform players who will be responsible for advocating and enacting the reform.

Reforms differ in the level of detail they provide in guiding the implementation of reforms (Cohen & Ball, 1999). In fact, some reforms have few if any materials that correspond with this sense of reform content. Some reforms include vague descriptions

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<sup>15</sup> This does not mean that it is always easy to discern reform content from reform documents. However, such documents convey the contours and themes of particular instructional reforms explicitly in ways that the broader educational discourse cannot. From this perspective, the documents tied to a particular reform are more perspicuous than are the texts of broader reform movements in relating the particular reform content.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of the role of textbooks in reform, see Janine Remillard, 1996.

of reform strateg(ies), while others provide detailed recommendations for elaborate systems of professional development designed to help guide and support the enactment of reforms. Whatever the level of detail provided by reform documents, this sense of reform content refers to the strategic guidance provided for enacting the reform. This sense of reform content might be called the "pedagogy" of the reform.

Reform content is normative, because it provides pictures of what should or could happen in schools, as well as ways that reforms should or could be supported and enacted. Reform content is not entirely normative, though. The normative stances of reforms (and reformers) grow out of positive assertions about current teacher practices and assumptions about how to effect positive change. At least implicitly, reforms claim that current practice "falls short" in some way(s). Reforms emanate from appraisals of current practice, and result from implicit or explicit claims about how to make improvements in teaching and learning that comport with the espoused values of the reformers.

## REFORM TYPES

Reforms can be categorized in many different ways, by academic subject, for example, or their emphasis or focus. Some reforms target curricular issues, others focus on teacher professionalism, and some emphasize organizational issues, such as student-teacher ratios, team-teaching, and the like. Whatever focus reforms might have, scholars frequently divide them into two basic types. Though they often use different terms, students of planned innovation make a distinction between reforms that require minor changes and those that require major ones.

Studies of planned change indicate that reforms that demand fundamental changes

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<sup>17</sup> There is arguably a third aspect of reform content. What actually happens as the change is enacted or implemented, like "the curriculum as taught," will be addressed when we discuss the process of reform, below.

are more difficult to successfully enact than those that require relatively minor ones. This finding, of course, is no surprise. Yet, reformers continually seek to remake teaching and learning in fundamental ways. And students of educational policy continue to study what makes ambitious reforms (i.e., those that seek to change traditional practices) so much less likely to succeed than reforms that comport well with traditional practices (Cohen, 1988; Cohen & Barnes, 1993; Cremin, 1961; Cuban, 1984; Elmore, 1996; Fullan, 1991; Little, 1993; Sarason, 1982; Sykes, 1990; Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

In his commentary on a set of cases studying the implementation of the 1985 *Math Framework*, Gary Sykes (1990) observes a striking contrast between the success of two different reforms. He notes a "success story about instructional policy. The policy, of course, is not the new math framework, but the direct instruction model--also known as clinical teaching, ITIP, or the Madeline Hunter model--which is omnipresent in the teaching described here" (Sykes, 1990, p. 350). In part, he explains this by stating that direct instruction has several advantages over framework teaching. It is familiar, and the ITIP "model represents a theory of instruction that supplies direct practical guidance in the form of a common technical language, principles, and procedures" (Sykes, 1990, p. 350). He contrasts this with framework teaching that "requires a major reorientation for many teachers, a journey into unfamiliar territory beyond the bounds of their present knowledge and competence" (Sykes, 1990, p. 350).

This theme of unfamiliar territory is also present in Cohen's (1988) review of the many attempts made by Dewey and his followers to get teachers to embrace and practice what Cohen calls "adventurous teaching." Dewey, he notes, set a path into adventurous territory as a pedagogical pioneer, and others have followed his lead. Cohen (1988) observes that Dewey's notion of the child-centered curriculum and student-centered teaching departs from teachers' expectations about what real school looks like, and it also goes against the grain of deeply-entrenched cultural assumptions about what it means to teach, learn, and know. The story of reform is that reformers have repeatedly aimed at

making such changes. Nearly as often, they have been unsuccessful. Cohen's (1988) observations help explain why converting one's teaching in fundamental ways is difficult and unlikely. Another way of casting the reality is Cuban's (1984) claim that "teachers teach as they were taught." And that means they teach in teacher-centered ways.

The lessons from reform implementation show the importance of reform content in explaining the challenges of reform implementation. There have been many studies of innovations, and one important variable that helps to explain the success or failure of reform implementation is reform type.

### Two Basic Types of Instructional Reform

Though scholars employ different labels for the categories they create, many divide reforms into two basic groups. A quick review of the categories leads to a simple division. In the first category, we find reforms that are relatively minor and consequently easy to implement. In the other, we find those that are relatively major and difficult to implement. Here are four examples of ways authors have divided up educational reforms:

- David Tyack & Larry Cuban (1995) distinguish reforms based on the way they fit with the "grammar of schooling." The "grammar of schooling," again, refers to the ways in which schools typically function, or "the organizational forms that govern instruction" (Cuban & Tyack, 1995, p. 5). Some reforms are consistent with the grammar of schools and others challenge it.
- In an earlier work, Cuban (1988) divided reforms into what he called *first-* and *second-order* changes. First-order changes are those that improve matters "without disturbing the basic organizational features, without substantially altering the way that children and adults perform their roles" (Cuban, 1988, p. 342). He describes second-order changes as those that seek to reorganize relationships, goals, and roles in schools in fundamental ways.

- Michael Fullan (1991) distinguishes between reforms aimed at *intensification* and those aimed at *restructuring*. Intensification refers to "increased definition of curriculum, mandated textbooks, standardized tests tightly aligned with curriculum . . . and monitoring" (Fullan, 1991, p. 7). Restructuring, on the other hand, "usually involves school-based management; enhanced roles for teachers in instruction and decision making; integration of multiple innovations . . . radical restructuring of teacher education; new roles . . . ; and revamping and developing the shared mission and goals of the school . . . " (Fullan, 1991, p. 7).
- Ernest House (1974), citing Richard Normann's (1971) study of organizational innovations, offers another set of terms. Normann divides innovations into two groups: *variations* and *reorientations*. House (1974) describes the two types as follows:

Variations are minor changes that do not require drastic shifts within existing policies and power structures. Existing cognitions, rules, and heuristics are sufficient for dealing with minor innovations. Reorientations, on the other hand, require new types of specialized knowledge and task systems for implementation. Reorientations require new goals, new values, new, as well as realigned, power structures, and shifts in cognitive structure. These are drastic changes. (House, 1974, p. 57)

If we list the categories we just reviewed, we note a basic pattern of dichotomous pairs of reform types:

- Grammar-following      vs.      Grammar-challenging
- First-order change      vs.      Second-order change
- Intensification      vs.      Restructuring
- Variations      vs.      Reorientations

Though dichotomies of this sort often over-simplify matters, the way these scholars divide up reforms is remarkably consistent. The consistency of their analyses lends credence to the claim that there really is a fundamental distinction between reform types. The basic distinction each draws between reforms turns on the extent reforms upset or challenge the familiar structure and assumptions of what it means to teach and learn in

schools.

Reforms that fit into the left column are relatively unproblematic because they do not entail major reorganization of social structures in schools and do not challenge current assumptions about teaching and learning. They are, in that respect, *surface changes*. Reforms that fit into the right column are problematic precisely because they demand major changes to the organization of social structures in schools and/or assumptions about teaching and learning in schools. These reforms aim at changing the structure and assumptions about teaching and learning in schools. As a result, they are *deep changes*. They delve below the surface and aim at the roots of teaching practice itself.

### DEEP REFORM

This distinction between *deep reform* and *surface reform* captures the dichotomies we derived above from studies of reform. It also has the advantage of conveying the difficulty entailed in implementing reforms of the two types. *Deep reforms* would naturally be more difficult to effect than *surface* ones. Deep reforms challenge the grammar of schools, while surface reforms conform to it. Deep reforms demand organizational (read: second-order) changes, while surface reforms don't (read: first-order changes). Deep reforms require restructuring, while surface reforms don't. Deep reforms require reorientation of structure and mindset, while surface reforms don't.

Though all *deep reforms* entail difficult changes, it would be incorrect to infer that all *surface reforms* are easily enacted. Similarly, it would be incorrect to infer that surface reforms are all "minor" reforms. Tyack & Cuban (1995) offer several examples of major changes we would characterize as surface changes because they were "add-ons" to the current structure. In their list, they include the introduction of indoor plumbing, Kindergarten, and the Carnegie Unit. Each of these reforms improved schools by helping them do what they had already been doing more easily or effectively. Even though they

were major reforms, they did not challenge the grammar of schooling. In large part, these reforms were implemented successfully because they were consistent with notions of "real school."

### Hopes and Frustrations of Deep Reform

Reformers are often idealists (Shulman, 1983). Sometimes, they are "dreamers" seeking a better pedagogical (and social) world (Wilson, 2003). Whatever term is used, when reformers see needs in schools for excellence, equality, or equity, they want to make things better. And they often look to deep reform as the answer. However, as we have shown, hopes for deep and fundamental changes in schools have frequently been frustrated. Indeed, the history of reform provides little confidence that widespread deep reform can be achieved (Elmore, 1996; Sarason, 1990; Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Students of reform offer diverse diagnoses of the problems and challenges of deep reform, but they share a sense of skepticism about its success. Fullan (1997), for example, begins an essay on the past and future of reform with the following lamentation:

It is easy to be pessimistic about educational reform. There are many legitimate reasons to be discouraged. From a rational-technical point of view, the conclusion that large-scale reform is a hopeless proposition seems justified (Fullan, 1997, p. 216)

In their review of the past century's educational reform efforts, Tyack & Cuban (1995) note that "continuity in the grammar of schooling has puzzled and frustrated generations of reformers who have sought to change these standardized organizational forms" (1995, p. 85).<sup>18</sup> Based on their study, there seems little reason to suspect that the future will be much different from the past. *Plus ça Change . . .*

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<sup>18</sup> Reflecting on the history of reform, Tyack & Cuban (1995) wonder if "utopian" visions for radical change in teaching are ever likely to meet with widespread effect. They counsel a retreat from the utopian vision, recommending instead a strategy of incremental improvement of current practices rather than attempts to radically remake classroom instruction through deep reform.

That is not to say that students of reform lack all hope for success. Though Sarason (1990) entitled his book *The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform*, his subtitle tells us he wrote the book to warn reformers to "change directions before it's too late." In prophetic terms, Sarason talks of doom. Then he offers his key to unlocking the puzzle of intractability in schools, which, he argues, is paying attention to the power-relations in schools. For Sarason, even though things are bad, all is not lost. Hope still remains.

In much the same way, after stating his negative appraisal of "large-scale reform," Fullan (1997) offers reasons for hope that deep reform can be successful. The rest of his essay describes a new way to think of the problem of change, including ways to improve the likelihood of success. Even though Tyack & Cuban (1995) remain skeptical of grand attempts at achieving utopia through deep reform, they offer a possible way out of the loop of repeated reform failures. They argue that the best path for reform is targeting help at the felt needs of teachers, helping them improve their own teaching by building on their successes in the classrooms.

Though these and other studies of reform consistently criticize past reform attempts, the criticisms are made with an eye toward success. By explicitly highlighting problems and weaknesses, the criticisms (at least implicitly) aim at points of possible intervention. Typically, they move beyond criticisms and conclusions from their analysis to recommend changes they suppose would make a positive difference in the ways deep reforms are carried out in schools. Though authors' optimism is mitigated by the disappointing history of deep reform, their skepticism is tempered by the lessons they glean from those failures.

### Difficulties of Deep Reform

Many of the challenges of deep reform follow logically from the definition of *deep reform* itself. Because they demand changes to the structures and assumptions of

teaching, deep reforms are difficult to implement. House (1974) articulates well the challenges implicit in deep reform. Drawing on Normann's (1971) terminology, House employs the label *reorientation* to describe what we call *deep reform*:

Variations, or small-scale changes, can be accommodated within the existing political system. The existing cognitive framework, rules, and perceptions are sufficient for variation, requiring no change of cognitive domain. Reorientations, or more fundamental change, occasion shifts in the internal power structure. Large-scale change cannot occur without some realignment, and not only are new goals, values, and power structures necessary, but the cognitive structure must also be changed. People must "see" things differently. (House, 1974, p. 77)

Despite the many reasons for pessimism about the success of deep reform, reformers continue to hope. They place hope in deep reform because, they believe, deep reforms have the greatest *possibility* of remaking instruction. Though deep reform may be *unlikely* to succeed, reformers continue to see it as the best chance for remaking instruction. This highlights a terrific irony: reformers often seem to hold the highest hopes for those reforms that consistently prove least successful.

The disappointing history of these ambitious reforms raises some difficult questions: Is it possible to effect major change in teacher practice on a wide-spread basis? If so, how might this best be accomplished? If not, what hinders the effort?

To answer those questions, we need to investigate the process of instructional reform to consider how it works and what factors influence the ways reforms are enacted. After investigating the process of reform, we will consider the results of reform efforts and draw conclusions about important factors that contribute to successful enactment of instructional reforms. Those questions will be addressed in Chapter 3, when we investigate the process of instructional reform in depth. For now, we turn to a consideration of the persons of reform and the contexts in which they work.

## PERSONS OF REFORM

In some respects, all citizens are players in the work of reform, because all citizens have the right to address educational concerns in their communities. It does not

matter that many citizens have little awareness of what is happening in schools. They elect school board officials and other legislators of their choice, who make decisions about schools and the reform thereof. Parents are persons of reform. They play a role in reform when they speak to teachers or principals about their concerns and hopes regarding instruction and what their children are (or are not) learning. Students too can be persons of reform because often it is their learning that motivates reformers' visions and plans for change. Of course, among those most directly involved in instructional reform, teachers figure prominently because their practice is the target of change. Others, too, are directly involved in the work of reforms. For this review, we will divide these major players into three categories. The division is imprecise, but persons of reform can be divided up into three categories: 1) authors of reform; 2) agents of reform; and 3) objects of reform. Please note that the categories are not mutually exclusive; individuals can (and sometimes do) function in all three roles.

#### Authors of Reform

Authors of instructional reform are those persons who have an identified agenda for changing teaching and learning. They desire to effect some change in teachers' beliefs and/or practices. The central meaning of authorship in this context refers to writing of some kind, but it extends beyond those who write reform documents. True, some authors of reform write down particular plans for change in classroom instruction. But in addition to those who write reform documents, other reform players could also be called authors of reform. Among them are scholars and critics who write about the process, purposes, and goals of education. Their authorship is not as direct as that of those who draft reform documents of various kinds. But their writings and observation create an intellectual context within which reform ideas grow and are debated (Cohen & Garet, 1976; Weiss & Cohen, 1991). A further group of authors of reform are the politicians and administrators who authorize reforms by passing legislation or adopting

reforms and policies for use in schools or classrooms. In sum, authors of reform are those persons who are most closely tied with the formulation of the reform content we discussed above. Authors of reform write, write about, and/or authorize plans for reforming teaching and learning in classrooms.

### Agents of Reform

Agents of instructional reform are those persons whose efforts are most directly involved with guiding and directing the enactment of reform ideas and practices in classrooms. They are concerned with enacting or implementing the reform that is authored and authorized by authors of reform. Their job is to get the policy enacted, implemented, put into practice. Agents of reform are sometimes teachers, but more often they are administrators or other consultants from the district, state, or federal level. Frequently, agents of reform are members of professional organizations or entrepreneurial groups who provide professional development workshops that focus on curricular supplements, curriculum series, or reform-focused pedagogical practices.

### Objects of Reform

The chief objects of instructional reform are teachers. Because reformers seek changes in what teachers do in their classrooms, teachers, their ideas, and their practices are the central targets of reform. Teachers often need to learn things about the curriculum, their students, and themselves, not to mention the reform itself, if they are to enact new practices in their classrooms. Typically, when teachers receive assistance enacting reforms, they receive it from authors of reform through reform documents, revised texts, and/or agents of reform who help guide their efforts to enact reforms.

Teachers often receive assistance from professional development workshops, so professional development workers are also objects of reform. After that, they often serve as agents of reform in their work with teachers. Administrators may likewise be both

objects and agents of reform. Administrators can significantly influence the ways reform ideas will be (or will not be) enacted in districts and schools. A host of other "targets" or "objects" of reform could be named, but, in the final analysis, the primary targets or objects of reform are teachers themselves.

Teachers are sometimes called to be both the objects and the agents of change. Cohen (1990) points out this key paradox in recent instructional reforms. In some cases, teachers are left largely to their own devices in attempting to effect changes. If they do not know how to teach in reformed ways, they will struggle to be effective agents of their own change. And calling someone an agent of change does not mean that they are committed to the changes they are being asked to enact. Teachers may not attempt to enact reforms, even if they are called (or realize they are expected to be) agents of (their own) change.

### PERSONS OF REFORM IN CONTEXT

From our brief discussion of the persons of reform, it is obvious that reform players interact with one another. Authors, agents, and objects of reform function as context for one other, and their interaction influences the ways reforms are drafted, interpreted, and enacted. For example, the authors of change hope to have an influence on how the objects of change will interpret and enact reforms. Just as surely, the ways that agents of change and objects of change have responded to prior reforms can influence what reforms are authored and authorized. Those authors of reform who fail to understand the "real world" of practice, and fail to anticipate the ways objects of reform will respond to their reform proposals, will be compromised in their efforts.

### THE CONTEXTS OF REFORM

There are other levels of context as well. Each person of reform is influenced by the educational, cultural, and ideological contexts of schools and classrooms, as well as

cultural influences of the broader society.

To gain insight into the factors that shape and influence interpretations of reform, we will consider four interrelated aspects of the context of reform. We begin with social and cultural factors that shape the ways reforms are understood and received. After that, we will explore how prior (and current) reforms influence the ways teachers understand and respond to new reforms. Then we turn to teaching practice and the school as the workplace to see how the nature and workplace of teaching shape the ways teachers teach and also respond to calls for change.

### Society as Context

One level of context that shapes the ways reforms are received is the general social and cultural context within which all education and instructional reform occurs. The values of the community and culture shape the way we all receive any proposal for change. To the extent that changes are consistent or derive from common values, persons are often more receptive than they would be if the changes contradicted or called into question those values.

Tyack & Cuban (1995), for example, claim that students, teachers, and citizens in general have a set of assumptions about what real school looks like. As patterns and assumption about schooling are formulated and reinforced over time, the grammar of schooling, just like the grammar of a language, creates boundaries of acceptable activity. Of course, not everyone conforms to the rules of grammar, but the rules influence the ways most individuals make sense of what happens in schools and how they judge schools, teachers, and reforms.

Cohen (1988) provides a prime example of how the broader social values and context shapes teachers and their reception of reform. The broader society's views of knowledge and pedagogy create incentives for teachers to continue teaching and learning in ways that align with the expectations of the broader constituencies of teaching (Tyack

& Cuban, 1995). The philosophical underpinnings of reforms and the various players of reform influences the ways ideas about teaching and instructional reforms are received (Cohen, 1988; Dow, 1991; Sarason, 1982; Sykes, 1990; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Wilson, 1990b).

### Reforms as Context

Another major aspect of reform context is the influence of rival reforms. New reforms are never merely taken on their own terms, but are inserted into contexts where myriad reforms have already been played out. As a result, all reforms must live up to (or live down) the reputation of reforms that have preceded them. In short, reform history is thick with the aftermath of efforts—both successful and failed—to improve schools. New reforms (and the reformers who would effect them) must "contend" with that history in some way.

The flow of reforms can cause reform fatigue. Teachers are consistently presented with new initiatives to "fix" what they are doing and/or to extend their abilities and success with students in the classrooms. Teachers can become jaundiced by the sheer number as well as the cyclical nature of reforms. As reforms come their way, teachers' experiences with past reforms influence the ways they respond to reforms, especially those they have "seen before." Not surprisingly, their attitude toward new initiatives is often cautious, sometimes even cynical.

Reforms do not merely function as historical context, they also figure as contemporary context. Any new reform must contend or compete with other reforms that are being played out in schools. At any moment, multiple reforms vie for attention by districts, schools, and teachers in classrooms. Instead of processing toward schools in orderly fashion, reforms often seem to gang up on schools. And that means that reforms must fight for the attention of districts, schools, and teachers (Kingdon, 1984).

Part of the challenge for reforms is getting noticed, but the competition between

reforms often transcends the question of attention. At times, the competition between reforms rises to the level of ideological tension. Simultaneous reforms are sometimes explicitly opposed, and at other times reforms push against one another in counter-productive ways. As a result, competing reforms sometimes yield philosophical as well as practical tensions for those teachers and schools that attempt to enact them. In her study, Barnes (1997) provides a nice study of the social and pedagogical turmoil that results from good-faith efforts to enact fundamentally conflicting reforms.

Policies are rarely placed strategically within a larger policy landscape in districts or schools in ways that provide teachers and administrators a sense of policy priority and curricular/pedagogical coherence (Cohen & Spillane, 1992). Teachers in schools face a blizzard of sometimes contradictory educational reforms, and rarely have much help orienting themselves to see a clear vision for their instructional life. New policies pile on top of older ones, and only rarely are they explicitly articulated with other prior (or current) ones. Policy accretion is the rule, rather than the exception, and clarity of the policy picture often remains elusive.

Not all reforms, of course, push against one another. Sometimes reforms are "add-ons" that don't disrupt the current instructional arrangements or assumptions about what it means to teach and learn in schools (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). At other times, simultaneous reforms are complementary to one another. An example would be a pair of reforms, one that reorganized an elementary by "families" or groups of K-6 teachers and another that advocated greater engagement with subject matter. The two reforms could be implemented separately, but are complementary because, *ceteris paribus*, teachers who know their students and work with them for several years are better able to engage them in study of subject matter than those who must get to know their students (and their interests/experiences) each year.

#### Teaching as Context

Teaching practice is the target of instructional reform, but it is also the most immediate context in which those reforms get played out. Instructional reforms are enacted in classrooms where teaching practice itself is enacted. In other words, reform is a process (i.e., a practice) that works on a practice. The nature of teaching influences how instructional reforms are enacted in the same way it shapes the practice those reforms aim to change.

Though schools and classrooms are admittedly marked by important differences, at this point we choose to focus on commonalities. Sarason (1971) calls these "regularities" of life in schools and classrooms. We begin with a brief reflection on the reputation and perception of teaching in the United States, and then look at the regularities of life in American schools. We will consider how teachers are socialized into teaching and are shaped and influenced by the work they do. We will then elaborate some of the challenges teachers face in classrooms and how teachers often accommodate and adjust to the demands of classroom life. In short, we will look at common perceptions of teaching, investigate the ways teaching shapes those who teach, and the ways that teachers shape teaching practice.

### *Familiarity and Contempt*

The appraisals of teaching in the U.S. are equivocal. As Dan Lortie (1975) says, "[Teaching] is honored and disdained, praised as 'dedicated service' and lampooned as 'easy work'" (p. 10). Teaching is valued by many in this culture. Many former students recall fondly the good teachers they have had, and some even choose to become teachers to serve others as they have been served. However, the view that teaching is a vocation of honor and service contrasts with a prevalent cultural impression that views teaching as easy work. To underscore the point, consider this bit of sage advice: "If you can, do; if you can't, teach; if you can't teach, teach teachers."

Few professions are as visible and familiar as teaching. Indeed, almost everyone

sits for years in classrooms observing teachers at work. Teachers' work is so familiar to kids that they can successfully emulate teachers when they play school in the dog-days of summer. On this point, Lortie (1975) argues that the lesson of this "apprenticeship of observation" is "intuitive and imitative rather than explicit and analytical" (p. 62). Future teachers observe what teachers do, but do not know why they do it.

Though familiarity contributes to the perception that teaching is easy work, appearances are deceiving. Teaching well is hard work. Scholars often focus on the uncertainties of teaching (Cohen, 1988; Elbow, 1986; Floden & Clark, 1987; Jackson, 1986; Jackson, 1968; Lortie, 1975) or the dilemmas of teaching practice (Ball, 1990; Lampert, 1985; Rosenholtz, 1989). Some even call it an "impossible" profession (Cohen, 1988; Lipsky, 1980; Sarason, 1982; Shulman, 1983).

### *Teaching Regularities*

To discover what makes teaching hard work, we turn to an investigation of life in schools. Tyack & Cuban (1995) describe what they call the "grammar of schooling" that includes the typical arrangements of life in schools. Among the features of the grammar of schooling are age-graded classrooms, the discrete treatment of subject matter (in departments at the H.S. level), a focus on grading, report cards, and generating credits (by Carnegie Units) at the high school level.

The grammar of schooling developed as it did because these features were considered effective and efficient in processing the multitudes of students who were in the schools.

Inside the schools, the grammar of schooling offered a standardized way to process large numbers of people. The grammar was easily replicable. The institutional design of graded schools produced a cookie-cutter sameness. (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 107)

As time passed, schools developed in particular ways that shaped expectations of what schools do (and should) look like. Tyack & Cuban (1995) point to the grammar of schooling to explain why reforms were often ineffective. They argue that the extant

structure of schools triumphed over the prospective structures in the reforms, and effectively muted various proposals for change.

The experience prospective teachers have as students begins early to shape their perceptions of what school is like, what teaching is, and how the work is done. During their time in schools, prospective teachers gain a sense of what the work is like, but "teachers-to-be underestimate the difficulties involved . . . " (Lortie, 1975, p. 65). Their understanding is limited by what they can see of teaching from the outside. They have little sense as students of what teachers must consider as they teach.

### Workplace as Context

Prospective teachers' experiences as students play an important role in shaping their conceptions of teaching. Their studies as undergraduates are also significant, because they begin to think more analytically about the practice of teaching in terms of subject matter knowledge, psychology, and pedagogy. But by far the most important factor in shaping their views of teaching is the time they spend in classrooms as "student teachers" and during their first years as teachers (Lortie, 1975).

In that respect, schools are like other workplaces. Schools influence the nature of teaching as well as the teachers themselves. Lortie says that "Occupations shape people" (Lortie, 1975, p. 55). Years earlier, the sociologist Willard Waller (1932/1970b) claimed that "teaching form[s] them" (p. 287). The question, then, is how teaching shapes teachers and what form it gives them.

Workplaces constrain definitions of acceptable and approved practices, and make particular resources available to workers there. In these ways, workplaces help shape what "good practice" means. Michael Lipsky (1980) puts the case well when he states:

. . . the most powerful agent in professional socialization is the work setting . . . . The education of new recruits as to what is acceptable, what is appropriate, and what will enhance one's career is an extremely powerful determinant of future professional behavior. (p. 204)

Just like other workplaces, the ways schools are arranged and operate influence how new

teachers learn their jobs. To understand how this process works, we will focus on one central characteristic of schools, their cellular structure, to see how it influences teachers and shapes what happens inside classrooms.

### *Cellular Structure of Schools*

Schools are almost universally described as having a cellular structure (Cuban, 1984; Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1982). Walk into almost any school, and you will find people arranged in predictable ways. School buildings typically have many separate rooms with a teacher and 30 or so students inside. Sometimes there will be fewer children, sometimes more. Occasionally, there will be more than one adult in the room. For the most part, however, schools are made up of classrooms in which one adult teaches a large group of children.

This structure sets up patterns of interaction among those who work and study in schools. It means, for the most part, that teachers work alone. That is to say they do the bulk of their work in their classrooms without direct involvement from other adults (Dreeben, 1970; Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1966). Though they "work with" others, the others with whom they work are students rather than colleagues.

This does not mean that teachers do not talk with or learn from one another. But the ways teachers talk about what they have learned from other teachers reveals an important insight into the way teachers think about their work. Their talk reveals a proprietary view of teaching practice. Teachers avoid giving the impression that they are imitating what their peers are doing. Instead, "[t]heir talk underlines the idea of *adapting* others' practices to their personal style and situations" (Lortie, 1975, p. 77). Though teachers talk and learn from one another, they are careful to place their personal stamp on practices and ideas they glean from others.

Teachers typically view suggestions through the grid of their personal experiences and interests, rather than viewing them against a broader set of principles of instruction.

Talk about teaching is shaped more by personal experiences and perspectives than on collective judgments about what works. Conversation among teachers rarely explores the ideas that support particular practices and most often hovers at the level of sharing "tricks of the trade" (Lortie, 1975). Lortie (1975) found that teacher practice, like the talk about practice, was marked by "... pragmatism of a highly personal sort. The practice must work 'for me,' and the teacher is the judge of what works" (Lortie, 1975, p. 78). All this means that teaching is an individual and personal skill rather than a collective and professional one.

### *Learning to Teach Alone*

The pattern of isolation and independence begins early. When they begin teaching, teachers are left on their own to either "sink or swim" (Lortie, 1975). As a result, they learn how to teach *on their own*, with little help from others. And they learn to teach *independently*, isolated from their peers. Lortie describes the neophyte's situation this way:

As with Defoe's hero [Robinson Crusoe], the beginning teacher may find that prior experience supplies him with some alternatives for action, but his crucial learning comes from his personal errors; he fits together specific solutions and specific problems *into some kind of whole* and at times finds leeway for the expression of personal tastes. Working largely alone, he cannot make the specifics of his working knowledge base explicit, nor need he, as his victories are private. (Lortie, 1966, quoted in Dreeben, 1970, p. 112, emphasis Dreeben's)

It would seem then that schools shape teachers primarily by *not* shaping them. Instead, teachers shape themselves. They develop personalized approaches to teaching that work for them and their students.<sup>19</sup> Lortie (1975) concludes that "socialization into teaching is largely *self-socialization*; one's personal predispositions are not only relevant but, in fact,

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<sup>19</sup> Highlighting teacher agency is not intended to minimize or deny student agency. Teachers must obviously contend with thirty or so other actors hour by hour, but how they do so—the choices they make—will determine whether they sink or swim as they learn to teach. Note that if a teacher survives sink-or-swim socialization, we can infer little about the quality of her instruction. She may have won

stand at the core of becoming a teacher" (Lortie, 1975, p. 79, emphasis in original).<sup>20</sup> The upshot is that schools do not help teachers *conform* to professional expectations so much as *confirm* them in their prior assumptions and beliefs about what it means to teach.

### *Classroom Effects*

Teachers' typical socialization requires that they look to their past to craft their current practice, and the effect is that the vast majority of teachers teach as they were taught (Cuban, 1984; Lortie, 1975). As a result, classroom teaching more often resembles variations on teacher-centered themes than new pedagogical compositions. Most classrooms are predominantly teacher-centered, even though most prospective teachers learn more "cooperative," student-centered methods in their pre-service coursework. The socialization into teaching helps us understand why this is the case. Teachers draw on their prior experiences when they face challenges in the classroom, and because most students learned in teacher-centered classrooms, they build on those experiences to establish their own patterns of practice.

The isolation that results from the cellular structure of schools does afford teachers great flexibility. Teachers enjoy great latitude in their separated classrooms. As a result, isolation can liberate teachers to teach in innovative ways, if they choose. It can also free teachers to do very little behind their classroom doors.

Doing as they like, [teachers] may greatly benefit students. Indeed, some teachers privately create the most remarkable environments . . . but most do not. (McDonald, 1996, p. 94)

The cellular structure allows teachers to do what they will. In that respect, the cellular structure is an equal opportunity architecture. It allows, even if it does not explicitly

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compliance from her students by making things very easy for them (McNeil, 1986; Sedlak et al., 1986; Powell, et al., 1985).

<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that personal dispositions in teaching are salient for experienced teachers as well. The cellular structure of schools shapes the nature of teaching, and ensures that teachers think

support, ambitious, traditional, and mediocre practices.

Some schools, it is true, differ from the typical cellular, isolating structure. They provide more potent socialization for new teachers, in which teachers are mentored and taught to collaborate with other teachers as they plan and teach in their classrooms. The strong support network in those schools stands in sharp contrast with the isolation experienced by the majority of teachers in schools.<sup>21</sup>

The teaching and learning in most schools is a product of generations of teachers who have learned and taught in isolated classrooms. As we have shown, the cellular structure of teaching has not just shaped the way teachers learn their job, it also shapes teaching practice. As Lortie (1975) and others have said, teachers have a highly personal pragmatic approach to what they do in the classroom. To further explore the question, we turn to an investigation of teaching as it is commonly practiced in American schools, with an eye to understanding the nature of the practice of teaching.

## THE NATURE OF TEACHING

Reforms that entail changes to the nature of teaching or the "grammar of school" face greater challenges than those reforms that are consistent with the current grammar of schooling. As we seek to understand the domain of instructional reform, it is important to further develop our understanding of the grammar of schooling. One way to talk about that is to develop an understanding of the challenges teachers face that are bound up with the nature of teaching in American schools. To further understand the context in which new reforms are sent and interpreted, we investigate the nature of teaching as it has

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independently about what they will do there. As a result, classrooms, doors, and the teaching that goes on behind them are all proprietary. Each belongs to the teacher and each bears her mark.

<sup>21</sup> A parallel movement has occurred in teacher education programs. Some programs have recognized the weakness of the typical process of teacher socialization in schools. And in order to improve the depth and character of the experiences of new teachers, some colleges and universities have developed fifth year programs. These programs often feature year-long internships that provide support to the future teachers as they struggle to learn how to teach in their own classrooms (Holmes Group, 1990b).

developed within the isolated structure of the typical American school.

### Overriding Problem of Control

Teachers typically teach large groups of children, and one of their major challenges is control (Cusick, 1973, 1992; Labaree, 1999; Lortie, 1975; McNeil, 1986; Sarason, 1982; Waller, 1932/1961). Not surprisingly, students don't always (or even often) consider it their job to learn what teachers are teaching them. Instead, as Waller wryly notes, their job is to distract or derail the teacher from doing hers. Even if Waller overstates the case, the problem he describes is real. Teachers face a large clientele that is frequently reluctant to be in class, and often more reluctant to learn.

The personal qualities enabling teachers to withstand the demands of classroom life have never been adequately described. But among those qualities is surely the ability to tolerate the enormous amount of ambiguity, unpredictability, and occasional chaos created each hour by 25 or 30 not-so-willing learners. (Jackson, 1968, p. 149)

Teachers have to figure out ways to cope with their reluctant learners, and their efforts to manage classroom life highlight the role coercion plays in school classrooms. Typically, classrooms are marked by two different types of coercion (Labaree, 1999). First, there is the coercion of compulsory attendance. The law tells students they must attend school (usually to the age of 16), and so do most parents. Regardless of personal interest in learning, then, students are required to attend school. Of course, some enjoy school. A few enjoy it because they love to learn, but many enjoy school because that is where their friends are (Labaree, 1999).

Second, teachers employ coercion to deal with the classroom effects of compulsory attendance. Though learning is the primary reason why students are required to be in school, learning is rarely their primary reason for being there. Though some students are consistently interested in learning, others are more fickle, and many are not interested in learning at all (Cusick, 1983; Labaree, 1997, 1999; MacLeod, 1987; Powell, et al., 1985; Sedlak et al., 1986; Willis, 1981).

As a result, every teacher must encourage, cajole, or entice students to behave and, whenever possible, to learn. To do so, teachers employ sanctions of diverse kinds to foster—for they cannot actually force—student engagement with subject matter. And this coercion is present even in the best classrooms. All teachers employ forms of coercion, whether their approach is blatant or subtle. Coercion functions to keep students in school and to increase the likelihood that they will learn things while they are there. Teachers may use diverse methods, but whatever they do, they must maintain control.

Describing classrooms with words like *power*, *control*, and *coercion* makes them sound more like battlegrounds than cooperative contexts for learning. As unsavory as the impression may be, teachers are required to maintain a modicum of control, even if they never use heavy-handed techniques. Power, control, and coercion are present in classrooms everywhere. Cusick states the case succinctly: "[Control] never goes away. Everything students and teachers do together centers around it" (Cusick, 1992, p. 69).

### Uncertainties of Teaching

Though student resistance presents teachers with a major challenge, student reluctance is not what makes teaching difficult. Student reluctance simply exacerbates an already complicated practice. Even in classrooms with motivated students, teaching is complicated, uncertain work. And, just as they learned to teach, most teachers learn to cope with the challenges of teaching by trial and error.

As teachers gain experience, they are often able to find approaches that work for them. But strategies that "work" are not easily transported to other contexts. Saying that a strategy works simply means that it *works better* than some alternative in *this* situation, with *these* students, in *this* class, on *this* particular day, for *this* particular purpose. Some strategies have wide application, but none "work" in every circumstance. As Labaree puts it:

... there is always a *ceteris paribus* clause hovering over any instructional prescription: this works better than that, if everything is equal. In other words, it

all depends . . . (Labaree, 1999, p. 12).

There is no tidy set of rules or plug-in practices tailor-made for the myriad challenges of classroom life. This makes planning difficult, and highlights the need for flexibility in teaching.

Another challenge of classroom teaching is that the signs of successful teaching and learning are faint and uncertain. As a result, teachers often feel profound self-doubt about the efficacy of their work (Lortie, 1975). They are often frustrated because their hopes are high while the proofs of their success are fleeting and doubtful. The softness and imprecision of the technology of teaching contribute to a sense of chronic uncertainty about the efficacy of their teaching.

Teachers also experience moments of acute uncertainty. Teachers hold a complicated mix of social and academic goals and priorities for their students, which are complicated by the diversity of the students themselves. Teaching well is more than "covering the material." Good teachers take into account the social and academic differences of their students, the social dynamics of their classrooms, as well as short and long term academic goals. Teachers rarely have time to reflect on how best to respond to the mix of priorities they hold and the circumstances they face, but they must do so nonetheless. They contend, moment-by-moment, with the contingencies and uncertainties of classroom life.

The challenges within the classrooms are compounded by factors that influence classrooms from outside. Teaching is complicated by difficulties and troubles that extend from the home to the school, and back again. Students, for example, may have serious (and reasonable) doubts about the value of an education (Labaree, 1999; MacLeod, 1987; Willis, 1981). Add to this the various social circumstances that influence the ways all students, especially "at-risk" ones, respond to school and teachers in them. Samuel Freedman (1990) offers a nice portrait of one teacher's struggle to balance her multiple commitments and care about students with her need for personal space. In his portrait we

see the overwhelming nature of the demands teaching (and the children in schools) can place on teachers.

The uncertainties and challenges we have noted hold even when teaching one student or a small group. Obviously, the complexity and uncertainty is multiplied when there are 30 children in the room. This added complexity also creates ethical issues for teachers. Robert Dreeben (1970) points to the logistical and ethical tensions involved in teaching groups of students:

Because the classroom is an aggregation of pupils, the teacher is charged with responsibilities to instruct and maintain control over them *both individually and collectively*. In this respect, teachers have much in common with clergymen and jail keepers. All preside over congregations whose members have diverse needs and interests which cannot find the same degree of expression that is possible when practitioners take clients one at a time. The teacher must serve some individual interests, but he cannot do so to the extent that he jeopardizes his hold over the members collectively by treating individuals as special privileged cases and thus raising questions of inequity . . . (Dreeben, 1970, pp. 52-53, emphasis in original)

Teachers must teach all students in their classrooms, not just those who are interested or in whom the teachers are interested. Teaching them all means attending to students both individually and collectively. The proper balance between attending to the needs of the group and to needs of individual students is not easily struck.

Magdalene Lampert (1985) provides a good example of the tensions she herself faced when she attempted to balance competing commitments in her classroom. Lampert holds multiple commitments for herself that create dilemmas in her classroom. In the instance she describes, she reveals her commitment to maintaining control among the boys in her elementary classroom so that math learning can occur. The boys, not surprisingly, had a hard time paying attention when Lampert was on the other (girls') side of the room.

Lampert's commitment to maintaining the focus on mathematics suggested she stay on the boys' side of the classroom. However, that commitment was in tension with her commitment to promote girls' interest in mathematics. Staying on the boys' side of the room made it hard for her to help the girls excel in mathematics. Because she felt

unable (and was unwilling) to resolve the tension by embracing one commitment as preeminent, she was forced to manage the dilemma.

Many other dilemmas of practice are like the one Lampert relates. They elude simple, clear answers, and require teachers to manage or cope. Though scholars and teachers may look to research to find ways to overcome or eliminate the dilemmas of teaching, Lampert is dubious:

The work of managing dilemmas . . . requires admitting some essential limitations on our control over human problems. It suggests that some conflicts cannot be resolved and that the challenge is to find ways to keep them from erupting into more disruptive confrontations. (Lampert, 1985, p. 193)

There is simply no set of propositions or principles that could relieve teachers, like Lampert, of the pressure to balance the many competing commitments they hold for themselves and their students as they teach. There is rarely—if ever—only one value or commitment in the mix, and even more rarely a single best choice for how to proceed (Lampert, 1985; Sykes, 1995). Dilemmas like Lampert's underscore the uncertainty of teaching and help explain the self-doubt teachers often experience as they teach.

### Coping with the Impossible

Despite the many uncertainties and the "impossibility" of teaching practice, teachers must respond. They must do something. They must contend with the predictable dilemmas and uncertainties as well as challenges that surface in the mix of classroom life. They must respond even though they typically have little or no opportunity to plan how to respond. This is because teachers must act in the continuous stream of classroom life. They cannot call time-out when things get too complicated or uncertain. Robert Connell (1985) sums up the situation nicely:

For all the research and talk about schools, getting people to learn remains something of a mystery. It is certainly an extraordinarily complex business, an interplay of intellectual, emotional, and social processes so intricate that it virtually defies analysis. A great deal of what teachers actually do in their time on the classroom floor is based on intuitive knowledge and instant reactions, not on formal plans. (Connell, 1985, pp. 126-127)

That is not to say that teachers do not plan (or need to plan) or that they cannot do different things in a minute or next week or next year. Teachers can and do plan what they will do as they teach. However, if planning can help guide instruction, even the best teacher cannot fully anticipate what the other 30 people in the classroom will do. As a result, teachers must continuously respond to the exigencies of classroom life as they strive to meet their pedagogical goals and commitments.

Teachers respond to the complex mix of social and academic life in classrooms in personalized ways. They take actions that "fit" them. Teachers, beginners and veterans alike, respond to the impossible complexity of teaching by establishing personal styles that help them cope with the demands of the classroom. Dreeben (1970) puts the challenge this way:

[The teacher] lacks . . . highly developed technology . . . and he must therefore fall back upon resources of a highly personal kind such as "personality," charisma, and reputation, which are difficult to define and to master as reliable skills of the trade. (Dreeben, 1970, p. 81)

The problem is not simply that the current technology of teaching is inadequate. No technology could ever eliminate the need for teacher judgments in response to the exigencies of classroom life because they are inevitable features of social life in classrooms. And, though making judgments may get easier with time, the challenges in classrooms are new every morning.

Teachers cope with these complexities by drawing on their own experiences, insights, and intuition. They also benefit from others' experience and insights, but their methods of coping are shaped by the "tools" of their personalities. Similar to the way they were socialized into the job, teachers craft pedagogical solutions to the uncertainties of teaching on their own, in personally distinctive ways. Teachers, in short, figure out what works for them.

That does not mean that teaching is entirely idiosyncratic. Experience makes a difference, and the wisdom of experience is accumulated into what is sometimes called the craft knowledge of teaching (Tom, 1984). And more recently, efforts have been

made to research and document the "knowledge-base of teaching," to include the knowledge that experienced teachers use as they plan and teach. However, even the most exhaustive knowledge base is not self-executing. Teachers still have to integrate the things they have learned from their own experience with what they have learned from others and from the discourse of the profession. Some of this work of integration can be done with others, but much of it must be done alone. Often it must be done "on-the-fly," as teachers teach. Though craft knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge can provide important resources to teachers, they cannot eliminate the contingent nature of life in classrooms, where teachers must continually create practices that work for them.

### PERSONAL SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS OF PRACTICE

Personal ways of handling the uncertainties of teaching are not merely byproducts of the current structure of schools or the typical socialization of teachers. They are the natural consequence of the relational dynamics of classroom life. Teachers in classrooms inevitably engage in social intercourse with their students. And they always establish patterns and modes of interacting with their students as they respond to the exigencies of classroom life. Drawing on prior experiences and things they have learned, teachers craft practices that work for them and for their students.

One way teachers manage life in their classrooms is by establishing relationships with their students. Teachers establish several levels of relationship with their students. One level of relationship is organizational, and concerns the way power will be played out in the classroom. These relationships are almost legal or constitutional in nature, and are often established through a tacit process of "bargaining" or "negotiation" about the way classrooms will run (Cohen, 1985; Cusick, 1983; Powell, Farrar, & McNeil, 1986; Sedlak, et al., 1986). Teachers and students bargain with each other to achieve a satisfactory level of student effort and engagement with subject matter. Ultimately, such student-teacher negotiations result in arrangements that are mutually acceptable, though it

might be more accurate to say they settle on terms that are least objectionable.

In practice, teachers often win student compliance by lowering expectations (Cusick, 1983; McNeil, 1986; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985; Sedlak, et al., 1986). As a result, negotiations in many classrooms have the effect of simplifying life for students and teachers, as both opt for less engagement with subject matter rather than more. Less frequently, other bargains are struck, in which teachers and students mutually agree that they will engage deeply in subject matter. Either way, constitutional classroom arrangements of this kind shape what occurs (and can occur) inside.

A second level of relationship between teachers and students is social or emotional in nature. Teachers inevitably form social relationships with their students because they inhabit a common space. Relational connections between teachers and students can help make life in classrooms more pleasant and less adversarial. In this respect, emotional connections between teachers and students can be of strategic benefit for teachers. David Labaree (1999), for example, argues that the emotional bonds teachers create with their students help them manage the problems of control and uncertainty in their classrooms.

An additional benefit of emotional connections teachers establish with students is the information they provide about students as persons. Partly through relationships they establish with students, teachers learn their interests and the ways they understand the social and material world. The insights teachers gain about their students can sometimes help them approach subject matter in ways that "connect" with students.

Emotional bonds also provide teachers leverage with students to get them engaged with subject matter (Waller, 1932/1961). Students are more likely to pursue ideas when someone they care about is asking them to do so. The goal of these connections, as Labaree puts it, is to "convert emotional engagement with the teacher into cognitive engagement with the curriculum" (Labaree, 1999, p. 7).

All teachers establish an atmosphere or environment for learning in their

classrooms, and the ways they do so vary as much as their personalities. Classrooms and the activities conducted in them bear the personal marks of the teachers who are their architects (Hansen, 1995).<sup>22</sup> There is no single best way to build these connections or to create the "right" atmosphere. But regardless of the approach they take, most successful teachers find a way to make relational connections with their students (Hansen, 1995; Labaree, 1999).<sup>23</sup>

## REWARDS IN TEACHING

Relationships teachers establish with students are not just important because they help things run smoothly and can make teaching more effective.<sup>24</sup> Relationships are important for the teacher at the personal level as well. They help foster greater student engagement and student success. And that matters to teachers, because student success is intimately tied to teachers' job satisfaction. Lortie (1975) found that 76.5% of teachers declared that "psychic rewards" gave them the most job satisfaction. Of these, far and away the most common (86.1%) was "knowing that I have 'reached' students and they have learned" (Lortie, 1975, p. 105). Some ten years later, the percentage of teachers nominating "psychic rewards" remained very high at 70% (Kottkamp, Provenzo, & Cohn, 1986, p. 565).

Student learning signals a "connection" between the teachers and student at both personal and intellectual levels. When this happens, when they "reach students," teachers

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<sup>22</sup> To say teachers are the architects does not mean that they dictate the relationship or atmosphere. But teachers do have the dominant role in the classroom. The power relationships between teachers and students are not, or at least should not be, equal. Having said that, students will affect the relationships and atmospheres the teachers create. Teachers establish different atmospheres in classrooms that depend upon a great many variables, including, of course, the cohort of students themselves.

<sup>23</sup> Labaree (1999) offers a nice example of a teacher's efforts to craft her persona and shape the atmosphere in her classroom that Freedman (1990) calls "The Tough Cookie."

<sup>24</sup> I am not saying that this is the most important aspect of teaching effectiveness. Clearly some teachers can establish strong relationships with their students without engaging them with subject matter. Hawkins

get excited. And their excitement goes soul-deep. Connell (1985) provides a glimpse of what a good day is like, and what happens to teachers emotionally when they reach students:

And when you get it right, when it does work really well, it is a most exhilarating experience. People who have not taught can have little idea of what it is like to have *taught well*, to be buoyed up and swept along by the response of students who are really learning. (Connell, 1985, pp. 126-127, emphasis in original)

That kind of positive experience encourages teachers and serves as an incentive to continue teaching day to day.<sup>25</sup>

Regrettably, psychic rewards of this kind are relatively rare. Many teachers long for a sense that they are making a difference, and cling to evidence of success where they can find it. Though teachers typically aim at reaching *all* students, they are often forced to settle for lesser accomplishments (Lortie, 1975). Instead of entire classrooms, teachers' reports of success usually involve one student or a small group of students:

. . . the occasions associated with pride, *in all but one instance*, involved a single student or a small number of students . . . Although their stated ideals are universalistic, Five Towns teachers feel pride at results which fall below universalistic standards. (Lortie, 1975, pp. 131-132, emphasis in original)

From this perspective, we can see why the connections teachers establish with their students would be so important. They provide the soil in which the all-too-rare psychic rewards of teaching can grow.

## TEACHER PERSONALISM

Our discussion of personal approaches to teaching and the value of emotional relationships with students is reminiscent of what Anthony Bryk (1988) calls "teacher personalism" (p. 275). In his "Musings on the Moral Life of Schools," he describes ways that teachers connect with their students by drawing on their personal resources. After

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(1974) describes the vacuum that results when there is no "it" for students and teachers to investigate together.

all, teachers cannot reach students without connecting with them. "Good teaching," he writes, "is also an intensely personal activity. Teachers draw on their own interests, talents, and personalities to engage and teach their students . . . ." (Bryk, 1988, p. 275). Bryk goes on to show how teacher personalism recaptures important relational and moral aspects of teaching that have sometimes been downplayed in discussions of the profession of teaching. He laments that the focus on professionalization has at times deflected attention from the personal and relational aspects of teaching.<sup>26</sup> With a desire to get back to historic understandings of teaching, Bryk (1988), after Nel Noddings (1988), calls for a return to "An Ethic of Caring."

The view of teaching as caring assumes that altruistic love (*agape*) is central to the work and mission of teaching. When teacher personalism is evident, when love is a part of the teaching-learning experience, Bryk argues, the benefits accrue to teacher and student alike:

Teacher personalism vitalizes the concept of the teacher as an agent of personal transformation and not just a subject matter specialist. It directs attention toward the formation of school environments that offer teachers the opportunities for the psychic rewards necessary to sustain their practice . . . .

We can fill our schools with posters exhorting positive behavior, present media celebrities on television offering testimony about how we should live, add courses of instruction to the personal development curriculum and specialists to the school staff to help students after the fact, but the most powerful integrative force is likely to remain the sustained personal encounter of student with teacher. It is a teacher's sense of *agape* that can unite the academic and moral aims of education and engage students in an education of intellect and will. (Bryk, 1988, pp. 278-279)

Teacher personalism helps teachers and students by connecting students with their teachers, and inspiring teachers with a love for their students that helps animate and

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<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, when frustrations are more frequent than these psychic rewards, teachers become disaffected (Rosenholtz, 1989).

<sup>26</sup> One important note in this context concerns the public nature of teaching. Though teaching is "personal," it is not private. Teaching is public work carried out in personal ways. Even though teachers can (and often do) close their doors to adult passers-by, a classroom full of observers remains. When parents ask their children what they did in school, students are free to respond to the questions, even if they often do so with little more than a shrug. The point is that teaching is public work open to public scrutiny, even if it is carried out by persons who adjust to the demands of classrooms in personal ways.

inform their practice.

These calls for more love in teaching and greater teacher personalism parallel other work that highlights the emotional aspects of good teaching. "Good teaching," Andrew Hargreaves (1997) claims, "is not just a matter of being efficient, developing competence, mastering technique, and possessing the right kind of knowledge. Good teaching also involves emotional work" (p. 12). Part of the emotional work of teaching serves teachers by parlaying student-teacher relationships into productive engagement with subject matter. Perhaps an even larger part of the emotional work of teaching is bound up with teachers' care for their students.

The emotional work of teaching is demanding (Connell, 1985; Freedman, 1990). It is also risky, because it makes teachers (and students) vulnerable. Caring for students and caring about doing well places the teacher in a position of dependence on others for the sense of satisfaction in her work:

[Care] can lead to over-involvement. It can lock teachers in to situations they might be better out of, attempts they might be better off not making. It can make *failure* of the teaching effort a personally devastating event. (Connell, 1985, p. 121, emphasis in original)

Because of the challenges teachers face, they often need strong social and emotional support from their colleagues as well as family and friends. In his discussion of teacher personalism, Bryk (1988) underscores the personal risks that teachers take when they invest themselves heavily in their work:

Good teaching is also an intensely personal activity. Teachers draw on their own interests, talents, and personalities to engage and teach their students. This high level of personalism, however, requires an openness of teachers that can leave them vulnerable to criticism by students, parents, and others outside the school. This is another reason why teachers need support from their colleagues to sustain themselves. (Bryk, 1988, pp. 275-276)

When teachers choose to take the risks that Connell (1985) and Bryk (1988) describe, they manifest some of the characteristics Hansen (1995) attributes to those who have the "call to teach," or those who have the vocation of teaching.

## THE CALL TO TEACH

All of the things we have been talking about—teacher personalism, the role of care and love in teaching, and the challenges and uncertainties of teaching—are integral parts of what David Hansen (1995) calls the *vocation of teaching*. In his study of four teachers, Hansen found that the age-old concept of "vocation" helped him make sense of what he observed and heard:

The emotions the job triggers, the involvement in students' lives, the daily successes and failures, seem to call forth [the language of vocation]. The language of "occupation" or "job" by itself will not suffice. That occupational language cannot capture the deeply personal aspects of the work to which these teachers so abundantly attest. Nor can it satisfactorily convey the importance of the person who occupies the role of teacher. (Hansen, 1995, pp. 114, 115)

In making his case for viewing teaching as a vocation, Hansen offers five dimensions of vocation that shaped his understanding of the four teachers he studied. Here are brief descriptions of the five dimensions of vocation that Hansen nominates, and the way he connects them with the teaching he observed:<sup>27</sup>

*Public Service and Personal Fulfillment*—teaching sits at the crossroads of these two purposes. Teachers feel a sense of responsibility to students, parents, the schools, and "society." They also seek a sense of personal fulfillment in their work. They are, in this sense, not "in it for themselves." Surely, they seek a way to pay their bills, but that is not what motivates teachers who see teaching as a vocation. Teachers seek to meet social goals, and gratefully receive the intrinsic rewards their efforts return. "[Teachers] act as if teaching is more a way of life than a task that calls on only minimal aspects of the person they are" (Hansen, 1995, p. 116).

*Being an Architect*—teachers do not merely "do" a job. In many respects, they

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<sup>27</sup> The teachers Hansen observed are good teachers. His description of vocation is helpful to understand what they did and why they did it. There are countless teachers who hold much lower expectations for themselves, and therefore these dimensions of the vocation of teaching may not apply to all teachers

function as architects of what happens. They imaginatively connect students with subject matter in distinctive ways in a hospitable environment for learning. "[Teachers] *inhabit* the role of teacher to the extent that each gives it . . . a distinctive personal stamp" (Hansen, 1995, p. 116, emphasis in original).

*Attention to Detail*—teachers must attend to myriad small details in the daily life of schools. These details are bureaucratic as well as instructional. Teachers attend to the demands of preparation and grading, even if they do not like doing either. The work demands close attention to the interests, dispositions, and understanding of the students they teach. The "drudgery" of teaching is one chief mark of a vocation. One works hard for lofty purposes. The vocation calls one to this commitment and effort, to this level of attention to the details of the work and to their students. " . . . they appear alert to even the most subtle of their students' actions, while also acknowledging how much they fail to notice given the sheer number of young people they must teach" (Hansen, 1995, p. 116).

*Uncertainty and Doubt*—teachers, as we have seen, cannot clearly see their influence on student learning. They also encounter the sorts of uncertainty and the many dilemmas inherent to the practice we have already noted. Teachers, Hansen notes, worry about the "adequacy and warrant for [their] judgments, given the fact that they influence so directly the fate of individual students" (1995, p. 122).

*The Intellectual and Moral*—the dilemmas and competing commitments teachers face point to the intellectual and moral implications of teaching. Hansen noted the ways in which " . . . repeatedly their work calls on their moral judgment and their moral strength. Time and again, it draws on the very core of their character as persons" (Hansen, 1995, p. 123). It is impossible in practice, Hansen argues, to separate the intellectual and moral aspects of teaching:

. . . the claim that one is "only" teaching good thinking or good understanding of subject matter presumes a moral conviction in its own right, namely that a

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equally well. I list these dimensions of vocation because they provide a nice synopsis of the challenges of teaching I have been discussing in this section.

person's life will be *better* as a result of that teaching—else why engage in it? In brief, the issue is not either/or: that teaching is an intellectual act *or* a moral enterprise. To conceive teaching without encompassing both dimensions is to truncate it beyond recognition. (Hansen, 1995, p. 123, emphasis in original)

Hansen (1995) does not claim that all teachers do (or even should) think of themselves as having a vocation. His work centered on studies of four teachers, but his conclusions help us make sense of the demands of teaching we have noted. It also helps us make sense of those persons who choose--or, in Hansen's terms, are *called*--to teach.

The studies of teaching we have surveyed demonstrate the essentially personal nature of teaching. Even if some teachers would never view their work as a "vocation," their work is inevitably and profoundly tied to their identity as persons. Teaching is not simply a job one does. Teaching is a way of being in the world. So who teachers are as persons fundamentally influences what they care about, what they think, and how they live as teachers in their classrooms.

## SUMMARY

In our investigation of the content, persons, and contexts of reform as well as the nature of teaching, several themes have emerged. First, instructional reform is a normative enterprise, driven by assumptions and values of the authors of reform. It is intentional and aims at improving teaching and learning in schools.

Second, some reforms conform to the "grammar of school" and others do not. Reforms that challenge the structures and assumptions of schooling as we have come to know schooling, those that aim at deep, fundamental change to teaching and learning, struggle in ways that surface reforms do not.

Third, there are three basic categories of persons of reform: authors, agents, and objects of reform. Authors are those who formulate and/or authorize reforms. Agents are those who work for the enactment of reforms, and objects of reforms are those who are the "reformees," those the reformers are hoping will be changed as a result of the particular reform.

Fourth, the culture of most schools is cellular, which often means that teachers are left on their own to teach themselves how to teach. As a result, they learn to teach more by default than by design. They often teach as they were taught, though they often individualize their practice in ways that fit their personalities.

Fifth, we noted the great difficulty of teaching well. Teaching, we found, is an "impossible profession" that demands ongoing spontaneous teacher judgments to meet the exigencies of classroom life.

Sixth, teachers maintain classroom control and pursue engagement with academic subjects by establishing relationships with their students. Those relationships foster smooth running classrooms, facilitate engagement with subject matter, and increase the chances that students will learn what they are teaching.

Seventh, relationships help teachers create classroom environments that increase the likelihood that students will learn. Student learning, in turn, increases the incidence of the psychic rewards teachers experience in teaching.

Eighth, given the profound challenges of teaching and the emotional connections teachers establish with their students, teaching can rightly be considered a vocation—a calling—filled as it is with value, hardship, and purpose.

Ninth, we noted that teaching in schools, like all teaching, is intimately bound up with the person of the teacher. Teaching is, in other words, a way of being in the world. Teaching is not merely what one does, but who one is as a person.

Finally, all of this suggests that teachers will respond to reforms in ways that parallel the ways they learned to teach, and that means in personally distinctive ways. Teachers experience reforms as historical beings, situated in particular cultures. Their history and their values are bound to influence the ways they understand and respond to calls for change. To gain a sense of how reformers seek to effect changes in classrooms, and how teachers respond to those calls for change, we now turn our attention to the process of instructional reform.

## Chapter 3

### The Process of Instructional Reform

In this chapter, we continue describing the domain of instructional reform, which we began in Chapter 2. Here we focus on the process of instructional reform. We take as our starting point common divisions for the stages of reform. Paul Berman & Milbrey McLaughlin (1978), for example, offer a three stage model: *initiation*, *implementation*, and *continuation*. Others (e.g., Fullan, 1991) include a prior stage we will call *problem identification*.<sup>28</sup>

#### PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

As we stated in Chapter 2, reforms are typically targeted at problems with the intent of making improvements of some kind. For that reason, reforms are often derivative of problems. They are drafted, promulgated, adopted, and implemented to remedy particular problems or to make specific improvements. Because reforms are often adopted in response to problems, the first step in the process of reform is often problem identification.

Though it is not obvious why some social conditions get identified as problems and others do not, problem identification is obviously a social process. In general, problem identification involves the combination of human perceptions of social conditions with human judgments about those conditions. Because of the subjective nature of problem identification, problematic social conditions can exist for long periods of time without being considered social problems. Social problems do not define

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<sup>28</sup> These four stages are convenient for analytical purposes, and will help us understand the process of reform with an eye to the effects or outcomes of reform. As we move through this discussion, please keep in mind that the stages we will describe are not discrete. Furthermore, it is important to note that reforms do not always proceed smoothly through the four stages we will describe.

themselves, but are socially-constructed (Kingdon, 1984).

Social conditions are highlighted through demographic and social science studies conducted by diverse groups from a wide range of disciplines. Journalists, scholars, pollsters, members of advocacy groups, as well as civic and cultural leaders conduct studies and/or comment on studies of social conditions. Among the regular studies of social conditions in the U.S. is the decennial census, which reveals demographic patterns in the nation. These studies and the diverse interpretations given them contribute to official and nonofficial discussions about social conditions (Cohen & Garet, 1976). Politicians and other opinion leaders draw on these studies to bolster (or counter) claims that this or that set of social conditions constitutes a social problem.

Discussions of social conditions, like the studies of social conditions upon which they are based, are influenced by human values. This happens in several ways. First, values influence which social conditions are studied and which are not. Decisions about research are informed by the values and commitments of the constituencies that sponsor and direct both publicly and privately funded research studies (Lindblom, 1990).

Second, human values inevitably influence the way research findings are interpreted. Interpreters and analysts hold particular values and they will view research as they view other information, from particular perspectives (Lindblom, 1990). The subjective component in funding and analysis of research leads to differences in what research tells us. Analysts can (and often do) draw different conclusions from the same studies. More than that, they often have a large pool of studies that yield conflicting results and diagnoses of social conditions. The upshot is that subjectivity influences the interpretations of research studies in the same way it influences the definitions of social problems. Studies of social conditions are no more self-interpreting than social problems are self-defining.

#### Social and Moral Aspects of Problem Identification

Problem identification is a social process both descriptive and evaluative. It compares what "is" with "what should (or ideally could) be." Claims about social problems are moral claims because they entail judgments that particular social conditions fall short of some standard of what is good and/or just. For example, critics might assert that an "essential feature" in school or society is absent, or the "quality of life" is unacceptably low for a particular social group, or "teacher quality" in schools is "inadequate," or the "danger" in a particular community or school might be unacceptably high. All claims about social problems call for change or reform of some sort, even if the "calls for reform" remain implicit.

Though some might argue that the problems listed above require remedy, others might disagree. Such disagreements reveal the subjectivity of human judgments about problems in schools and society. After all, what exactly is an "essential feature" of schools? What are the core elements and criteria of "quality of life"? What constitutes adequate teaching? What is an acceptable level of danger? Those questions elude simple answers, and they underscore the softness of the "science" of problem identification. Problem identification is a messy process in which rival interpretations of social conditions compete for prominence. The battles are messy, in large part because persons with different values can draw rhetorical weapons from stockpiles of studies that support their particular interpretations of the facts (Lindblom, 1990).

Fully addressing why persons hold different values is beyond the scope of this study, but the question is important nonetheless. We can simplify matters by stating that differences in values result from a combination of cultural influences and personal characteristics of individuals. In other words, people view the world through culturally-conditioned lenses. People learn within cultural contexts that in turn give them and their lives meaning. They learn to value things and to see the world around them from cultural perspectives.

Persons, in short, understand social conditions in light of the values, norms, and

experiences that have shaped them and their knowledge of the social and material world. Problem identification involves judgments about social conditions, and persons' prior experiences and knowledge shape those judgments. To explore how values and perspectives influence judgments about social conditions, we will consider one painful example of problem identification, that of segregation in American schools.

### Identifying the Problem of Segregation

Segregation in schools was long considered a simple fact about schooling, most prevalent in the South. Indeed, for a very long time, few persons in power considered segregated schools problematic.<sup>29</sup> Segregation was simply the way things were done, especially in the American South. Even the Civil War could not unseat centuries old convictions of essential differences based on race. For many persons in the South, nothing seemed more natural than separation based on race, and nothing more unnatural than integration.

Nearly a century after the Civil War, the issue of segregation gained renewed public attention in both political and judicial contexts. In its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court declared the earlier policy of "separate but equal" schools unconstitutional. In part, the Court's decision was based on psychological studies that revealed the negative effects of segregated schools on African-American students. The Court's action contributed to an official redefinition of segregation as a social problem demanding redress. The Court declared that segregation should be eliminated "with all deliberate speed."

Though the Court had spoken and redefined segregation as a *problem*, huge

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<sup>29</sup> African-Americans were much quicker to recognize the injustice of segregated schools. There was no illusion that "separate but equal" meant what it said. The conditions of the schools were anything but equal. Schools for the African-American students were inferior in terms of physical plant and teaching and learning. The oppressed citizens were tremendously aware of the problematic nature of the social conditions in which they were forced to live.

segments of American society were unprepared for the Court's definition of the problem. Many White Southerners were even less prepared for the Court's remedy. To put things mildly, the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* received mixed reviews. For some, the decision was considered official recognition of longstanding injustice. For others, the Court's "remedy" created bigger social problems than it solved.

The years since *Brown* amply demonstrate the violent differences of opinion about segregation in schools and society. The painful history speaks loudly of the challenges of social change. The tensions around desegregation reveal how the process of problem recognition is problematic in its own right. Some White Americans simply did not see segregation as a problem in need of remedy, and some were defiantly resistant to desegregation measures. Only after much time passed—time marked by demonstrations, marches, and (alas) assassinations—did much of Americans come to agree that forced segregation was wrong. Still, even if most Americans would eventually come to view segregation in schools as a problem in need of redress, many white Americans remained opposed to integrated schools.<sup>30</sup>

The process of identifying segregation as a social problem was slow and difficult. It was also incomplete. Some citizens came to view segregation differently as a result of consciousness raising efforts. They came to view the injustice segregation entailed, and their attitudes changed in part because the national conscience was trained on segregation. Many others, however, continued to believe—and some groups, like the KKK, continued to defiantly assert—that segregation was never a problem, and demands for desegregation were wrong. For the latter group, the official proclamations against segregation made little constructive difference in their perceptions and attitudes, even if they resulted in changes of behavior to comply with changes in the law. For many

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<sup>30</sup> Note that says that schools may not be segregated by force, but they are still largely separated by race, in fact. Though Americans may agree that forced segregation is wrong, they apparently still tolerate segregation.

Whites, these changes in behavior masked continued attitudes of racism.

The lingering racism in the U.S. highlights the natural limits of legislation to radically remake societal values. The courts and legislatures officially declared segregation illegal, and demanded its elimination, but the purview of courts and legislatures is limited. They could (and did) change definitions of acceptable external behaviors but they could not successfully dictate changes of hearts and minds.

When social conditions are deeply engrained and longstanding, identifying problems is especially problematic. For example, the social conditions of segregation and the values that fostered segregation were so entrenched that identifying segregation as a problem required a radical reorientation of perspective for many Southern Whites. Identifying the problem of segregation in schools and society involved unlearning engrained habits of mind and practice. Part of the process involved learning about segregation and its effects on all citizens. Recognition of segregation as a problem was also concomitant with changes in social values.

The history of desegregation reveals how dependent problem identification is on socio-cultural values. Problem identification is undertaken by persons who interpret events and conditions in light of their particular perspectives. It involves learning about social conditions and often requires seeing those social conditions in light of different values, or through different value-laden lenses. The subjective dimension of problem identification makes it uncertain. And because the US is anything but culturally monolithic, the process of problem identification is often controversial.

### Chronic Crises

Schools get a great deal of public attention. As a result, problems in schools are often highlighted and calls for reform are common. One reason why school problems are often highly publicized is that reports about education and educational changes make good copy. Though media attention is sometimes positive, the coverage is often negative

or controversial. Sometimes, special interest pages highlight creative projects of a school or classroom, but when schools hit the front page, the story is more often one of competition, controversy, or crisis.

*Crisis* is an equal opportunity label. It is sometimes used to describe the state of teaching (or results on standardized tests) in particular subject matter areas. Sometimes, the label is used to identify disparity between different demographic groups on standardized tests, or in the amount of resources provided for the education of urban vs. suburban children. The crisis could be an increase in problematic student behaviors in or outside of schools (e.g., smoking, drug-use, STD's, and the like). A recent school crisis involved the disturbing trend of murder-suicides. Whatever the problem, reformers and social critics are quick to label educational problems *crises*.

Part of the rush to judgment about problems in schools results from the grand hopes and expectations we have for our schools. We expect them to ensure our democracy, to help our students get ahead, and to ensure our national economic and political welfare (Labaree, 1989). As a result, when society has major problems, schools typically get the blame. Just as often, though, they are viewed as the solution.

Two of the more prominent calls for major reform of education stemmed from international comparisons triggered by concerns about how the US compared with political and economic rivals. Perhaps the most conspicuous focusing event for curricular reform in the United States this century was the Soviet orbiter Sputnik in 1957. That launch triggered fears that we were "falling behind," and resulted in huge national investments in science and technical education at both the K-12 and college levels. It also spawned a decade of curricular reforms in mathematics and science, with the goal of equipping our students so they could outperform our Russian Cold War rivals.

A more recent, but no less pivotal, event was the national report on schools entitled *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). It warned of "a rising tide of mediocrity" in our schools. The problems were serious, it

said, and the situation was getting worse. Our children were falling behind Japan and other Western nations, and our economic future was in peril. Other reports quickly followed, reporting much of the same concerns. Another round of reforms ensued, as the states and textbook publishers scrambled to address the problems revealed in *A Nation at Risk* and the other reports on the status of schools across the nation. Millions of dollars were targeted at educational research, and hosts of studies were conducted to determine scientifically exactly what works (and, ostensibly what doesn't work.)

*A Nation at Risk* ushered in a renewed press to get "back to basics" and encouraged a re-evaluation of "what works" in classrooms to encourage higher levels of achievement for America's school children (U.S. Department of Education, 1986). Some instructional reform programs were designed to change teacher practice to get results--typically reflected in improved test scores. One example is Madeline Hunter's Instructional Theory Into Practice (ITIP) program. Her approach emphasized traditional pedagogical techniques of "anticipatory sets," review of materials taught, recall, and guided practice, along with frequent monitoring of student achievement. Another good example of this sort of "back to basics" movement can be seen in the Effective Schools Movement. Their research pressed for changing the school culture and employing sure technologies that would encourage better student achievement. These various reforms called teachers "back" to techniques that were ostensibly supported by educational research designed to demonstrate "what works" in schools.

Other reformers and educational entrepreneurs capitalized on the climate of reform. In mathematics, individuals like Marcy Cook and Marilyn Burns developed workshops and materials for use in classrooms. Entrepreneurs developed programs for school renewal, new texts, and professional development workshops aimed at helping teachers change their teaching or curriculum to conform to the revised expectations. On the heels of *A Nation at Risk* and other reports in the 1980s, subject matter organizations grew in prominence and membership in response to national concerns about the condition

of American education.

The launch of Sputnik and *A Nation at Risk* are two prime examples of a very common practice of claiming that American schools are in crisis. The calls for reform were motivated by concerns about competitiveness with economic and political rivals, and reformers and politicians concluded that schools were failing. Reform was the answer to the crises those events signaled for our national attention.

### *Manufacturing Crises*

Employing the term *crisis* to describe problems remains a staple of analyses of schooling today. Education is in crisis. Classrooms are in crisis. Schools are in crisis. Charles Silberman's (1970) book, *Crisis in the Classroom*, is a nice example of the jeremiads against the state of schooling in America, but is just one of many books that focus on crises in education. Gregory Cizek & Vidya Ramaswamy (1999) searched the library holdings at the University of Toledo and got 3314 entries when they searched on the key word *crisis*. They found 179 entries when they searched on *crisis and education*, 9 entries when they searched on *crisis and classroom*, and 72 entries when they searched on *crisis and schools(s)*. When they searched the ERIC database (1966 to present), they returned 6024 entries when they searched on the key word *crisis*. They found 2275 entries when they searched on *crisis and education*, 306 entries when they searched on *crisis and classroom*, and 1446 entries when they searched on *crisis and schools(s)* (Cizek & Ramaswamy, 1999, p. 500). Those authors reveal that crises do not merely make good journalistic copy, they also make good topics for research papers and educational monographs.

David Berliner & Bruce Biddle's (1995) work highlights especially well the rhetorical power of the word *crisis* and the way Americans rally to reform when claims of crisis are made. The claims of crisis are reported widely, and often influential constituencies accept the judgement. Politicians, parents, and other concerned citizens

rise to the challenge to address the crisis. The reports of crisis and the public attention they evoke help to move particular educational problems higher on the political agenda.

As effective as claims of crisis may be in calls for reform, the claims themselves are often exaggerated or mistaken. Berliner & Biddle (1995) debunk the notion of crisis and many of the modern educational crises of our day in *The Manufactured Crisis*.

Berliner & Biddle (1995) found that claims of crisis are frequently based on decontextualized interpretations of results of international studies. Sometimes, the claims of crisis are not merely misinterpretations of studies but are instead based on anecdote and innuendo. They conclude that the facts rarely justify the claims of crisis. Instead, in many cases, things are getting better in American schools rather than worse.

### Crises and Calls for Reform

Regardless of the warrant for claims that things are "in crisis," such claims are often paired with calls for reform. In the rhetoric of reform, calls for instructional reform that respond to problems can be divided up into two basic types. One class of reforms is marked by calls for return from disordered practice to rightly ordered practice. And the other class of reforms is marked by calls for a different (and ostensibly better) order of practice. Sometimes reforms are drafted in direct response to perceived problems and at other times they are proffered as pathways to better pedagogical worlds.

- Calls to *return* to "good old practices." Some calls for reform highlight the need to return schools to tried and true educational practices, to practices that could be called "rightly ordered." These calls aim to restore practices to conformity with established definitions of quality teaching and learning.
- Calls to *turn* to a new vision for practice. Other calls for reform trumpet alternative vision(s) for teaching and learning. In response to judgments that the "old ways" have been ineffective, alternative vision(s) are formulated by individuals, governmental agencies, professional subject matter organizations, or other

constituencies to overcome perceived deficiency(ies) in teaching and learning. They call for a new order of teaching and learning.

Because the former type of calls for reform demand returns to "tried-and-true" practices, they are less apt to be controversial than the latter type. The former type of reform is consistent with norms and values in schools and society, and asks schools to live up to the values society holds. The latter type of reform asks for changes in the grammar of school, and therefore challenges assumptions and expectations about what schools and persons in them should be doing. For that reason, receptivity to reforms of the latter type is often cooler than that given to the former. Desegregation would obviously fall into this second type of reform, because of the major changes in socio-cultural values it entailed.

In this section, we have shown the social nature of problem definition, and the role values play in those definitions. We have seen that problem identification leads to calls for change, even if those calls sometimes remain implicit. Most often, however, problem identification leads to explicit calls for reform. Some reforms call for a return to quality teaching and learning, and others seek to turn toward visions of improvement that depart from modal practices. As we continue to explore the process of instructional reform, the next question we investigate is how reforms get adopted as solutions to problems in schools.

## REFORM ADOPTION

The process of coupling problems with reforms is not always linear or tidy. As we said in the section describing the policy context of reform, many reforms are "available" to schools, districts, states, and the nation at any given time. Decisions need to be made both about which problems will be addressed and then which reforms should be adopted to address them. We saw above that people disagree about problem definitions. They also frequently disagree about which problems are most important.

And even when they agree about which problem is most important, they sometimes disagree about which reform proposal would best address it. This is because most of the time multiple reforms are available as potential "fixes" for the same problem (Kingdon, 1984).

Reform adoption, like problem identification, is a contested process. Reform proposals and their advocates often compete for the attention of policymakers, state boards of education, legislatures, and local administrators. Reforms compete as rival solutions to particular problems, and compete for the highest place on the reform agenda.

One major factor that influences reform adoption involves the values and ideas of reformers and policymakers. This factor echoes the way values and ideas shaped the process of problem definition we outlined above. Unsurprisingly, reforms that comport with the set of values embraced by policymakers rise on the reform agenda (Kingdon, 1984; Lindblom, 1990). The values and ideas of policymakers are based both on common, cultural views about what it means to know, teach, and learn as well as social scientific findings about schools and reform (Cohen & Garet, 1975; Lindblom & Cohen, 1979).

In his study of federal policy making, John Kingdon (1984) says that policies float, as it were, in a "primeval policy soup" in which ideas grow, get broken down, and recombined in various ways. This ongoing reformulation of policies keeps particular policies in play until the right political moment, the right combination of problem recognition and political currents for a particular reform to gain ascendancy. In Kingdon's (1984) terms, policies circulate until the right policy window opens, though which a policy moves, coupled with the social problem for which it is a policy solution.

A second factor that influences reform adoption is knowledge. Without knowledge of reforms, few policymakers would see them as potential responses to problems that have risen on the policy agenda. Knowledge of reform can be based on research and sometimes is sometimes "ordinary knowledge" based on experiences and

anecdote (Lindblom & Cohen, 1979). At times, information about reforms is spread through research studies in scholarly or professional journals, by advocates of particular reform solutions, and through other formal or informal networks of policymakers and practitioners. House (1974) describes this informal spreading of ideas the "neighborhood spread of innovation," because it works by word of mouth. As a result of these informal contacts, adoption sometimes amounts to the educational equivalent of keeping up with the Jones. Popularity can be converted into social pressure to adopt reforms (Pincus, 1974). Even when the pressure is weak, however, knowledge of reform is a common prerequisite to adoption. Invisible reforms rarely get adopted.

A third factor that influences reform adoption is advocacy. Advocacy is the targeted promotion of reforms to decision makers. Sometimes, advocates are policy entrepreneurs who are selling particular reforms to solve instructional problems. At other times, advocates are school or district administrators who have become convinced that a particular reform holds promise for "fixing" instructional problems or introducing desirable changes in schools. Teachers are sometimes advocates for reforms, but the most salient advocates are usually politicians, administrators, and policy entrepreneurs.

House (1974) offers a nice description of the role of the innovation entrepreneur as advocate. He works as a reform advocate to "sell" the reform to those who may at first be skeptical about the promises and demands of the reform proposal:

An extremely important innovation phenomenon revolves around the promise of and promises for an innovation, around selling and overselling. At all levels--school, project, and national--a certain amount of "selling" is necessary if the innovation is to make headway against tradition. In fact, one might say that the one indispensable attitude of those involved is faith in the future. Faith in the future of the innovation is required, as in any religion, because the innovation can never, in the present, live up to its future promises. Faith is necessary to justify putting vast amounts of resources and efforts into something that does not work well now. Innovation, particularly for the pioneers, is an act of faith. (House, 1974, pp. 185-186)

For obvious reasons, advocacy increases the chances that reforms will be considered.

When reform proposals have advocates in schools or when they are being sold by innovation entrepreneurs, they gain a certain prominence in reform discussions. When

constituencies press hard for reforms, the prominence and visibility of their advocacy can make particular reforms seem more important and worth adopting (Cusick, 1992).

A fourth factor is sponsorship for reform. Sponsorship is the monetary equivalent of advocacy. Sponsorship speaks the language of money and material resources rather than rhetoric, which is the currency of advocacy. It is little wonder that money and resources influence decisions about adoption. Reforms that have financial support are received differently from other reforms. Simply put, they have less to prove. Fiscal sponsorship virtually ensures that the default position toward the reform will be affirmative rather than neutral or negative. This is especially true when the sponsored reform does not require highly specified changes in practice (Pincus, 1974).

Fiscal sponsorship not only serves to get the attention of administrators and boards of education, it also supports implementation efforts, even after initial missteps.

If the innovation is supported by a powerful sponsor, more resources can always be found, and previous errors can be corrected. If the innovation is not sponsored by a powerful agency, it gets only one chance. When it runs into difficulties or exhausts its resources, it is finished. Like the son of a rich man, the well-endowed innovation gets many chances. Its deficiencies are remedial. (House, 1974, p. 55)

For administrators and other policymakers, an additional factor that influences adoption of reforms focuses on career aspirations and goals. Adopting reforms sometimes helps administrators and policymakers prove they are reform-minded. As a result, career aspirations sometimes influence their decisions. In fact, Michael Huberman & Matthew Miles (1984) found that 50% of administrators reported that concerns about career advancement figured in their decisions to adopt innovations.

Sometimes decisions about adoption depend on judgments about the "fit" of the reform. Questions of fit can operate at several levels. One type of fit centers on the content of the reform itself, asking how well the reform addresses the problem at hand. Another type centers on the organization, asking how well the reform fits the organizational structure. The last centers on the objects of reform, asking how well the

reform fits teachers' philosophies and teaching styles (Huberman & Miles, 1984).<sup>31</sup>

Kingdon (1984) echoes these findings when he argues that "technical feasibility" boosts a reform's chances of adoption (p. 138).

Parental and community response can also influence policy adoption.

Policymakers sometimes consider how parents and other leaders will react to reform proposals, asking the proverbial question, how will this play in Peoria? To the extent that decision-makers take public opinion into account, they will look kindly on reforms that are "popular" and be reluctant to adopt those that seem politically risky or unpopular.

Another aspect of community response is less content-based, and more time-sensitive. Sometimes communities are so concerned that something be done about an educational problem that adoption of a trendy reform intended to address it is enough to alleviate the pressure. In those cases, adoption of a plan to change and improve schools may be more important than the changes themselves (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Pincus, 1974). Because reforms come at schools like waves at beaches, schools and districts can respond to pressures to change by adopting reforms one after another, even if the reforms rarely result in substantive changes in teaching and learning.

In this section, we have looked at factors that contribute to decisions to adopt reforms. The factors are not discrete, but interconnected in various ways. Many of the factors we listed center on the subjective elements of decision-makers. Reform adoption, just like problem definition is a social process, full of value judgments and interpretations. We have seen in our discussion of the persons of reform that reforms are drafted in light of problems and in light of the values, ideas, and commitments of the authors of reform. Decision-makers sometimes draft reforms themselves, but their decisions are always based on their interpretation of the facts and their views of the best courses of action.

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<sup>31</sup> Because this last question concerns the way teachers respond to innovations, this factor lies at the

## Interestedness of Reform Adoption

The process of reform adoption is thoroughly social and political, and always draws on values and interests. Though instructional reform is ostensibly always "about the children," the interests of reform advocates are often very mixed. The motive for a reform advocate might be "making a name" for him- or herself or it might be guided by desires to make money. Even when the motives of advocates for reforms are relatively pure, advocates of competing reforms will most often be at odds with one another. They have rival interests, and will argue for their reform at the expense of the alternatives. The interests of advocates and authors of different reforms always compete, implicitly if not explicitly, in the debate about which problems are most salient and which reforms should be adopted to address them (Lindblom, 1990).

Reform adoption, just like the process of problem identification, is thoroughly interpretive. Values shape and influence the ways social conditions are interpreted, help to set the agenda for reform, as well as the choice of reform. In short, adoption of particular reform proposals depends in large part upon the assumptive worlds of the reform players who adopt it.

## REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

Regardless of the type of reform and the motives for adopting reforms, all reforms must be implemented. To simplify matters greatly, reform implementation is the process through which reforms eventually get "worked out" in practice. Implementation includes the ways reforms are disseminated to schools and classrooms, the ways reforms and teachers are supported, and the ways reforms are enacted.

We will begin by reviewing three basic approaches to implementing reforms. We will then enumerate four central aspects of reform implementation. After that, we will

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boundary of the adoption and implementation stages of the process of instructional reform.

consider several examples of specific strategies employed to implement reforms. Finally, we will highlight important factors that influence the ways reforms are received, interpreted, and enacted in schools.

### Three General Approaches to Implementing Reforms

We begin with three general approaches to reform. Tom Whiteside (1978), drawing on work of Warren Bennis, Benne, & Chin (1969) and Sam Sieber (1972), describes three approaches to innovation that he says are present in some combination in all attempts at reform, though rarely in pure form. The three approaches are 1) *empirical-rational*; 2) *power-coercive*; and 3) *normative-re-educational*. These three approaches are based on philosophical assumptions about how change occurs. Though these approaches are often combined and overlap with one another, we consider them separately because they highlight an important range of assumptions about what is necessary to effect changes in teacher practice.

#### *Empirical-rational*

The first of the three approaches Whiteside (1978) describes is the *empirical-rational* approach, which views the practitioner as the "rational man." Consistent with its label, the approach assumes that reform implementation is largely a question of knowledge. This approach leans on empirical studies and assumes that teachers are primarily guided by rational planning. In sum, this approach holds that the primary impediment to good teaching is a lack of knowledge about what works best. It holds that

... the teacher as a rational man only needs to be informed and he will change his mind. The underlying assumption is that reason determines the process of initiating innovations and that scientific investigation is the best means of extending knowledge, from the initial basic research to the final practical application. (Whiteside, 1978, p. 46)

In this approach, the typical change agent would be an educational "expert" of some kind who communicates the results of research to help teachers make changes in their

**teaching.** For the most part, this approach is accomplished by information flowing from **experts** to teachers. It works on the "inside" of teachers, changing what they know in order to change what they do. In that respect, the approach is one directional, from the experts as change agents to the objects of change who are teachers.

#### *Power-coercive*

The second approach is called *power-coercive*, because it centers on teachers as obedient workers. Consistent with its label, the approach assumes that reform implementation is largely a question of authority, rules, and obedience. Reform, on this view, requires clear declarations about prescribed and proscribed classroom practices, and teachers are expected to obey these authoritative mandates. Teachers are treated as obedient subjects of expert power who will change their practice in response to administrative fiat. On this view, teachers are told what to do and will do as they are told.

In this approach, the typical change agent is an authority figure such as a legislator or administrator. These authorities provide clear instructions about what is expected and what is sanctioned. For the most part, this approach spreads reform by imposing rules and requirements that constrain the behaviors of teachers in schools. In that respect, this approach works on the "outside" of teachers, changing what they do so that it conforms with administrative expectations. The approach works in one directional, as rules pass from the administrators and other authorities to the objects of change who are the teachers.

#### *Normative-re-educational*

The third approach to reform is labeled *normative re-educational*. Consistent with its name, this approach assumes that reform implementation requires changing the values that guide teaching through a process of "re-education." Rather than merely

informing teachers about new practice or requiring that they do what they are told, this approach takes a more critical look at the difficulties of change. It highlights the centrality of learning new practices in the context of a realignment or reorientation of the values that guide teaching practice. It entails the unlearning of old practices and the embrace of new ones.

In this section, we choose to focus more fully on this third approach because it goes beyond the more limited prior approaches. In fact, this approach to reform arose in response to the acknowledgment that neither of the former strategies was successful in effecting major change. In this approach, reformers engage with teachers in a long and difficult process designed to move them away from old practices toward new, improved practices. Whiteside (1978) describes the development of the normative-re-educational approach as follows:

... there was a growing awareness that relying solely on rational persuasion (expert power) was insufficient because "too often, rational elements are denied or rendered impotent because they conflict with a strongly ingrained belief, consciously or unconsciously held" (Bennis, 1966, p. 176). This led to an increased concentration on the internal states of the individual and fundamentally this strategy is concerned with changing people--their perceptions, attitudes and behaviour. (Whiteside, 1978, pp. 49-50)<sup>32</sup>

The process of "re-education" has roots in the work of Kurt Lewin (1947, 1951), among others. Edgar Schein (1972) built on Lewin's (1947, 1951) seminal work, which outlined three basic steps necessary for successfully implementing planned change. Lewin (1947, 1951) labeled the steps *unfreezing*, *moving*, and *freezing*. Schein replaced *moving* with *changing*, but their ideas were essentially the same. Both paid great attention to the first step, unfreezing, because they considered it the major impediment to change. Unfreezing involves softening up rigid patterns of behavior and thought so

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<sup>32</sup> A recent summary of this view is found in Fullan (1997), who writes: "Technical planning has not worked in educational change. Political pressure has failed to make a difference. Because moral exhortation falls short, is there a way of going deeper that leads to motivating and mobilizing even the most discouraged? I think there is. The question is whether in rethinking the place of emotion and hope in

movement and change can follow. Unfreezing, in a sense, makes change possible.

The focus on unfreezing is an acknowledgement that change is difficult and that great effort will be required to make major changes. Schein (1972), for example, observed that

. . . the change agent must assume that the members of the system will be committed to their present ways of operating and will, therefore, resist learning something new. As a consequence the *essence* of a planned change process is the *unlearning* of present ways of doing things. (Schein, 1972, p. 75, emphasis in the original)

This process of unlearning involves awakening persons to the need for change, and, where possible, can help foster the motivation to change. The process of change requires creating a sense of disequilibrium for practitioners. Schein elaborates the steps involved in the upsetting process of unfreezing as follows:

. . . unfreezing is, of necessity, composed of three very different processes, each of which must be present to a certain degree for the system to develop any motivation to change: (1) enough *disconfirming data* to cause serious discomfort and disequilibrium; (2) the connection of the disconfirming data to important goals and ideals causing *anxiety and/or guilt*; and (3) enough *psychological safety*, in the sense of seeing a possibility of solving the problem without loss of identity or integrity, thereby allowing members of the organization to admit the disconfirming data rather than defensively denying it . . . (Schein, 1992, pp. 298-299, emphasis in original)

One way to view Schein's (1992) three stages of change is to view them as corresponding to aspects of the human soul: the mind, will, and emotions. The first of his three stages focuses on the mind with information that calls into question prior beliefs, ideas, and conclusions. The second reveals the emotional dimensions of change, with a focus on anxiety and guilt. The last manifests the volitional dimension of change, where teachers admit their need for change and make commitments to do so. The process of unfreezing

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change, we can actually come up with a more effective route to working with complex change" (Fullan, 1997, p. 217).

requires engagement of the human person at intellectual, volitional, and emotional levels.

Normative-re-educational change, in other words, goes soul deep.<sup>33</sup>

The final step of the normative-re-educational approach, which Lewin (1951) termed *freezing*, often involves an explicit statement of commitment to the new patterns of thought and behavior. This often occurs in the context of a group that is collectively committed to the new practices.

The decision links motivation to action and, at the same time, seems to have a "freezing" effect which is partly due to the individual's tendency to 'stick to his decision' and partly to the 'commitment to a group'. (Lewin, 1951, p. 233)

The process of moving and freezing often occurs in the context of workshops where persons are given the freedom—Schein (1992) might call it "psychological safety"—to learn and embrace new behaviors and patterns of thought. So-called "cultural islands" create safe space in which the new ideas and practices can be tried out. Lewin (1951) describes the value of intensive periods of support for change in the following terms:

The effectiveness of camps or workshops in changing ideology or conduct depends in part on the possibility of creating such 'cultural islands' during change. The stronger the accepted subculture of the workshop and the more isolated it is the more will it minimize that type of resistance to change which is based on the relation between the individual and the standards of the larger group. (Lewin, 1951, pp. 232-233)

In the normative re-educational approach, the typical change agent is a "consultant or human relations expert" who facilitates the unlearning and learning involved in this approach to change.

The normative-re-educational approach to change spreads reform by getting practitioners to unlearn old patterns and learn new ones. It seeks changes at the level of attitudes and values, and, in that respect, works on the "inside" of teachers. Because of the emphasis on seeking attitudinal and value changes, the process is structurally bi-directional and purposefully interactive. The normative-re-educational approach

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<sup>33</sup> Some might argue that such an approach is manipulative, perhaps even immoral. For our purposes at this point, we will bracket that question.

**acknowledges the deeply engrained patterns of behavior in schools and highlights the difficulty and need to "unfreeze" patterns of behavior in the hope of modifying them in salutary ways.**

Summarizing, we see that the three approaches are based on different assumptions about what change requires. They also target different aspects of the teachers they hope to change. The first two approaches focus on what teachers lack, and operate primarily in one direction. They send guidance and information to the teachers who need to learn and/or be told what to do. The third approach is more bi-directional, because it engages the change-agents and objects of change in a kind of conversation about their practice and possibilities for change. It transcends the other approaches by concluding that the challenge of reform is greater than simply a lack of knowledge or a lack of direction. The normative-re-educational model captures the disruptive nature of change, and the profound difficulty humans have breaking established patterns of action (Marris, 1975).

### **Basic Phases of Implementation**

Regardless of the chosen implementation approach, reforms typically proceed through four basic phases as they are implemented in schools. The first two of these phases involve getting the message out and the final two concern personal and institutional responses to the message of reform.

- The message of the reform must be spread. It must be sent to those who are being asked to change their practice. Among the central questions at this stage are: What message? Sent by whom? Sent to whom? Sent how?
- The message of the reform must be interpreted. Among the central questions at this stage are the following: Interpreted by whom? Interpreted in what ways? What is the level of clarity about the reform's demands and the level of specificity? What shapes and influences the interpretations of reform ideas, documents, requirements and regulations?

- The message of the reform must be applied. Among the central questions at this stage are the following: Applied to what? By whom? Applied how? Like interpretations, applications can be shaped and influenced by local expositors of the reform ideas.
- The message must be enacted. The ultimate goal of reform is to have reformed practices become a part of classroom life. Among the central questions at this stage are the following: Have things changed? Says whom? What's the proof?

These four phases of reform implementation will be present in any attempt at planned change in schools.

### *Spreading the Message*

The process of adoption we described above involves dissemination of reform ideas. Reform advocacy is one important way that reform ideas are communicated to various stake holders in education and educational reform. Information about reforms communicated by reform advocates influences reform adoption, as we saw above. Implementation takes the dissemination of reform ideas several steps further. Clearly, reform ideas must also be communicated after the adoption of reforms.

The first post-adoption communication about reforms is spread as news of the reform adoption is announced. Obviously, reformers must spread the message of the reform to the agents and objects of reform in order to make a positive difference in schools. Reform content will inevitably be communicated in some way whenever attempts are made to implement planned changes. There are no secret reforms. Those who are agents of reform and those who are targets of reform will know they are involved in reform when they are informed about the changes they are supposed to make.

Getting the message out also depends upon the methods and medium of communication selected. Messages require messengers and means of communicating the message. Sometimes, messengers are reform advocates or "specialists" of various kinds who provide workshops or lead discussions about reforms. At other times, messengers

**are** school and district administrators who talk about the demands of reform. At other **times**, "messengers" of reform are simply document(s) or tape(s) that describe reform **goals** and objectives. On some occasions, the messenger of reform is merely a new text **or** test that is adopted for use in schools that has little, if any, explanatory material.

### *Interpreting the Message*

Once the message has been spread, the message must be interpreted. The "phase" **of** interpreting the message of reform is intimately bound up with spreading the message **of** reform. *Phase* is in quotes because interpretation is not a discrete step in the process **of** implementation. There is never a point in the process of reform when interpretation **ceases** to play a role (Fish, 1980). However, in some senses interpretation is an important *phase* in the process of implementation. The most obvious moments when interpretation **plays** a central role are when reform messages are initially received.

In all efforts to interpret and understand messages, including reform messages, the **"hermeneutical circle"** operates. In other words, persons bring understandings of the **world** and words with them to interpretations of texts and actions. In social and narrative **contexts**, they make sense of new texts and actions. Other interlocutors, including **"consultants"** and other "experts" can influence interpretations, but they cannot dictate the **meanings** persons give to the messages of reform they encounter in conversations and by **reading** documents connected with reforms. Interpretation is a practice both personal and **collective**. Persons must interpret texts and actions on their own—that is, in their own **minds**—but they cannot do so without recourse to associations and meanings that are **shaped** and influenced by the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which they live (Gadamer, 1960/1989).

### *Centrality of Interpretation*

Given the importance of interpretation to reform implementation, we will now

**take** time to explore one philosophical perspective on the process of interpretation and **understanding**. Philosophers have always been concerned with interpretation, with **meaning**, with understanding, and what it means to know. Especially since the 18th **Century**, philosophers have attended to the problems of hermeneutics, of how humans **come** to understand and interpret texts and other utterances. This school of thought was **greatly** influenced by the growing philosophical awareness of the effects of human **historicity** on understanding. Being in time influences the ways humans perceive the **world** around them, including the ways they understand texts and utterances of others.

Hermeneutical philosophers pay special attention to the implications of historical **and** situational perspectives, and describe how those factors influence interpretations of **texts** and actions. One prominent thinker within this school was Martin Heidegger. His **student**, Hans-Georg Gadamer, continued and extended his work. Gadamer's (1960/1989) ideas, as expressed in *Truth and Method* offer us some important insights **into** issues of interpretation.

For Gadamer (1960/1989), after Edmund Husserl, *horizon* is the range of view **persons** have within (and from) their cultural and historical traditions. Despite the fact **that** persons inherit meaning within their traditions, within their horizon, they are not **fixed** forever within one horizon. "A horizon is not a rigid boundary but something that **moves** with one and invites one to advance further" (Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. 245). **Because** we are historical beings, our experiences accrue and our understanding likewise **grows**, as we interpret the world around us.

Heidegger talked about our "fore-understandings," those ideas that we project in **front** of us as we negotiate our world, and through which we understand others and texts:

Heidegger describes the [hermeneutical] circle in such a way that the understanding of the text remains permanently determined by the anticipatory movement of fore-understanding. The circle of whole and part is not dissolved in perfect understanding but, on the contrary is most fully realized. The circle, then, is not formal in nature. It is neither subjective nor objective, but describes understanding as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter . . . . Thus the circle of understanding is not a "methodological" circle, but describes an element of the ontological structure of understanding."

(Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. 293)

As we encounter the world, a text, or another person, we have expectations that are borne of our prior experiences within our horizon of understanding. At every moment our expectations are either confirmed or challenged. When challenged, we naturally seek to make sense of this "negative" experience--negative because it was not what our "fore-understanding" had led us to expect. Of course, as soon as we learn from our new experiences--after we make sense of them--our fore-understandings are changed, are transformed.

Because of the essential role that fore-understandings--or "prejudgments" or "prejudices"--play in human understanding, they figure prominently in Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. He distinguishes between "true prejudices, by which we *understand*, from the *false* ones, by which we *misunderstand*" (Gadamer, 1960/1989, pp. 298-299, emphasis in original). Because he holds that prejudices are inevitable, and **because** it is through them that we orient ourselves to the world--to understand it at all--some **of** them at least must be good.

**In** summary, we understand (and sometimes misunderstand) texts and actions in light **of** our prior experiences and information we glean from narrative and social contexts. We interpret things in light of our "worldviews." Sometimes, persons will have **clear** ideas about reforms, but others will sometimes misunderstand them. The more a text **or** action is outside a person's prior experience, the more effort it will take to make good **sense** of the text.

**In** similar ways, Fullan (1991) describes two common forms of misunderstanding. He calls **the** first "painful unclarity" where persons are unable to understand the message of reform (and also unable to practice what they believe the message is asking of them) (p. 35). **Fullan** labels the other type of misunderstanding "false clarity" (p. 35). His **application** of the terms concerns not just the phase of interpretation, but leads us into the next **phases** of implementation, which are application and enactment. The forms of

misunderstanding of reform ideas is conspicuous as teachers and other objects of reform attempt to live out the ideals and practices they interpret from the messages about the reform they have received.

False clarity occurs when people *think* that they have changed but have only assimilated the superficial trappings of the new practice. Painful unclarity is experienced when unclear innovations are attempted under conditions that do not support the development of the subjective meaning of the change. (Fullan, 1991, p. 35)

### *Applying the Message*

Interpretation and application of reform messages stand at the nexus of the communication and enactment phases of implementation. Applications of reform messages cannot proceed without interpretation. Application, in fact, is utterly dependent upon interpretations of reform messages, as is clear from the excerpt from Fullan (1991) above. Fullan's terms "painful unclarity" and "false clarity" are actually forms of "non-change." The interpretation and application of ideas are so intimately bound up with one another that Fullan construes misunderstanding as misapplication of reform ideas themselves.

Gadamer (1960/1989) drew but a small distinction between interpretation and application. Discussing specifically legal and theological hermeneutics, Gadamer asserted that persons "concretize" their understandings of texts (and discourse) in the field of application. A text, "... if it is to be understood properly—i.e., according to the claim it makes—must be understood at every moment, in every concrete situation, in a new and different way. Understanding here is always application" (Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. 309). The concretized meanings teachers give to reform ideas could be simply affirmations of their prior beliefs, or they might be new understandings, arrived at through hermeneutical reflection.

As we consider the application phase of implementation, it is important to note that all applications of reform ideas that teachers make in their classrooms (whether

guided by reforms or other influences) are also made in the context of their current practices (Cohen, 1990; Gadamer, 1960/1989). When teachers do not have others to help them think through the interpretations and applications of reform messages, they will inevitably draw on their prior experiences and understandings to understand and apply reform ideas. Without guidance, teachers will simply do the best they can (Ball, 1990; Cohen, 1990; Wilson, 1990; Wilson, 2003).

Because teaching practice is continuous, new reform practices rarely supplant older ones (Cohen & Ball, 1990b; Wilson, 2003). Instead, teachers make (often incremental) changes as they balance the philosophical and practical tensions between "new" and "old" practices. With or without sustained reform guidance, teachers must respond to calls for reform from where they are, in light of their current and prior practice. The changes they make will often be minimal, even when the reforms recommend radical changes in teaching and learning.

Because teachers often work to implement reforms without much help in understanding the demands of reform and without much support as they work to change their practice, the practices they construct are often more like patchwork quilts than the complex tapestries of reformers' dreams (Cohen & Ball, 1990b; Wilson, 2003; Wilson & Ball, 1991).

### *Enacting Reform*

All of the preceding phases of implementation aim at the enactment of reform. Once a reform has been communicated, interpreted, and applied, the question arises whether the reform has been communicated effectively, interpreted correctly, and applied well. In other words, we ask whether a reform has been successful. Tyack & Cuban (1995) articulate three different criteria for success: "Fidelity to original design; effectiveness in meeting preset outcomes; and longevity" (p. 61). The most subjective of the three is the first, because fidelity to design requires interpretation of the design and

**judgments** about what it means to conform practice to those designs. The other criteria, **meeting present** outcomes and longevity, are more objective. But they still require **interpretive** judgments.

The question of the success of reform implementation is never simple, in large **part** because of the subjective dimension of interpretation and application of reform **messages** we outlined above. Persons can only apply texts or messages after (or as) they **interpret** them. Naturally, when persons misunderstand reform messages, they are limited **in their** ability to make wise applications of those messages. So questions of success are **salient** not just at the end, but at every stage of reform: To what extent have the ideas of **a reform** been disseminated? To what extent have they been interpreted and understood "**correctly**"? To what extent have the resources to apply the reform ideas been made **available** to teachers? Those are the sorts of questions that help determine how well the **implementation** has proceeded and how successful the reform has been.

Responses to reforms are always responses to *interpretations of reform messages*. **Teachers** only have access to the reform messages by way of interpretations. They can only **enact** messages they "get" and the messages they "get" are their interpretations of the **mediated** (i.e., interpreted) messages they receive from others. For example, teachers might **receive** (or make) bad interpretations of reform messages. Obviously, those **interpretations** will influence any applications of reform ideas they make in their **classrooms**. When teachers and others fail to understand reforms, their practice is **unlikely** to reflect reform ideas.

**Clear** understanding of reform demands does not guarantee that changes in **practice** can or will be made. In some cases, teachers who understand reforms and desire to **teach in** reform-oriented ways are prevented from doing so because of limitations in their **capacity** to teach in reform-oriented ways. Others might lack sufficient support from **teachers** and administrators to risk enacting the practices in their particular contexts. And **others** who have a good understanding of the demands of reformed practices, along

with sufficient capacity and support, might simply disagree with the reform or might choose **not** to enact it for other reasons.

**Enactment** of reform sits at the nexus of understanding of reform ideas and responses to those ideas. There are myriad ways that reforms are enacted because there are many different ways that levels of understanding of reform ideas interact with teacher responses to reform ideas. We have seen that some teachers understand reform ideas **clearly** but reject them for a variety of reasons. Others enthusiastically embrace incorrect **interpretations** of reform messages and implement their interpretations rather than the **reform** ideas themselves.

### *Evidence of Enactment*

As we begin our discussion of evidence of enactment of reforms, it is important to **qualify** our claims. We start out with the caveat, "it depends . . .," because our **judgments** will depend on who determines what reforms "really mean" and what **constitutes** evidence of implementation. Sometimes the criteria are observable changes in **classroom** practice, but often the measure of success of reforms is more remote. Instead of **addressing** questions of how well reform ideas have been communicated or how well **teachers** have enacted them in practice, success of reforms is often measured by student **results on** assessments that are (sometimes) aligned to reform goals and objectives.<sup>34</sup> Though success of reforms is often sought in "the numbers," we will focus here on **observed** changes in classroom practice as evidence of reform success.

**An** important source of evidence about how well reforms are implemented is

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<sup>34</sup> Teachers' knowledge that test scores are often the criteria for success of reforms and also for successful teaching **surely** influence the ways teachers respond to reforms that are less compatible with student success on **standardized** tests (Barnes, 1997).

classroom observation.<sup>35</sup> When observers note little evidence of change in the teaching they observe, they typically seek out plausible explanations. After interviews, observers sometimes conclude that teachers were not (or ill-) informed about the reformed practices. Others might attribute the lack of change to a teacher's misapplication of reform ideas. There are countless explanations for why change in classrooms might be minimal or nonexistent. Many such explanations focus on failures in the dissemination and support phases of implementation. And the blame is often well-placed.

These arguments sometimes seem to assume that teachers who are well-informed about a new practice and are given adequate assistance will faithfully enact reformed practices. So when changes in classrooms are minimal, observers might conclude that teachers lacked the necessary information and/or support to learn and practice in new ways. Such claims are as plausible as they are common. However, they sometimes discount the important role of personal response to demands for change.

Even though understanding and capacity are important prerequisites for change, they are insufficient to effect change in practice. Disseminating information, or simply telling teachers what to do, has never been very successful. Lewin (1947, 1951) and Schein (1972, 1992) remind us of the profound challenges of getting teachers to "unfreeze" their current ways of thinking and acting to consider and change those patterns. Making such changes can be traumatic (House, 1974; Marris, 1975).

### *Summary*

**Interpretation and application of reform ideas play a central role in implementation.** Interpretation occurs at every step of the way. As the messages of reform get closer to the classroom, teachers preparedness for reform and the meanings they attach to reform ideas gain importance. Teachers' responses to reforms are

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<sup>35</sup> Clearly, all observers bring themselves with them when they observe. Alan Peshkin (1988) challenges

intimately bound up with the lifeworld they inhabit. From the perspective of interpretation and application of reform ideas, we can see that there are three fundamental needs for implementation of reforms.

The first is a *clear understanding of the reform message*. Reforms need to be understood in order to be implemented. The second is *capacity to enact the reform message*. Teachers and others who are called upon to implement reforms need the **material** and social capacities to make requisite changes in their practice. The third **fundamental** need is a *positive response to the reform*. Inevitably, teachers' responses to **re**forms will influence how and whether reforms get implemented.

These three fundamental needs capture aspects of change that are requisite for **ch**ange, but they do not offer definitive criteria for how much understanding, capacity, or **po**sitive response is necessary for reforms to succeed. Reform success is not limited to **th**ose situations in which teachers are absolutely clear about reform ideas before they **sta**rt, where they have every capacity necessary to enact the reform completely, or only in **pl**aces where teachers are unequivocally favorable to reform ideas. But successful reform **re**quires enough understanding, enough capacity, and enough embrace of reform ideas to **mo**ve implementation forward.<sup>36</sup>

### Instruments of Implementation

Reformers can employ a diversity of means of conveying reform ideas and **at**tempting to win positive teacher responses to reform ideas. Among the tools reformers **em**ploy to implement reforms are those outlined by Lorraine McDonnell & Richard **El**more (1991). They offer a typology of policy instruments employed in reform

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researchers to take their own subjectivities into account in their analyses of research.

<sup>36</sup> We will make no attempt to quantify the adjective *enough*. The point is simply that these three thresholds must be crossed in order to move reform implementation forward. The disposition to attempt to **ch**ange (the third need) might be achieved by persuasion or by teachers' deference to authority. Regardless of the motive for the positive response, when there is openness to attempt change, this threshold is crossed.

implementation. These instruments differ in the ways they garner and sustain attention as well as the ways they encourage changes in teaching:

- *mandates* are rules governing the action of individuals and agencies and are intended to produce compliance;
- *inducements* transfer money to individuals or agencies in return for certain actions;
- *capacity-building* is the transfer of money for the purpose of investment in material, intellectual, or human resources; and
- *system-changing* transfers official authority among individuals and agencies in order to alter the system by which public goods and services are delivered. (p. 158)

**T**hese instruments reveal particular assumptions about what is needed and what will **e**voke positive responses to reform.

*Mandates* are used when policy-makers assume that the substance of the mandate **i**s a "good in its own right." Furthermore, the "action would not occur with desired **f**requency or consistency without the rule" (p. 169). *Inducements* assume that money is **r**equired to increase the incidence and consistency of some valued good or action. *Capacity-building* assumes that knowledge or skill competence is necessary to attain **s**ome future good. It further assumes that capacity is ". . . good in its own right or **i**s **i**nstrumental to other purposes" (p. 169). *System-changing* assumes that "[e]xisting **i**nstitutions, existing incentives cannot produce desired results, and that **c**hanging **d**istribution of authority changes what is produced" (p. 169).

These four types of reform instruments also point to factors that can elicit positive **r**esponses to reforms. *Mandates* highlight the role of pressure in reform. *Inducements* **h**ighlight the importance of financial sponsorship for reform and how money can **s**ometimes win compliance from teachers and other educators. *Capacity-building* **i**nstruments highlight the importance of socio-emotional and intellectual supports in **c**hange, focusing as it does on the needs of individuals who will make choices to **i**mplement reforms. *System-changing* instruments highlight the importance of cultural **a**nd organizational changes in accomplishing reform goals.

## REFORM OUTCOME AND CONTINUATION

In our discussion of reform outcomes and continuation in classrooms, we will summarize various studies of instructional reform to nominate factors that influence successful implementation. We distinguish the factors for analytical purposes, but they are inter-related and mutually reinforcing. After we lay out other factors of successful implementation, we will consider the central importance of teacher response to instructional reforms.

### Important Factors in Reform Implementation

We now turn to a discussion of the results from studies of instructional reform that highlight characteristics of reforms and reform implementation that contribute to successful reform implementation. Note that the factors we list here are general findings from a range of studies of educational reforms, and are not specifically focused on the deep reforms we referenced in Chapter 2. Our purpose here is to describe aspects of reforms and reform implementation that have been shown to be effective.

#### *Type of Reform*

As we noted in Chapter 2, deep reforms are much more difficult to enact than surface reforms. For example, reforms of the "teacher-centered" or "direct instruction" sort fare better than "student-centered" ones (Cohen, 1988; Cohen & Barnes, 1993; Cuban, 1984; Sykes, 1990). Part of the reason for this Cohen (1988) argues, is that the student-centered teaching he labels "adventurous" goes against the broader cultural assumptions about what it means to teach, learn, and know. Though reformers have repeatedly aimed at making such changes, they have met with little success.

Tyack & Cuban (1995) found that lasting reforms had the following characteristics:

- they were "structural add-ons [and] generally did not disturb the standard operating procedures of schools"
- they were "non-controversial to the lay people on school boards or in legislatures"
- they "produced influential constituencies interested in seeing them continue"
- "Reforms also tended to persist if they were required by law and easily monitored" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 57)

The finding that reforms that comport with the values and views of society are more successful makes a great deal of sense if we think back to the two central implementation questions we asked: How well do teachers and other educators understand the reforms? And, how do they respond to them? Because surface reforms deviate minimally from accepted conceptions of school, teaching, and learning, it is relatively easy for teachers to understand and enact them. On the other hand, deep reforms present challenges on both fronts. First, they are difficult to understand because they deviate from standard practices in significant ways. They go to the heart of practice and require major changes. Second, deep reforms go against the "grammar of schooling" and therefore increase teachers' uncertainty. As a result, teachers are understandably slow (if not reluctant) to embrace them.

### *Teacher Involvement in the Ongoing Development of Reform*

Successful reform efforts allow teachers a voice/role in the implementation process. Teachers are important to the success of reform. They need to be afforded the latitude to tailor reforms to their context, using their professional judgment (Barth, 1990; Cuban, 1984; Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Fullan, 1991; Lipsky, 1980; McLaughlin, 1987, 1990; Odden, 1991; Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

In light of the three fundamental implementation needs, this factor is obviously important. When teachers are involved in the ongoing development of reforms, they are, by definition, involved with shaping the meaning of the reform. For that reason, they will have a relatively easy time understanding the demands of these reforms. In the same

way, when teachers are involved in the definition and development of reforms, they will be attentive to the demands and the their own capacity and that of their fellow teachers. Changes and development of reforms would ensure that teachers either have or can develop requisite capacities to enact reforms. Lastly, though no factor can guarantee positive response to reform, it makes good sense that those involved in tailoring reforms would respond to them more favorably.

### *Teacher Commitment*

Successful reform efforts enlist the commitment of teachers (Cuban, 1984; Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Fullan, 1991; Sarason, 1982). Early change agent studies showed that commitment must be built "up-front," but later studies revealed that teacher commitment to reform sometimes develops after teachers have gained mastery with reform practices (Huberman & Miles, 1984; Odden, 1991). Citing what he called one of the important factors for the success of reform implementation, Fullan (1991) refers to teacher commitment as the "ongoing problem of ownership" of the reform (1991, p. 91). Teacher involvement in the development of reform (see factor above) contributes to this sense of ownership. Clearly, when teachers are involved in the evolution of reform policies, they will have ownership and their commitment will increase.

Sarason (1982) too highlights the benefits of teachers' "owning" the reform and becoming a constituency for change, arguing that teachers can become the implementers of change, not merely the objects of change when they want to. Many reformers, Sarason argues, ignore the central importance of teachers to the process of change:

The high frequency of failure in efforts at change can in part be attributed to the failure to see teachers as a constituency that . . . needed to be informed and involved at all stages of the change process. That is to say, the task was to get teachers to feel committed to the process and goals of change. (Sarason, 1982, p. 293)

Though the studies are clear about the importance of teacher commitment, they do not often enumerate ways teacher support is won by advocates and change agents. From

these and other studies, however, it is clear that teacher support is sometimes won by enthusiastic selling of the innovation by educational entrepreneurs and/or administrators in schools and districts, leadership and exhortation of charismatic leaders, involvement and commitment that grown in professional networks and organizations, interest and commitment shown by fellow teachers toward reforms, and the like (House, 1974; Huberman & Miles, 1984).

This finding about the importance of teacher commitment to reform points directly to the issue of "teacher response to reform." Unsurprisingly, reforms that garner teacher commitment are more likely to succeed than those that fail to do so. In some cases, understanding of reforms coupled with the capacity to change increases teachers' commitment to reforms. Nonetheless, understanding of reforms and capacity for change are not always prerequisites for teacher commitment. Sometimes teacher commitment to reform grows over time as teachers attempt to enact reforms in their classrooms. They grow to be more committed to it as they gain mastery of the reformed practices (Huberman & Miles, 1984; Odden, 1991). In other situations, teachers embrace reform ideas on the basis of someone's recommendation or in deference to a personality who sells the general idea without spelling out the way the general reform would be worked out in practice (Gross, et al., 1971).

### *Pressure*

Successful reform efforts provide pressure to change (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Fullan, 1991; Huberman & Miles, 1984; McLaughlin, 1987). Without pressure to change, teachers can easily deflect the ideas and "demands" of the reform. This finding is consistent with others that reveal that top-down initiated efforts not only could work, but actually were successful in more instances than bottom-up initiated change efforts (Huberman & Miles, 1984).

Teachers need pressure to change. When they feel little or no pressure to change,

they are apt to discount or disregard reforms (Huberman & Miles, 1984). When reforms lack administrative support and/or pressure, teachers might reasonably conclude that they are a low priority in their schools and districts. Strategic pressure can help focus attention on demands of reforms, and increase the chances that reforms will garner more than fleeting interest (Odden, 1991).

### *On-going Training and Support*

Successful reform efforts provide teachers and others involved in reform adequate intellectual, emotional, and material supports as they attempt to change their practice (Cohen, 1988; Cohen & Barnes, 1993; Cuban, 1984; Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Fullan, 1991; Marris, 1975; McLaughlin, 1987, 1990; Weissglass, 1994). Teachers need support, and they need it in the breach, on demand (VanNote-Chism, 1985). Important sources of support are central office staff and site administrators (Huberman & Miles, 1984; Odden, 1991). Odden (1991) summarizes the importance of ongoing support for implementation efforts this way:

Extensive, intensive, ongoing training and classroom specific assistance for learning new instructional strategies was critical . . . . Ongoing assistance was the *sine* (sic) *qua non* for effective implementation when change in classroom practice was needed to put a new program into place. All studies, including Rand and post-Rand studies, documented the importance of this factor. (Odden, 1991, p. 307)

Support is especially vital in cases where the reform requires major changes in teachers' thinking and practice (Lewin, 1947, 1951; Marris, 1975; Schein, 1972, 1992; Wheelis, 1973; Whiteside, 1978). When teachers are required to interpret and implement reforms on their own, they often founder, especially when they attempt to enact practices about which they know very little (Ball, 1990; Cohen, 1990; Cohen & Ball, 1990a, 1990b; Wilson, 1990a). Without guidance and support, they risk interpreting and enacting the reform in conservative ways (what Fullan calls "false clarity") or attempting to make huge changes all at once, which often creates what Fullan calls "painful unclarity" (Fullan, 1991, p. 35).

Teachers' need for support includes intellectual support to help them understand reform changes as well as material and moral support as they work through the challenges of changing their practice. The combination of intellectual, material, and socio-emotional support can increase the capacity for change as well as teachers' willingness to work through the struggle of making change.

The last two factors (i.e., pressure and support) work in tandem to focus teachers' attention on reform ideas and encourage enactment of reform ideas once they have consented to attempt to change their practice (McLaughlin, 1987). Reform efforts that combine pressure with support are typically more successful than reforms that either require major changes with little support or provide support but require little in the way of change (Huberman & Miles, 1984). Pressure and support increase the chances that teachers will take reforms seriously enough to learn about them and commit to enact changes in their classrooms.

The four implementation factors we have described can be divided into two groups. The first two focus on *content of reforms*, and the last two focus on *persons of reform*. To briefly recap, the first factor describes the role of reform content as it is initially presented in reform messages. In that regard, we mentioned a basic division between deep and surface reforms, noting that deep reforms present greater challenges than surface reforms. The second factor reveals the value of teacher involvement in the ongoing development of reforms through the process of "mutual adaptation" (Lindblom, 1959, McLaughlin, 1987). The third and fourth factors describe the importance of a strategic combination of pressure and support on the part of agents of reform (including authorities in schools and districts) to help teachers develop capacity for change as well as a willingness to attempt to enact reforms in their classrooms.

### *The Culture of the School*

Cultural characteristics in schools influence the ways reforms are received,

interpreted, and enacted (Bryk, 1988; Chrispeels, 1992; Elmore, Peterson, & McCarthy, 1995; Fullan, 1991; House, 1974; Lipsky, 1980; Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1982, 1990).

Even though the culture of schools shapes the ways reforms are received, reformers often fail to take the school culture seriously enough (Sarason, 1982, 1990). This oversight contributes to underestimates of the difficulty of influencing and shaping school cultures and practices in schools (Cohen, 1988; Fullan, 1991; House, 1974; Marris, 1975; Sarason, 1982, 1990).

At the start of our discussion of the culture of schools, it is important to note that we are not employing strict anthropological definitions, but more common-sense notions of "culture." We are focused here on the value-based milieu in which teachers work. In ways we talked about above in our discussion of life-worlds, school cultures operate by invisible forces (often imperceptibly) within and among members of schools to influence the thoughts, values, commitments, and actions of the members of the school community.

School cultures not only help teachers interpret reform messages, they provide teachers and staff with intellectual and emotional resources and support that can influence their willingness and ability to work through the challenges of change. School cultures are the ground in which seeds of reform are planted.

School cultures differ in important ways as to the degree and kinds of support they provide and the extent to which they nurture the seeds of reform. In Chapter 2, we described in detail the "regularities" of schools, the socialization of teachers, and the lives many teachers live in schools. Because of their cellular structure, most school cultures and the teachers who live in them are conservative, individualistic, and presentist (Lortie, 1975). Those characteristics make the typical school culture (and the typical teacher) highly resistant to change (Cuban, 1984; Cusick, 1992; Lipsky, 1980, Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1982; Waller, 1932/1961).

Other schools have characteristics that make them hospitable places for reform. There are many ways to characterize supportive contexts for teaching and reform, but

most of them emphasize the importance of building capacity for teaching and reform. Most also reference the importance of socio-emotional support that can help teachers decide they will attempt to take the difficult initial steps of changing their teaching practices, and can sustain them in the process of change.

The culture of the school is not a simple factor but a complex of factors and characteristics. Arguably, one of the central characteristics of positive school cultures is the opportunity for teachers to learn about new practices and to improve their individual and collective capacities for change. Obviously, where teachers are not given opportunities to learn about and practice reformed ideas, they will struggle to implement them, if they make the attempt at all. For that reason, learning opportunities are valuable in the process of reform. In her study of teachers' workplaces, Susan Rosenholtz (1989) provides a list of organizational characteristics that account for 79% of the variance in teacher learning opportunities in schools:

- goal-setting activities that accentuate specific instructional objectives (students' basic skills mastery) toward which to point one's improvement;
- clear and frequent evaluation by principals, who identify improvement needs, and who monitor the progress teachers make in achieving them;
- shared teaching goals that give legitimacy and support and create pressure to conform to norms of school renewal; and
- collaboration that at once enables and compels teachers to offer and request advice in helping each other improve instructionally. (Rosenholtz, 1989: pp. 102-103)

This list of characteristics echoes some of the factors we outlined above, with a special emphasis on support for, and pressure to, change. Because teacher learning is central to reform implementation, schools that place a focus on learning, create expectations for change, and support those efforts, will be places where reform has a greater likelihood of succeeding.

Another way to view the culture and contexts of teaching is to consider the organizational structures through the lens of what is called Quality Work Life (QWL). In their review of the characteristics of schools that mark Quality Work places, Karen Louis

& Betsann Smith (1990) nominated seven characteristics that were evident in schools where teachers were committed to their jobs and enjoyed their work:

1. Respect from relevant adults.
2. Participation in decision making.
3. Frequent and stimulating professional interaction.
4. A high sense of efficacy.
5. Use of skills and knowledge.
6. Resources to carry out the job.
7. Goal congruence. (Louis & Smith, 1990, pp. 35-37)

Most of these characteristics are self-explanatory. Unsurprisingly, they include reference to the importance of knowledge and other resources in creating capacity for good practice and for improving practice. As we pointed out above, teachers will struggle with reform when they lack the resources and support to take up the challenge of change.

This list also points to the importance of constructive and supportive peer relationships in the workplace, again echoing our findings above. Elaborating why professional interpersonal interaction is important, Louis & Smith (1990) say the following:

Collaborative work with peers who are within the school increases teachers' sense of affiliation with the school and their sense of mutual support and responsibility for the effectiveness of instruction (Little, 1984; Miles, Louis, Rosenblum, Cipollone, & Farrar, 1986; Newmann, Rutter, & Smith, 1988). As Bryk, Lee, and Smith (1989) indicate, what changes is the "sense of community." (Louis & Smith, 1990, p. 36)

Intimately related to the findings about collaboration in schools and the value of community are the findings about goal congruence, or the value of common norms and goals in the workplace. When teachers' personal goals align with those of their peers and the school as a whole, they are supported and confirmed in their beliefs and actions based on those values and beliefs.

Teachers must feel that there is a connection between their personal goals and values and those of the school as a whole. Where values and goals are not congruent, alienation is likely to result (Cohn et al., 1987; Metz et al., 1988).

(Louis & Smith, 1990, p. 37)

Goal congruence not only helps build a sense of community, it also helps foster good practice and student learning in schools. When teachers in schools place a high priority on student learning and come together with common commitments and values, the results can be quite positive (Elmore, 1995). Teachers in these schools feel a sense of collective responsibility that encourages their best effort as well as a distributive sense of accountability across the teaching staff (McDonald, 1996).

. . . when the values and norms of the school focused attention on instruction and teachers took responsibility for student performance, teacher empowerment seemed to lead to significant changes in pedagogy and changes in pedagogy seemed related to changes in student learning. (Elmore, 1995, p. 25)

Regrettably, Louis & Smith's (1990) seven characteristics of quality workplaces are often absent from schools and other "street-level bureaucracies" (Lipsky, 1980). Their absence often means workplaces are quite resistant to calls for change. However, when norms in schools are collaborative and focus on improving teaching and student performance, reform is often more successful. Janet Chrispeels (1992) found "a close link between the existence of collaborative structures and the successful implementation of changes in either school technology or school culture" (p. 136). Collaborative structures encourage enactment of reforms partly by providing internal networks of support for teachers as they struggle with the challenges of change. This finding is consistent with the third QWL characteristic, "frequent and stimulating professional interaction," listed above.

This kind of support is sometimes focused at the site-level, but teachers can also find support for change in professional organizations and voluntary teacher networks outside of schools (Lieberman & Grolnick, 1997; McLaughlin, 1997; Parker, 1977). In their study of teacher networks, Ann Lieberman & Maureen Grolnick (1997) state that Allen Parker's (1977) study of 60 networks documented the value of networks for educational improvement. He also nominated "five key ingredients" of teacher networks:

- A strong sense of commitment to the innovation

- A sense of shared purpose
- A mixture of information sharing and psychological support
- An effective facilitator
- Voluntary participation and equal treatment (Parker 1977, p. 25, quoted in Lieberman & Grolnick, 1997, p. 193)

One of Parker's (1977) "key insights," Lieberman & Grolnick (1997) tell us, is that members of these kinds of networks "have a sense of being a part of a special group or movement" (quoted in Lieberman & Grolnick, 1997, p. 193). The networks he describes provide teachers with "connections" to others, commitment to reform ideas, support as they struggle to enact reforms, and a sense of belonging to a community of like-minded men and women.

Networks are helpful to teachers largely because they have to be. Teachers volunteer to participate in these networks, and without the voluntary involvement of teachers, the networks would wither and die. Teacher networks are dependent on interested teachers and schools and districts for their survival, so they need to respond to teachers' felt needs in ways that other educational organizations do not (Lieberman & Grolnick, 1997).

It is most important to understand that, while [teacher networks] have all the problems of formal organizations, they must, in addition, find ways to keep the commitment, energy, and participation of their membership. Where formal organizations *should* do this, networks *must* do it to stay alive. Despite these problems, however, successful networks have powerful effects on their members. (Lieberman & Grolnick, 1997, p. 213, emphasis in original)

Lieberman & Grolnick (1997) proceed to give six reasons why networks have what they call "powerful effects" on teachers. The reasons they list build on one another, and their final reason summarizes their observations about networks. It also underscores the importance of communities and cultures in the process of interpreting and enacting reforms:

. . . when networks, coalitions, and partnerships last long enough to create continuing learning communities, cultures based on mutual knowledge building, learning, and collaborations replace the transformation of knowledge from one

institution to another. These cultures, focused on critical issues of school reform, place educational practice at the center--providing the kind of social and professional nourishment that leads members to invest time, effort, and commitment far beyond what they give to typical professional development opportunities . . . (Lieberman & Grolnick, 1997, p. 213)

At the heart of these teacher networks is community. In these networks, teachers engage with one another around issues of teaching and learning, and often develop common values and commitments that shape their individual and collective views of practice.<sup>37</sup>

We have observed the benefits of school cultures that support teacher learning and have common goals and values. We have also seen the benefits of teacher networks. Unsurprisingly, schools that are most successful in making change feature a combination of internal and external support networks for teachers and staff:

. . . vibrant internal learning communities dynamically plugged into two-way relationships with external networks made the difference [in successful schools] . . . Collaborative work of the kind described in these studies embodies socioemotional support as well as technical assistance. (Fullan, 1997, p. 228)

In our discussion of school cultures, we have found that nurturing school cultures feature many of the following characteristics:

- They have adequate intellectual and material resources (i.e., they possess the capacity for good teaching).
- They have common values, that often include a central focus on student learning.
- They feature collaboration among faculty and staff
- They provide support to one another and receive support from outside consultants and networks.
- They are places where teachers desire to be and work.

Schools that are hospitable to good teaching and reform possess a positive sense of community. They are places where teachers are supported, where they are challenged to take risks to improve their teaching and student learning, and where they desire to be.

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<sup>37</sup> Wilson (2003) argues that hope for successful reform of mathematics in deep ways depends in large measure on the development of networks in which "civil, constructive discourse" can occur (p. 216).

These cultures provide, as it were, rich soil in which quality teacher lives and practices can grow and bear fruit. Most schools lack the characteristics we have named, but most successful efforts to reform teaching and learning occur in schools that possess them. In other words, the "culture of the school" figures prominently in the "problem of change" (Bryk, 1988; Chrispeels, 1993; Cohen, 1988; Elmore, Peterson, & McCarthey, 1995; Fullan, 1991; House, 1974; Lortie, 1975; Lipsky, 1980; Sarason, 1982, 1990).

Because of the centrality of culture to teachers' receptivity and responses to reform, some reformers suggest targeting the culture of schools explicitly in what are often called "restructuring" or "organizational reforms." For some, cultural change has emerged as the central task of reform:

The meaning of change for the future does not simply involve implementing single innovations effectively. It means a radical change in the culture of schools and the conception of teaching as a profession . . . *cultural change is the agenda*. (Fullan, 1991, pp. 142-143, emphasis in original)

Of the factors that influence the ways reforms are enacted in schools, the culture of the school is fundamental. In some cases, reform success will depend more on how much the culture of schools can be changed than on the particular content of the reforms that are adopted to improve instruction. This is because the positive cultural characteristics are beneficial in their own right. They can foster good teaching practice, regardless of specific responses to particular calls for instructional reform.

### *Challenges of Changing Cultures*

Naming the need for cultural change in schools is but the simplest part of changing them. The challenge is profound, in large measure because cultural change always entails deep changes. Cultures are stable and, in a sense, self-perpetuating, because they are functional. Cultural characteristics and the rituals of life in schools develop and become engrained in schools because they help the schools run smoothly. They help the persons who live and work there make meaning of their lives together. Cultural characteristics infuse and surround the entire life of schools and the persons in

them. As a result, changing cultures can be profoundly disruptive.

Consider, for example, the challenge of restructuring schools to make them less isolating and more collaborative. It makes good sense that teachers who have been socialized in isolating contexts and have been taught to teach independently would find it difficult to work in more collaborative ways. Lipsky (1980) underscores the challenge of this kind of change: "The hardest reform of all will be to develop in street-level bureaucracies supportive environments in which peer review is joined to peer support and assistance in the working out of problems in practice" (Lipsky, 1980, p. 206).

Part of the difficulty of making organizational changes is the irony inherent in such reforms. Structural reforms are often intended to make schools more hospitable to change. But the schools that most need to change in these ways are, by definition, places that are inhospitable to change. That doesn't mean that organizational reforms are necessarily self-defeating. But it does mean they face challenges that other reforms do not. Consider, for example, this case:

It proved difficult for the schools in this study to evolve a shared sense of mission, develop norms of collegiality, establish a coordinated curriculum, and sustain high expectations without the existence of collaborative structures to bring teachers together not only in their grade level, but across grade levels and as a whole school. (Chrispeels, 1992, p. 136)

Reforms that seek to develop characteristics of positive cultures in places that lack them face an uphill battle, not just because they entail cultural change but precisely because the cultural characteristics most helpful to implementing fundamental changes are lacking in those schools.

### Structure-Instruction Connections

Our discussion to this point has focused on the challenges of making structural changes in schools, as if that would make all the difference. But changing structures in schools does not ensure changes in school cultures or in the teaching and learning that

goes on there. Structural changes that lack concomitant changes in the values and norms can lead to few if any changes in teaching practice:

. . . the relationship between structural change in schools and changes in teaching and learning are mediated by relatively powerful factors, such as the shared norms, knowledge, and skill of teachers, and that changing structure has a slippery and unreliable relationship to these mediating factors. A teacher who responds to the opportunities presented by longer class periods by showing the whole movie is a teacher who is pursuing old practices while working in a new structure. (Elmore, 1995)

Based on the mediating effects of the norms, knowledge, and skills, Elmore (1995) recommends that reformers ". . . focus first on changing norms, knowledge and skills at the individual and organizational level before they focus on changing structure . . ." (Elmore, 1995, p. 26).

Though Elmore's (1995) recommendations may help avoid "misuse" of new structures, establishing new norms in schools is no easier than establishing new structures. It might well be harder. This is because structures stand, in a sense, "outside" teachers. They are, in that sense, objective and manipulable. Norms and values, on the other hand, operate, if they are effective, "inside" persons who live and work within the structures in their schools. As a result, changing values is apt to be much more difficult than changing structures. One could perhaps force changes in structures by fiat, but values and norms will not yield to mandates in the same way. Elmore (1995) may be right about the priority of norms to structures, but there are no sure methods for changing the values and norms in schools.

Though it is impossible to change values and norms by fiat, reforms sometimes encourage schools to develop common values and supportive norms because research says they are important. Of course, not just any set of common goals and values will do:

. . . the shared values that ground the good school have a particular nature, and not any set of values will do. Teaching and learning are intimately personal human endeavors, the success of which requires commitment from its participants. The values underpinning the good school are qualities worthy of such commitment. They are expressions of individual and social qualities capable of engaging students in the difficult process of learning and providing teachers with personal gratification in what is otherwise an uncertain, demanding, and often frustrating undertaking . . . (Bryk, 1988, p. 276)

Goal congruence is important, but the goals and values of teachers in good schools also need to support teachers in their desire and commitment to engage students in learning subject matter. Good schools do not have common goals simply because some reform or reformer said they should. Their norms and goals center on good teaching because they genuinely believe good teaching makes a difference in student learning. Their common goals grow out of common convictions, not merely in response to reforms that demand that they develop common goals.

In summary, we can see that school structures, cultures, values, and teaching practice interact with one another, but the way they influence one another is slippery and inexact. It is not obvious how best to change the structures, cultures, and values of schools or the teachers in those schools in order to effect positive changes in teaching practice. Yet some school leaders and reformers have successfully established school cultures that have many of the positive characteristics we outlined above. What can we learn from their experience?

## CHANGING CULTURES

These "school culture success stories" reveal some interesting insights into how agents of reform were able to establish supportive contexts for teaching. Most conspicuous in these descriptions is the freedom of the leaders and teachers in these schools. This freedom is evident in several ways. The first is leadership for change. Schools with positive school cultures have strong, often independent, leaders. Almost without exception, these schools (or movements) had charismatic leaders who set the visions for their schools and then recruited teachers who committed themselves to the visions of practice set out by them.

Consider, for example, Deborah Meier's (1995) work at Central Park East High School in New York City. She established the school to make a difference in the lives of students who were often "left behind." She encouraged a focus on developing powerful

habits of mind in students who were not being well-served in their other schools and teachers embraced her vision. She hired her own staff, and was freed from district-guidelines and rules about how teachers could work together and with their students.

The importance of Meier's leadership and the leadership of others like her cannot be overstated. Impressed by leaders like Meier, Joseph McDonald (1996) offers a vision for the kind of leadership he considers necessary in schools today:

The image of leadership I have presented in this chapter is not that of a technical phenomenon. I am convinced that technical moves and innovations will not create the kind of schools we need for the twenty-first century. We need a kind of spiritual leadership instead, a leadership steeped in beliefs about what schools and children can be and passionately focused on enacting these beliefs, willing in the process to risk loss. (McDonald, 1996, p. 85)

Leaders, on this view, are more than administrators. Their work focuses on the values and visions of their school and staff, and their work is guided by an over-arching commitment to student learning. Charismatic leaders, like Deborah Meier, often lead by inspiring their followers to take risks, just as they take risks to establish new schools or remake schools in ways that make a difference for students in their schools.

Charismatic leaders can be leaders of entire reform "movements" as well as leaders of individual schools. Ted Sizer, for example, leads the Coalition of Essential Schools . Over fifteen years ago, Sizer (1984) cast a vision for improving America's schools in response to his (and others') perceptions that schools were failing to cultivate the life of the mind for many students. He offered a stern warning to America, and made a stark appraisal of current school routines and assumptions, and provided an alternative. He offered Nine Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools, and argued that they were all interconnected. By guiding education according to the Common Principles, and by working to develop curricula that responded to the local concerns and interests of students and communities, schools would be better able to cultivate academic

learning in schools.<sup>38</sup>

The second way freedom is manifest in these schools is faculty selection. Some of these schools were formed from scratch, and teachers were typically recruited or they volunteered. In schools where the cultures were changed, the changes overlapped with (and often followed from) changes in staffing. Replacements for those who left were teachers who "fit" the context and values of the schools (Peterson & Deal, 1999). In fact, all of the leaders made commitment to the values of the school a central criterion for selection. Teachers who ended up working in these schools were often persuaded by the rhetoric of the charismatic leaders, who cast visions for their school and for the teaching and learning they hoped would occur inside.

The selection and choice of staff is an important factor in good schools. Fred Newmann and Gary Wehlage's (1995) study of restructuring revealed that the schools where the organization and curriculum were changed in the direction of reforms were all schools of choice (both for students and faculty) or newly formed charter schools. In these schools, the freedom to select teachers who embraced the schools' vision was a key factor in their success. These schools managed to forge clear, shared goals, and to work interdependently to achieve them (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

In general, teachers and administrators in these schools were free to form cultures in which teachers could grow professionally and cultivate teaching practices they could embrace. For example, in *The Courage to Change*, Paul Heckman and colleagues (1996) describe what happened when a group of committed individuals, a motivated leader came together in a structure that allowed them to cooperate with one another in their attempts at change. They were freed to enact changes in their teaching. The changes were not mandated from outside, but were enacted because of their shared commitments to remake the instruction in their school. This focus on freedom is consistent with Roland Barth's

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<sup>38</sup> See Chapter 6 for a description of the Coalition and the work of establishing an "Essential School."

(1990) recommendation that the good school is one "where each adult has chosen to be" (p. 166).

Unsurprisingly, these schools often show significant positive effects in terms of changes in teaching and student learning. For example, Richard Elmore, Penelope Peterson, & Sarah McCarthy (1995) found that of three "exemplary schools" in their study, one actually made significant changes in pedagogy as a result of restructuring. Elmore (1995) describes what happened in this school that was begun as an alternative school in the mid-1970s:

. . . teachers were recruited initially based on their agreement with a particular approach to teaching. This agreement was reinforced over time by recruitment of teachers whose views matched those of existing teachers . . . . Even though teachers were responsible for a single group of students in a single classroom, they established strong patterns of formal and informal interaction outside the classroom, and they shared strong norms about what good teaching looked like. Not surprisingly, we found that classroom practice in this school looked very different from that in our other schools and closely approximated teachers espoused views of what good practice was. (Elmore, 1995, p. 24)

That school was built and nurtured through recruitment of likeminded staff members. They established a sense of community that was evident in the values and norms they held concerning instruction. The results of such a combination are powerful. In that school, teachers moved individually and collectively toward their espoused views of good practice.

In all of these examples, personnel and personalities played a central role. It did not matter whether new schools were being formed or old schools were being transformed, personnel (and changes in personnel) made a huge difference. The cases of schools with positive cultures also highlight the importance of strong leadership and recruitment of committed staff. Striking too, in these cases, is the value of "starting out fresh" and "starting over" rather than changing incrementally. In fact, one rarely reads of examples of leaders taking existing staffs and transforming them, their values, their culture, and their practice over a long span of time. That is not to say that such slow transformations never happen, just that they are less common than approaches that

change cultures relatively quickly by changing the personnel inside.

The success stories we have referenced offer existence proofs of the possible rather than proven recipes for success. When schools have strong leadership, a staff with common values, norms that reinforce good teaching practices, and the capacity for teaching in new ways, teachers realize greater possibilities to make positive changes in practice (Elmore, 1995). The basic message of these success stories is that nurturing school cultures make good teaching more likely and create more possibilities for successful reform.

However, it is important to add a caveat at the end of our discussion of positive school cultures. Revising structures in schools may support changes in teacher practice, but changing structures is insufficient to effect changes in the values or practices that go on there (Elmore, 1995). Furthermore, though norms and values in schools can influence teachers' responses to calls for changes in teaching, influences do not determine responses. Teachers respond to messages of reform in light of their school cultures, but teacher responses determine what changes occur in classrooms. In other words, regardless of the success of changing the norms, values, and capacities for teaching and for change, the success of reform rests ultimately on teachers' responses to reform ideas in their schools and classrooms.

#### PRIORITY OF PERSONAL RESPONSES TO INSTRUCTIONAL REFORM

The same caveat about human response could be applied to all the factors we outlined in our review of reform implementation. Each of the factors that were helpful in reform implementation makes it *more likely* that teachers will move toward their collective visions of practice (Elmore, 1995). However, presence of the factors does not mean teachers will move toward their collective visions of practice, just that they have a better opportunity to do so.

In Chapter 2, we saw that the typical school structure fosters cultures marked by

individualism, conservatism, and presentism (Lortie, 1975). But not every teacher in the "typical school" responds the same way to the typical culture in schools. Though many are influenced in ways we described in Chapter 2, others work against the norms of the school to establish very different practices from the average teacher (House, 1974; Lipsky, 1980; Lortie, 1975). The same thing is true when school cultures are nurturing. There are no guarantees that all teachers in a nurturing school will respond favorably and/or conform to the norms of the school in ways that others in the school might hope or expect. Teachers in schools make choices, and whether they make constructive changes in their teaching depends ultimately on their responses to the calls for reform they receive. Whether teachers are in typical isolating schools or in supportive schools where they are challenged, well-equipped, and well-supported in their efforts to enact reforms, reform success depends on how they respond.

As teachers respond to reforms, a central factor in their response is the content of reforms, specifically what they promise and what changes would be required to enact them. Perhaps the fundamental content criterion teachers employ in evaluating and responding to instructional reforms is how well the reform meets needs they perceive in their own classrooms and schools.

We learned earlier that most teachers welcome reforms and assistance when they can help teachers with specific problems they are encountering in their work (Lipsky, 1980; Lortie, 1975). We also saw that ongoing practical support was important to reform success (McLaughlin, 1987, 1990; Odden, 1991; VanNote-Chism, 1985). If we couple these findings with observations we drew in Chapter 2 about the highly personal nature of teaching, we can conclude that teachers are interested in learning things that will help them meet the problems of practice as they encounter them. They will also seek out those practices that are consistent with their style and are likely to help them move toward the goals they hold for their teaching (Lortie, 1975).

Hargreaves (1997) calls this the "ethic of practicality." Teachers, he says, respond

to messages of reform with an eye to whether the reform can help them, in their particular classrooms, teach more effectively:

At the heart of change for most teachers is the issue of whether it is *practical* . . . . In the ethic of practicality among teachers is a powerful sense of what works and what doesn't; of which changes will go and which will not--not in the abstract, or even as a general rule, but for *this* teacher in *this* context. In this simple yet deeply influential sense of practicality among teachers is the distillation of complex and potent combinations of purpose, person, politics and workplace constraints. To ask whether a new method is practical is therefore to ask much more than whether it works. It is also to ask whether it fits the context, whether it suits the person, whether it is in tune with their purposes, and whether it helps or harms their interests. (Hargreaves, 1997, p. 12)

Hargreaves is writing in a long tradition. Though some have lamented teachers' focus on practical solutions to the problems of practice (Elmore, 1996), the characteristic is well-documented (Huberman, 1984; Lipsky, 1980; VanNote-Chism, 1985).

Teachers' focus on practicality places huge hurdles in front of reformers who seek to solve problems that teachers do not recognize. Persons of reform will struggle to find the energy or desire to undertake major (or even minor) changes toward meeting an unrecognized need. For example, Sarason (1982) says the New Math reforms failed in part because the reform was aimed at a problem few teachers recognized: "There are no grounds for assuming that any aspect of the impetus for change came from teachers, parents or children. The teachers were not 'hurting' because of the existing curriculum" (p. 49). If Sarason (1982) is right, and teachers did not feel a need for changing their math teaching, then teachers' resistance and/or their deflection of reform ideas makes eminent sense. If teachers don't acknowledge the problem a reform is seeking to solve, they will naturally struggle for motivation to apply the "fix" provided for by reform.

In his book, *How People Change*, Allan Wheelis (1973) provides a psychological explanation for the kinds of response teachers gave to the New Math.

. . . since a problem is something for which a solution is sought, only the patient can designate it. The therapist may perceive that a certain conflict leads regularly to such and such situations which cause suffering. But a cause of suffering is not a problem unless it is taken as such by the patient. (Wheelis, 1973, p. 19)

Though Wheelis (1973) is describing the process of therapy, his emphasis on the

importance of problem recognition is as apt in reform as it is in psychotherapy. Persons are simply unlikely to embrace a call to fix a problem they do not perceive.

In the circumstances Wheelis (1973) describes, one major role for the psychotherapist is to awaken patients to the problematic aspects of their current ways of thinking and being in the world. But psychotherapists cannot change individuals' perceptions of themselves, their lives, or the world around them. Patients must change themselves and their perceptions, often with the help of a therapist, if change is to occur. In the same way, teachers in schools often need reformers or agents of reform to awaken them to the problematic dimensions of their practice, but unless teachers can (or do) recognize the problem, they will not actively seek a solution.

Teachers, like all of us, are sometimes reluctant to embrace the demands of change, even when they recognize problems in their practice. Teachers frequently resist reforms that entail risky changes that lead to uncertainty and unease (House, 1974). Deep reforms are especially difficult because they require major reorientations in teachers' beliefs and/or practices.

Wheelis (1973) contrasts changes that require mere insight with those aimed at changing "who one is." The latter changes require great effort and much time to effect. It should be no surprise, then, that persons would be slow to take the risks attendant with making fundamental changes, even when they recognize the need for them. And this is true even in contexts where all the favorable conditions for changing practices in schools are present.

### Responses to Deep Reform

In our discussion up to this point, we have offered some insights into the challenges faced by what we have labeled "deep reforms," and why such reforms struggle in ways that "surface reforms" do not. This distinction between deep and surface reforms parallels the distinction Wheelis (1973) draws between changes that require mere insight

and those that require a redefinition of the whole person. Some reforms require acknowledgement of a problem and entail relatively minor changes, often at the edges of teaching practice. But other changes require more.

Take, for example, recent reforms like those fostered by the *NCTM Standards* (e.g., math reforms in California in the 1980s and 1990s). These reforms ask teachers to: value different things; to believe different things about subject matter, knowledge, themselves, their role, and students; to practice in very different ways--with students and their peers. These reforms challenge dominant school and societal assumptions about knowledge and what it means to teach and learn. Deep reforms of this sort demand changes in what members of school communities value, what they believe, as well as how they live and work.

From work they have done thinking about what the *NCTM Standards* imply for practice, Deborah Ball (1996) and Lampert (1985), among others, demonstrate from their own practice how difficult teaching mathematics in "reformed" or "adventurous" ways is. They also argue that it is not self-evident how the many simultaneous commitments in teaching might best be honored. It is least clear when these questions are raised in particular situations of practice, where multiple goals and purposes rarely coalesce and frequently compete with one another.

The math reforms inspired by the *NCTM Standards* are underdetermined (Ball, 1996). They may in fact be un-determinable. The reforms advocate a kind of teaching that opens up uncertainty rather than diminishing it. Teachers are required to select or invent the pedagogical moves they will make, what approaches or directions they will take in their teaching. It is not possible, with such a complicated and rich reform vision, to specify steps teachers should take next. Mathematics has its own rich tapestry of connections and patterns. Which of these should the teacher pursue now? Thence to which? And after that? There is simply no script that can adequately capture the panoply of possibilities open to the attentive and inventive teacher.

Reforms like these will be difficult to enact for many reasons. The teaching recommended by these reforms is underdetermined and increases the risks and uncertainties of an already uncertain practice (Ball, 1995). Most teachers have never experienced this kind of teaching, have few examples of what it would look like in practice, are often unsure of its merits, and may doubt their own ability to teach in such ways. For these reasons, teachers are often reluctant to embrace such reforms. Even when teachers attempt to enact reforms, they often struggle to enact them in ways that reformers might recognize as "reformed" (Ball, 1990; Cohen, 1990; Cohen & Ball, 1990; Fullan, 1991).

### SCHOOL CULTURES AND DEEP REFORM

We have been focusing on the priority of personal response in instructional reform. Because teachers interpret things in light of their cultural understandings, one central factor in their response is the culture in which they work. We spent a great deal of time in Chapter 2 and here talking about school cultures, and the way cultures influence the interpretations and responses teachers make to calls for change. School cultures, in a sense, provide the "soil" in which good teaching and reforms might grow. Differences in school cultures, like differences in soil, influence the kinds of practices and the kinds of growth that occurs. Some school cultures are collaborative and supportive of good teaching and change, but most are like the typical culture we described in Chapter 2.

Teachers in typical schools have relatively little interaction with other teachers, and rarely have much support in their attempts to interpret and enact reform messages. As a result, teachers are apt to make rather conservative use of reform messages (Lortie, 1975). They will be especially apt to diminish the demands of deep reforms because of the difficulty of understanding the reform message and/or they may be unwilling to take on the profound uncertainties involved in attempts to enact it (Fullan, 1991).

Provided with little guidance, few resources, and little time, even the most highly motivated teacher must resort to personal experience to resolve inherent classroom dilemmas. Under such circumstances, one must expect to see teacher-initiated activities, various subtle devices . . . of converting the reorientation into a variation of the conventional classroom with the innovation being transformed into something conforming to the exigencies of the teacher's world. . . . Innovations that conformed to classroom demands, often the least innovative, would be most likely to be adopted. Only tremendously creative teachers would invent new tactics of implementation (there would be some) and implement the innovation in conformance with the original ideology. Those who did not agree with the basic concept of the open classroom or who saw neither extrinsic or intrinsic rewards in it would not even attempt it.

The major point is that traditional instruction is a positively organized strategy to deal with the classroom situation, and it is perceived as having strong positive benefits. Innovation, of course, offers benefits, but these must compete with the benefits offered by traditional instruction. (House, 1974, pp. 80-81)

Because their current practices often work for them, teachers often deflect or redirect calls for deep change, by converting them to surface changes that are more manageable for them in their particular contexts. They are often reluctant to give up the benefits of traditional instruction for unknown benefits of deep reform that requires great effort and entails great uncertainty.

House (1974) is not alone in his skepticism about the likelihood that poorly supported teachers would embrace the challenges of deep reform. For example, Cuban (1984) writes the following:

The teacher needs to be persuaded that a change will be better for children, not undercut his or her authority, and can be adapted to the current setting. Where modest changes have occurred, they have occurred because teachers have absorbed rival beliefs that compete with existing ones. They embraced different ways of viewing the classroom. Also, I have argued that changing teachers' minds needs to be closely bound to tangible help in putting those ideas into practice. Because most instructional reforms impose increased demands upon the teachers' limited time and energy, help from outside the classroom is essential. (Cuban, 1984, p. 262)

Lortie (1975), for his part, takes his cue from the typical reward structures in schools, and posits that teachers have few incentives to attempt major changes.

Given teachers' desires to maximize their psychic rewards, and given the limited extent to which teachers are supported in attempts to make change. They would naturally be reluctant to follow the challenging demands of reforms that lead to initial uncertainty.

A reward system that emphasizes psychic rewards based on somewhat

indeterminate criteria for achievement reinforces individualistic orientations. The teacher who is burdened with ambiguous criteria must select his own indicators of effectiveness; this gives him the chance to align his goals with his won capacities and interests. Having worked out a satisfactory balance, a teacher is likely to resist conditions that would force change—he has a stake in autonomy. The ideology of individualism serves teachers' purposes; it undergirds psychic rewards; the circle is closed. (Lortie, 1975, p. 210)

Teachers in most schools, in other words, have incentives to maintain current practices and resist the demands and challenges of (especially deep) reforms that come their way. Those teachers who have few supports would need to make heroic efforts to work out the practices on their own, but even teachers who have significant supports might reasonably question how the reformed practices would work in their context or how much the reformed practices would increase the psychic rewards they receive.

As we said above, some schools have developed more positive, nurturing school cultures. They typically feature strong leaders, cooperative, likeminded staffs, freedom, common goals and values focused on student learning, and a sense of community. Teachers in these schools often embrace the sorts of practices some reformers are seeking to spread by way of reform. As a result, we might expect that teachers in nurturing schools would be more likely to embrace the sorts of demands entailed by deep reforms.

However, even if nurturing school cultures seem to offer the best hope for deep reform, that does not mean that teachers in them would be open to deep reform. In fact, we might expect to find that teachers in supportive school contexts are more satisfied with their current practice than teachers in less supportive schools. They might consider that their current practice is working, and be unwilling to compromise what is working for promises that some alternative practice might work better (House, 1974).

One irony of reform, then, is that schools with strong cultural identities might be particularly difficult to change when reforms call for major changes in belief and practice. Schools with positive school cultures might be open to reforms that fit their culture, values, norms, and beliefs about teaching and learning, but they may resist reforms that require major changes in those core beliefs and practices. In other words, it

may be hard to implement deep reforms in schools that have positive cultural characteristics but which maintain their focus on traditional practices (e.g., Effective Schools).

This means that deep reforms face stiff odds both in schools where teachers are isolated from one another and in schools where teachers support one another in their (often traditional) visions of good teaching. The sobering conclusion is that those communities that are most supportive of one another (and therefore most likely to be able to sustain radical changes in teacher practice) may be the ones least likely to feel the need for change. They are the most successful in the current mode of teaching practice, and their cultures may be stronger and more resistant to outside cultural influences.

### CRITERIA FOR TEACHER RESPONSE

Regardless of the cultures they inhabit, teachers are the ones who must respond to reforms. And the ultimate fate of instructional reforms hinges on teachers' reception and response to messages of reform. We have talked about some of the reasons why teachers respond to reforms as they do. Summarizing, we conclude that, all other things being equal, teachers respond favorably to reforms that meet these four criteria:

- Reforms respond to needs teachers perceive.
- Reforms meet teachers' "practicality test." In other words, teachers are convinced the changed practices will work for them in their particular contexts.
- Reform benefits outweigh the costs entailed in making the change.
- Teachers have adequate support in the process of change, and have adequate capacity to enact the reform.<sup>39</sup>

This does not mean that teachers will only embrace reforms when these four criteria are

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<sup>39</sup> This includes the sort of psychological safety Schein (1992) referenced as necessary in the process of unfreezing.

met, but they highlight central reasons why teachers respond to reforms as they do.

At this point, it is well to note once again the primacy of interpretation in the process of instructional reform. That is to say that teachers' judgments about whether reforms satisfy these four criteria are based on their perceptions and interpretations of reform messages and the ways they believe the reforms and the support for reform will play out in their particular cases. Teacher judgments about these criteria are always made in the context of their school cultures from the perspective of the practices they have crafted for themselves.

These four criteria do not exhaust the factors that influence teachers' responses. In fact, the list only features a few of the major rational influences on teachers' responses to change. There are other factors that contribute to teachers' responses. For example, some teachers might embrace a change because their peers have embraced it. Others might reject reforms for the same reason. Some teachers might be motivated to attempt change based on stirring rhetoric from the leader of their school or a reform movement (Muncey & McQuillan, 1993a; Smith & Keith, 1971). Others might be reluctant (or may see themselves as unable) to consider changes of any kind, regardless of the merit of the reform. These affective reasons for embracing or rejecting reforms are no less consequential to the success of reforms than the four criteria we have named, but they are more difficult to manipulate by way of educational policy.

One dispositional factor that influences teachers responses to reform is their general openness to learning opportunities outside their classrooms. As an indicator of teachers' dispositions toward calls for change, we can look at participation rates at professional development opportunities. R. N. Bush (1984), for example, concluded that 5% of teachers are "omnivores who will try anything new and exciting presented to them in their classrooms," 20% "are active consumers ready and willing to be persuaded," 50% are "passive consumers," while 10% are "withdrawn" and 15% are "entrenched" (Hart, 1990, p. 248). These findings do not reveal teachers' interest in particular reforms or

even their general interest in reform, but they do indicate that relatively few teachers are actively seeking ways to improve their teaching.

Elmore (1996) arrives at similar percentages when he tracks those he calls "intrinsically interested" in seeking to find ways to improve their practice:

Ambitious and challenging practice in classrooms thus occurs roughly in proportion to the number of teachers who are intrinsically motivated to question their practice on a fundamental level and look to outside models to improve teaching and learning. The circumstantial evidence suggests that, at the peak of reform periods, this proportion of teachers is roughly 25 percent of the total population, and that it can decrease to considerably less than that if the general climate for reform is weak. (Elmore, 1996, p. 16)

Judith Warren Little (1993) also reports disappointing results of efforts to provide after school inservice to teachers on a voluntary basis in the Illinois Writing Project. She offers some possible reasons for teachers' lack of participation:

. . . What we do not learn is why. Were teachers opposed to the assumptions and practices of the Writing Project? Unimpressed with the quality of the workshops, or already expert in the practices? Pressed by the demands of too many projects, or of too burdensome a teaching load? Committed to other activities that required time, thought, and energy? Not persuaded that participation would make a difference to the students they taught? Discouraged by failures of administrative leadership? Truly discouraged about teaching? (Little, 1993, p. 141)

The list of possible reasons for nonparticipation in workshops points to reasons why teachers might respond negatively to reforms or reform efforts, in general. Some of these reasons center on a rational appraisal of the fit and practicality of the inservice, but others highlight the importance of extra-school and affective concerns.

We should note that teachers do not typically run through criteria when they receive reform messages. More often, their responses evolve over time, as they work through interpretations of reform messages and the demands for change, as they judge the level of support they will have in the process of change, and as they contemplate the difficulty and promise of the changes.

Teachers often change their perceptions of reforms during the process of implementation. Some teachers who are reluctant at the start of implementation become convinced that the reform is, after all, worth their effort. Some teachers, in fact, grow

committed to reforms after they attempt and gain a sense of mastery of the reformed practices (Huberman & Miles, 1984). On the other hand, teachers who are committed to reforms at the start can become increasingly resistant to reform if the vision for practice remains vague or when they fail to receive clear guidance and/or sufficient support in their efforts to make change (Smith & Keith, 1971).

Recognizing that teacher commitment to reform ideas is rarely instantaneous, some approaches to implementation work to create motivation by cultivating a sense of need on the part of teachers for reformed practices. For example, in our discussion of the normative-re-educational approach to implementation, we mentioned how motivation for change can be catalyzed through "unfreezing" (Lewin, 1947). But it is not easy to get teachers to "unfreeze" their current patterns because they are heavily--and personally--invested in their practices. And teachers are invested in their practice because it works for them (Hargreaves, 1997; House, 1974; Lortie, 1975). Furthermore, as we noted above, the personal changes entailed by deep reform can be psychologically painful.

In his book, *Loss and Change*, Peter Marris (1975) offers reformers a warning about the importance of respecting practitioners' beliefs and commitments, of allowing them to make meaning for themselves in the context of demands for change:

No one can resolve the crisis of reintegration on behalf of another. Every attempt to pre-empt conflict, argument, protest by rational planning, can only be abortive: however reasonable the proposed changes, the process of implementing them must still allow the impulse of rejection to play itself out. When those who have power to manipulate changes act as if they have only to explain, and when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice, they express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives not their own. (Marris, 1975, p. 166)

Marris (1975) recommends that reformers allow teachers to work through their frustrations and to allow questions to play themselves out, as teachers deal with the challenges and uncertainties of change. If reformers do not do so, they risk alienating the very persons who must make changes for the reforms to be successful. Marris (1975) recognizes that it is not possible to change others. If change occurs, it is because persons change themselves. They can do so only if they are willing to do so and have the

capacity necessary. Part of that capacity is a safe environment for making change (Schein, 1992).

Some might argue that it is possible to coerce change, and in a sense they would be correct. Governing bodies could coerce teachers to act in particular ways by imposing sanctions. Even so, the question is how those efforts would work in the long run. Teachers can surely perform for the eyes of observers (Goodlad, 1984). But without a personal commitment to changes, teachers may be apt to enact reform ideas only sporadically or superficially. Without a personal commitment or investment in the changes, teachers are unlikely to make them part of "their practice" in their classrooms. Just as there were outward changes in behaviors in the South after the Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* with only a small decrease in attitudes of racism, teachers could make changes in their external behaviors without internal changes in their dispositions, attitudes, or beliefs. Without internal changes that reflect commitment to the ideas and rationale for reforms, teachers may only behave in reformed ways when they are being scrutinized. Because teachers are rarely scrutinized in their classrooms, coercing change is not a particularly promising approach to reform.<sup>40</sup>

Personal commitment to reforms and positive responses to reform messages are important elements in reform enactment, but even when teachers "embrace reforms," and desire to "live them out" in their classrooms, they may not enact the reforms in ways reformers would describe as "reformed." The reasons why good faith implementation efforts fall short are not always clear. One thing we do know is that teachers can only enact practices from where they are. They must start with their current practice, and work from there (Cohen, 1990; Cohen & Ball, 1990a, 1990b; Wilson, 2003).

Some teachers who seek to enact reforms lack sufficient understanding of the

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<sup>40</sup> Some national governments (e.g., France, Singapore) require specific practices in classrooms, and employ an army of inspectors to ensure that teachers live up to the national expectations for practice. Such

reform message. Others might be unsure how to apply the message in particular classroom circumstances. Still others might lack the competence to enact the reforms. Unless teachers have a "clear enough" understanding of reforms, have sufficient support from their school and/or from various agents of reform to develop "enough capacity," they will be limited in what they can do to enact changes, even when they have "enough commitment" to attempt to enact them.

## RHYTHMS OF REFORM

Another way to describe the outcome and continuation of reform is to consider the rhythms of reform. This includes the ways reforms typically play out over time as well as how reforms cycle back into schools across the years.

Policymakers adopt many reforms to remedy perceived ills in schools, and teachers experience a virtual flood of reforms (Cohen, 1988). Reforms are often described as coming in waves or cycles (Cuban, 1990; Passow, 1989), and sometimes as a swinging pendulum (Slavin, 1989). Regardless of the trope, they highlight both the regularity of reform and the phases through which many reforms pass.

For example, Robert Slavin (1989) decries what he calls the "faddism" of educational reform initiatives. He laments the number of reforms that are adopted and the ineffectual ways reforms come and go. He describes the basic pattern of educational innovation, which often leads to more reform efforts rather than lasting change in teaching:

Educational innovation is famous for its cycle of early enthusiasm, widespread dissemination, subsequent disappointment, and eventual decline—the classic swing of the pendulum. (Slavin, 1989, p. 752)

Slavin's (1989) answer to the problem of faddism is better science. He argues for a more rational approach to decision making about reform. He says that reform is typically

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an approach could be employed in the States, but only with major ideological changes in the philosophy of governance and fundamental changes from established practice (Cohen & Spillane, 1992).

motivated by the latest fads and the perennial impulse to try something new. We should have fewer, better-warranted reforms, he argues (Slavin, 1989). By taking that approach, he hopes for an end to the pendulum of educational fads. Educational reforms are not borne so much of good science, he laments, but popularity. Like other fads, he notes, enthusiasm for reforms fade over time.

Ironically, Slavin's (1989) call for research-based reforms is itself an example of the pendular reform pattern he laments. His call is a swing of the research-based reform pendulum. The period of that reform pendulum may be longer than that of other reforms, but confidence in reform-based practices is faddish too. Instructional Theory Into Practice (ITIP), Effective Schools Research, the US push to get teachers to do *What Works* (US Department of Education, 1986), and the "Back to Basics" movement are just a few examples of times when reformers have called for researched-based practices in schools. The repeated swings of that pendulum show how unlikely it is that Slavin's (1989) exhortation will help reformers get off the reform pendulum.

One reason schools are unlikely to be freed from the reform pendulum is that reform is not strictly concerned with fixing what is wrong with schools. Instructional reform is as much a social and cultural enterprise as a technical one. School reform, as we saw in our section on problem identification, is not simply or even mostly an empirical science. Problem identification and reform adoption are social, moral, and political processes. They have as much to do with values and impressions as they do with proven remedies to problems in schools. Reform is not just about solving problems; it is centrally concerned with maintaining confidence in the institutions of schooling and policymaking (Meyer & Rowan, 1983). Instructional reform has symbolic value as well as problem solving value.

As we have seen, the appearance of reform is sometimes sufficient to alleviate pressure for change (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Pincus, 1974). That does not mean that the appearance of reform is always sufficient, however. Indeed, reform efforts are

regularly criticized in the popular media for being ineffective. Though the appearance of reform can help alleviate societal and political pressure for reform, if reforms fail, a new round of criticism ensues. And the response to the criticism, to new laments of "crisis" in schools, is often another round of reform. Admittedly, there is a certain irony in the way citizens deal with instructional reform. When problems are identified, and crises are publicized, citizens demand (or at least support) reform. But when reforms fail citizens and politicians do not abandon attempts to reform schools. Instead, they look to a new, or at least different, reforms that seem to promise better results.<sup>41</sup>

Slavin (1989) seeks to eliminate the swings of the reform pendulum, but the pendulum may serve the cause of change, precisely because of the phases he describes. He observes that reforms often begin with enthusiasm. That enthusiasm, in turn, fosters widespread dissemination of reform ideas. Though he rightly laments the "subsequent disappointment, and eventual decline," the early phases of the pendulum swing seem to have great benefit (Slavin, 1989, p. 752). Fads do create excitement, and often have the power to motivate to action.

By calling reforms "fads," Slavin (1989) focuses on the downside of the pendulum swing, with the assumption that it is possible to avoid the downside. He evidently believes that it would be possible to make changes in schools without the ups and downs of the pendulum. Though we might like to believe that the best ideas are always adopted and best practices are always enacted, experience reveals otherwise. It is easy to criticize reforms for moving through the phases Slavin (1989) describes, but the criticism may be too facile. Most efforts to make major changes in outlook and orientation in life go through the phases of a pendulum. Slavin seeks to eliminate the pendulum, but sometimes even successful major change follows the pattern he seeks to change. In the early stages of reform, we see the excitement and spread of ideas,

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<sup>41</sup> Though it is true that old reforms get recycled, new versions of reforms are never exactly like the old

followed by the decline he laments.

For example, Donna Muncey & Patrick McQuillan (1993) adapt Anthony Wallace's (1956) description of revitalization movements to describe the development of the Coalition of Essential Schools, and how the movement grew. They document the growth of the Coalition as an institution. As it grew, they observed that the ideas continued to be conveyed, but there was an important difference. Much of the inspiration and charisma of Ted Sizer were lost as the movement became institutionalized and procedures were established as routines.

Their report of the case of the Coalition follows the general pattern Slavin (1989) describes. As reform or social movements grow, predictable changes ensue. The early enthusiasm of a reform movement or system of belief must be codified to communicate the ideas to more and more people. The ideas and the message of the reform get formalized. As a result, there is less flexibility and spontaneity because the identity of the organization and movement requires a level of coherence and structure. Waller (1932/1970) observed the general phenomenon of routinization and formalization when reforms and other systems of belief get organized:

Something happens to ideas when they get themselves organized into social systems. The ethical ideas of Christ, flexible and universal, have nevertheless been smothered by churches. A social principle degenerates into a dogma when an institution is built about it. Yet an idea must be organized before it can be made into fact, and an idea wholly unorganized rarely lives long. Without mechanism it dies, but mechanism perverts it. This is part of the natural flow and recession--the life principle of society. (Waller, 1932/1970, pp. 299-300)

Though a movement grows because of the ideas and animating force of a leader, it typically only grows when it becomes an organization. This tendency has both positive and negative consequences. A language typically grows up within the movement that once conveyed powerful ideas, but over time the language becomes hollow. The "spirit" of the ideas is lost as the organization grows and takes on a life of its own.

Every social structure and every system of thought must grow old in time, and

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ones (Cuban, 1990). Residue from earlier reforms change both the contexts and the reforms themselves.

every one of them must die. And each of these, in its essence, grows formal. One aspect of age in the social organism is a disorder of communication, and "excess of the organ of language" attended by a lack of real communication, a growth of verbiage and a failure of that inner contact upon which communication depends. This may occur, and often does, within the life cycle of individuals, and it then keeps pace with the mental ossification of men. (Waller, 1932/1970, pp. 300-301)

If Waller (1932/1970) is right, there may be good reason to have cycles of reform in schools. When ideas get formalized, and the spirit of the ideas gets lost in the language and institutions that grew up around them, the time may be ripe for a new call to reform or a call to renew earlier commitments. Calls of that kind may awaken or reawaken the life and vision of a movement in the hearts and minds of men and women. In fact, calls to renewal may help persons embrace (or embrace again) the ideas that motivated the reform movement at its inception.

All of this points out why reform movements like the Coalition may be beneficial to teachers in schools. As much as waves of reform might weary teachers, the opportunities afforded by repeated calls to reform might give teachers a chance to catch anew the enthusiasm of their vocation. Some ambitious calls to reform may even stimulate teachers to strive for heights they ceased approaching because they were tired and weary.

In light of this brief foray into the formalization of ideas and systems of belief, we might well conclude that reforms can have the greatest effects when they are "young." Enthusiasm for reform is not enough to ensure change in teaching, but the enthusiasm of teachers who feel a part of a movement may help spur them on to tackle problems and challenges they might not otherwise undertake. Ironically, then, the cycle of reform might be helpful because it can foster a vibrancy and spiritual vitality in teaching.

Though faddish enthusiasm can sometimes breed cynicism about change, it might also be the most predictable way to get teachers genuinely excited about it. Educational reform, like other efforts to change cultures and patterns of social interaction, are not merely rational. It transcends the rational, encompassing psycho-emotional, and sometimes spiritual, aspects of human life.

## SUMMARY

In this chapter, we described the process of instructional reform. We found that instructional reform, like any planned change, involves several stages. Instructional reforms entail normative stances toward the current state of instruction in schools, with an eye to improvement of some kind. For reform to proceed, social conditions must be identified as problems, reforms must be adopted as solutions to those problems, and reforms must be implemented if any changes will be enacted in schools.

The process of instructional reform is thoroughly social and is often highly contested. This is because problems do not announce themselves. Instead, persons who interpret data about social conditions from their socio-cultural perspectives must identify social conditions as problems. Social values often conflict, so problem identification is often filled with conflict. Problems are not self-identifying, and reforms are not self-adopting. Decisions about which problems have political and pedagogical priority are often contested, as are judgments about which (if any) reforms should be adopted as remedies to those problems. In sum, problem identification and reform adoption are social processes that reveal important differences in the social and cultural values of decision makers and other educational stakeholders. The processes reveal the importance of values and interpretation at the early stages of reform.

Interpretation plays a central role in all stages of instructional reform, but is most conspicuous at the point of implementation. Reform entails calls for change, and those calls are conveyed in messages of reform that contain two basic elements: expository messages that describe the ideas of the reform (and the demands for change) and the hortatory messages that provide the motivation and rationale for change. These messages must be interpreted if teachers are to enact the reforms, and teachers can only make applications of the interpretations they make of the messages they receive. Teachers' interpretations of reform messages are influenced by agents of reforms as well as other

persons and cultural influences in their schools and outside them.

Regardless of the approach reformers take in implementing reforms, all implementation efforts must go through four phases as the messages of reform are disseminated to the agents and objects of reform. In short, messages of reform must be 1) sent, 2) interpreted, 3) applied, and 4) enacted. Obviously, spreading the message of reform is but one aspect of the implementation process. Those messages must be interpreted by the agents and objects of reform, and then applied. Interpretation, application, and enactment of reform flow together and reveal the extent to which the reform has been successfully "implemented" in schools. Clearly, understanding the messages of reform, and knowing how to apply them in various school contexts, will influence the ways reforms are enacted.

It is difficult to judge the success of implementation and enactment, because evaluations of enactment are muddled by the subjective elements in interpretation and application of the messages of reform. Questions of who is or should be the arbiter of what the reform means, and what counts as evidence of reformed practices complicate judgments about the extent to which reforms have been successful. It is never possible to entirely eliminate the subjective dimension of evaluating the success of reforms, but that does not mean that it is impossible to make general claims about the nature of teaching that goes on in particular classrooms. Some classrooms reveal changes "in the direction" of reforms, while others do not.

Our review of studies of instructional reform highlighted several key factors that influence the ways reforms are enacted. We found that characteristics of reforms influence successful implementation, characteristics of the implementation process influence successful implementation, and characteristics of school cultures influence successful implementation of reforms. These are important factors in the implementation of reforms:

- The type of reform matters (deep reforms struggle more than surface reforms).

- Teacher involvement in the on-going development of reforms matters.
- Teacher commitment matters.
- Pressure matters.
- On-going training and support matters.
- The culture of the school matters.
- These factors combine to provide motivation, capacity, and the catalyst for positive teacher responses to the ideas and demands of the reforms.

Among these factors, among the most important is the culture of the school, for that is where teachers respond to reform. The message comes to teachers there, the support and pressure they experience is experienced there, and the values and norms that influence teachers' responses are resident there. School cultures differ in the ways they help teachers interpret and enact reforms, build capacity for change, and support teachers' positive responses to reform. Though the culture of the school plays a central role in the work of reform, the culture of schools does not dictate the ways individual teachers will respond. Cultures make different paths possible, but they do not command particular paths to individual teachers who must make choices in light of a host of variables that are influenced, but not dictated, by the culture of the school.

Teacher response, as we said, is the key to successful instructional reform. Other factors surely contribute to successful change, but if teachers reject reform, few changes will occur in their classrooms. In the typical school, we saw that teachers have good reasons to deflect efforts to change their practice in fundamental ways. They have good reasons to resist deep reforms. Without exceptional motivation to attempt deep reform, most teachers will deflect or ignore calls for deep change. This is because teachers' responses are filtered through the grid of practicality. Teachers respond most positively to reforms that meet their perceived needs, when the reforms are "practical," when the benefits outweigh the costs entailed in making the change, when they have adequate support and sufficient capacity to make the change. Deep changes rarely satisfy these

four criteria.

Whenever teachers seek to implement reforms, they implement them in ways that begin with their current practice, based on their interpretations of the reform, in ways that seem to "fit" them personally and professionally (Lortie, 1975). Just as they did when they learned to teach, teachers respond to reforms as individuals in particular contexts. They interpret reform messages through the grid of their cultural influences, both in school and outside it. When teachers attempt to enact reforms, they apply their interpretations of the reform messages they receive, and they enact them in ways that "fit" them. Teachers only rarely think that changes demanded by deep reform fit them well.

### Persons and Places of Particular Sorts

The message of this chapter for reformers who seek deep reform is somewhat sobering. All other things being equal, reformers who seek to effect deep reforms in schools must contend with two basic realities: 1) Culture change is the agenda of (especially deep) instructional reform, and 2) Successful implementation of deep reform, like all reform, rests ultimately on teachers' responses to the messages of reform.

We have seen that changing cultures is difficult work, and changing many schools simultaneously is especially hard (Elmore, 1996). We have few examples of widespread culture change in schools, and most of them were start-ups or start-overs. Such schools are fundamentally dependent upon persons and personalities that inhabit them. They feature strong leaders who often recruit likeminded staff members to commit to particular visions of teaching and learning. They have norms that help influence teachers to move individually and collectively toward their espoused visions of practice. They are typically collaborative contexts where teachers focus on student learning, and in which teachers experience both pressure and support to improve their practice. In short, these schools are successful in large measure because they are communities of mutual support and common vision. They are staffed by men and women of a particular sort, men and

women who are committed to teaching well and striving continually to improve their teaching.

What we do not know about these schools is whether they suffer the downside of the pendulum Slavin (1989) describes. Given that these schools are mostly small, they may be successful in maintaining the spirit of the reformed practices. But it makes sense that as the spirit of reformed ideas become rules for practice, the pattern Waller (1932/1970) described will occur. If so, even teachers in these schools may need future calls for reform to renew their commitment or to provide them an alternative set of ideals that can inspire and sustain them in their practice.

With the caveat that good reforms may suffer the pattern Slavin (1989) and Waller (1932/1961) describe, we might gloss our review of successful contexts for good teaching and instructional reform by saying that they are places of a particular sort, staffed by persons of a particular sort. They are not the typical school, staffed by typical teachers. If such cultures are necessary to sustain (especially deep reform), then implementation efforts will require a process that can change both the places teachers work (the culture) and the teachers themselves. Instructional reform, especially deep reform, seems to require a people-and-place-changing technology.

With an eye to understanding the challenges and demands of instructional reform better, we turn now to investigate a process that seeks to change persons by bringing them into communities of change. In the next chapter, we investigate the process of evangelism.

## Chapter 4

### The Process of Evangelism

Our reason for investigating evangelism is to gain insights into the challenges of instructional reform, especially those reforms that demand deep changes on the part of teachers. We will make the argument for the *instructional reform as evangelism* metaphor in Chapter 5. We begin with a survey of the process of evangelism beginning with its definitions and aims. As we did with instructional reform, we will then turn to the strategies, methods, and stages of evangelism, as well as its outcomes. Since religious conversion is the ultimate goal of evangelistic efforts, our survey will include reviews of studies of religious conversion (both Christian and non-Christian) to gain a sense of factors that influence the responses persons make to proselytizing efforts such as evangelism.

#### EVANGELISM<sup>42</sup>

Evangelism is one form of proselytism, which is the effort to spread religious messages with the goal of gaining converts to religious belief systems. Evangelism concerns the spread of specifically Christian religious messages, with the goal of gaining converts to Christianity.<sup>43</sup> The word *evangelism* stems from the word *evangel*, which means "good news" or "gospel." Webster defines *gospel* as "the message concerning

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<sup>42</sup> The following discussion of evangelism takes an "insider's view" of the beliefs about the gospel and evangelism. For our purposes, it is less important that the beliefs of Christians are correct than to note their conviction about these truths and the efforts they make to spread the good news as they understand it.

<sup>43</sup> Our discussion of evangelism will include reference to Roman Catholic and Protestant teaching. There are obviously important differences in theology between Catholics and Protestants. There are also differences among the Protestant denominations. For all the differences, however, most Christians agree about the basic message of the gospel and the goal of evangelism, which focuses on personal responses to claims about the salvific work of Jesus Christ.

Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation." <sup>44</sup> Webster's first definition of *evangelism* is "the winning or revival of personal commitments to Christ." This definition assumes success. Evangelism, on this view, means that persons will make (or renew) personal commitments to Christ.

Webster's definition makes the relationship between evangelism and conversion seem quite tidy. Webster provides, as it were, an ideal account of evangelism—an effective effort that leads to religious conversion. For a different set of reasons, Webster's optimistic definition finds echoes in definitions penned by Christians. Consider, for example, this definition evangelism by Anglican Archbishop Temple:

To evangelise is so to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit that men shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Saviour, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church. (Green, 1951, p. 6).

Like Webster, Temple sees a tight connection between the work of evangelism and conversion: to evangelize is to win converts. There is an intimate connection between evangelism and conversion, and the connection is both logical and practical. On a logical level, evangelism makes no sense in a world in which no one converts. Practically speaking, evangelism is often followed by religious conversion. Even so, the relationship between evangelism and conversion is not a direct causal one. The goal of evangelism is winning personal conversions to Christianity, but the goal is frequently unmet.

### Good News of the Gospel

The first words of John the Baptist, a prophet who cried "in the wilderness," were "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).<sup>45</sup> Jesus' first words in public ministry were "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent,

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<sup>44</sup> For our purposes, we will consider Jesus Christ to be the originator of the message, the kingdom of God as the motivating vision, and salvation as the process and goal for hearers/disciples.

<sup>45</sup> All scripture quotes are taken from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Similarly, Peter's first words in public ministry after the resurrection of Jesus were the same: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). The beginning of Christian preaching is the word *repent*. In Greek, the word is *metanoia*, which literally means, "to change one's mind." It is often translated "to convert." Evangelism is aimed at getting persons to turn or return to God and God's ways by way of conversion.

The message of the gospel is considered good news principally because it heralds Jesus Christ's saving work for humankind.<sup>46</sup> The Second Vatican Council describes evangelization (or evangelism) and its essential connection with reports about the saving work of Jesus Christ in the following terms:

Evangelization will always contain, as the foundation, the centre and the apex of its whole dynamic power, this explicit declaration: in Jesus Christ who became man, died and rose again from the dead salvation is offered to every man as the gift of the grace and mercy of God himself. (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, 27)

Salvation is the essence of the good news, and grace and mercy are central aspects of salvation. The offer of salvation is not merely a promise of eternal life in the hereafter, but it also applies to life in the present. The mercy and grace of God experienced in salvation change the way persons understand and experience life. Salvation is not simply a way to avoid hell in the hereafter; it is the Christian path to liberation from the effects of sin and evil in human life presently:

Christ proclaims salvation as the outstanding element and, as it were, the central point of his good news. This is the great gift of God which is to be considered as comprising not merely liberation from all those things by which man is oppressed but especially liberation from sin and from the domination of the evil one, a liberation which incorporates that gladness enjoyed by every man who knows God and is known by him, who sees God and who surrenders himself trustingly to

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<sup>46</sup> Most Christians believe that the good news includes all that Jesus did and taught, as well as the teachings of the early Christian church, especially writings included in the New Testament. The gospel is not simply a message about sin, repentance, and salvation. It extends to the way Christian doctrines and beliefs should be applied to all aspects of human life. Please note that there is more consensus among Christian churches and Christians about the canon of the New Testament than there is about how the gospel applies to particular contexts and circumstances.

him. (Evangelii nuntiandi, 9)

Christian salvation, on this view, frees men and women from bondage to their sins. The work of salvation is inaugurated when sinners surrender themselves in faith to the God of mercy.

The Christian idea of redemption (or salvation) has three major dimensions. First, the gospel offers an answer and remedy to the human state of sin. This means that the gift of God in Christ provides persons the promise of liberation from sinfulness and its effects in their lives. Second, the gospel calls men and women to live new lives of love of God and others after the pattern set down by Jesus in his teaching and life. Third, the scriptures reveal that God's offer of salvation includes the gift of grace to live the manner of life demanded by the gospel. That is to say that God provides grace to liberate persons from lives of sin and to live obedient lives of love for God and for others after the example of Jesus.

The problem to which salvation in Christ is the answer is the problem of "fallen humanity." The Christian world-view asserts a three-fold redemptive understanding view of the world. First came the good creation. Second came the "Fall" of Adam and Eve, which led to sin and evil in the world. Third, the remedy to the fallenness of the world and persons in the world is found in the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This three-fold (Creation-Fall-Redemption) view of human salvation history provides the basic orientation of Christianity.

The images of the Fall and the need for redemption motivate much of the Christian discourse about the relationship between humans and the God who created them. Thus, Christians typically talk about being "saved" or "redeemed" from the consequences of "Original Sin." Conviction about the truth of the paradigm provides motivation for belief as well as incentives for sharing the good news with others who are likewise in need of redemption. To share the good news is the central animating motive for the work of evangelism. Christ's message was more than a message of salvation from

the burdens and consequences of sin. It was also a call to live a particular sort of life, most clearly communicated in the "Sermon on the Mount" (Matthew 5-7).

That sermon begins with a discussion of the virtues that constitute beatitude or ultimate happiness for human beings. The beatitudes are the central piece of Christ's moral vision, speaking as they do of the consequences for those who live out the life his teaching describes. Each of the eight beatitudes begins, "Blessed are those . . ." who manifest a particular virtue, and each concludes with a promise of beatitude " . . . for they shall . . ." Humanity finds fulfillment and happiness by living lives marked by humility, gentleness, mourning, mercy, justice, purity, peacemaking, suffering for righteousness. Only by living in those ways will persons be truly happy.

The heart of Jesus Christ's moral demands is centered in the two great commandments to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, strength and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself." The gloss of these can be seen in his request that those who would be perfect should follow him. To follow him is to live his way of life. Knowing that following his example may seem impossible, Jesus extends an invitation to his hearers. He commanded his disciples to follow his example, but he assures them that he will help them carry the burden of living the moral life:

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.  
(Matthew 11:28-30)

Evangelism involves communicating the entire message of the gospel, from a call to repentance through this call to perfection. The gospel offers an answer to the fallenness of humanity. Because the gospel is a message of salvation opening up a life of love for God and others, believers embrace the gospel as genuinely good news. Unsurprisingly, they often wish to share that good news with those who have never heard. And they do so through evangelism.

## Goals of Evangelism

We saw above that the basic goal of evangelism is the winning or renewal of personal commitments to Christ. In his book, *Effective Evangelism*, Presbyterian George Sweazey (1953) enumerates a list of goals of evangelism, which he divides into "invisible" and "visible goals." The invisible goals are those that are private, internal, and spiritual. The visible goals, on the other hand, are public acts that point to invisible inner changes. George Sweazey's (1953) invisible goals are:

- Belief in Basic Truths
- Conversion
- A personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ
- Self-dedication (pp. 40-43).

These are the inner changes evangelists seek to cultivate or encourage in their hearers.

When persons convert, they often reveal outward evidences of change. These outward changes represent visible goals of evangelism. These are "outward signs to mark spiritual realities" (Sweazey, 1953, p. 43):

- Act of decision
- Public acknowledgment
- Baptism
- Church membership
- Christian practices (pp. 44-48)<sup>47</sup>

The Sweazey's list comports well with a Roman Catholic summary of elements of the results of evangelism:

. . . evangelization is a complex process involving many elements as, for example, a renewal of human nature, witness, public proclamation, wholehearted acceptance of, and entrance into, the community of the church, the adoption of

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<sup>47</sup> Different Christian churches hold different views of the place and function of baptism and church membership, but most Christians would assent to this list of invisible and visible goals of evangelism.

outward signs and apostolic works. (Evangelii nuntiandi, 24).

In both summaries of goals of evangelism, we see the implications the Christian faith holds for daily life. The ultimate goal of evangelism is Christian living, which is inaugurated by conversion. In the former list, the evidence is called "Christian practices" and, in the latter, "apostolic works." To underscore the importance of such complete conversion, Sweazey (1953) exhorts evangelists:

The Church must avoid giving invitations which will permit a response which leaves some areas of life unchanged. Its appeal must never be so one-sided that people will accept Christ as Saviour without accepting Him as Lord—and as Lord not only of the home and worship but also of business and politics. (Sweazey, 1953, p. 49)

"Christian practice" and "apostolic work" encompass all aspects of life.

### Universal Application of the Gospel

Christians believe that the gospel ultimately provides answers to all problems that might arise in human life. That is not to say that all topics that might arise are explicitly referenced in the Bible or in traditional Christian teaching, but rather that any question that might arise will be informed by the basic moral stance of Christian teaching. In other words, the world-view implications of Christianity are total. The good news of Christ is viewed as the answer to all questions of life, and so it has implications for all areas of life.

Evangelism seeks to change the lives of persons, beginning with their relationship with God. Becoming saved begins with a change of relationship with God and extends to all aspects of life. The changes in individuals should be evident in their relationships with others, and can (and should) influence the cultures persons inhabit, as well.

The church appreciates that evangelization means the carrying forth of the good news to every sector of the human race so that by its strength it may enter into the hearts and minds of men and renew the human race. 'Behold, I make all things new'<sup>48</sup>. But there cannot be a new human race unless there are first of all new

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<sup>48</sup> Revelation 21:5.

men, men renewed by baptism and by a life lived in accordance with the gospel. It is the aim of evangelization, therefore, to effect this interior transformation. In a word, the church may be truly said to evangelize when, solely in virtue of that news which she proclaims, she seeks to convert both the individual consciences of men and their collective conscience, all the activities in which they are engaged and, finally, their lives and the whole environment which surrounds them (Evangelii nuntiandi, 18).

The gospel is aimed at all aspects of human life, and believers view it as informing decisions about all aspects of life.

### Universal Appeal of the Gospel

The message is also a message for all persons. It is universal in application and universal in scope. Christians believe that no one should remain outside the domain of the gospel. For that reason, no corner of a city, nation, or the world should remain untouched by evangelism. The common Christian conviction that the gospel must be spread to all the world through evangelism is not simply a conclusion based on judgments of the benefits of living Christian lives.

The evangelistic impulse among Christians is drawn from the traditional interpretation of this command Jesus gave his disciples before he ascended into heaven:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.  
(Matthew 28:19-20)

This mandate, often called the "Great Commission," is found in all three synoptic gospels, and has been consistently interpreted by Christians as calling believers to live evangelistic lives. Jesus bids believers to go, share the gospel, baptize, and teach ("make disciples"). Jesus appeared to his disciples, and told them that they "shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8). The book of Acts goes on to document the spread of the gospel message beyond the confines of Jerusalem, through the regions of Judea and Samaria, and then to the limits of the known world through the missionary trips of Paul and other apostles.

The clear implication of the missionary mandate in Matthew and Acts was the spread of the gospel to "all nations." Part of this was accomplished by going to places far away, but part of it was preaching the gospel to those nearby. Evangelism is the spreading of the gospel message, which can encourage conversion in nonbelievers and elicit renewed commitments to Christ in those who are already Christian:

. . . the church begins her work of evangelization by evangelizing herself. As a community sharing a common faith and a common hope which she proclaims and communicates to others by her life, and sharing likewise a common fraternal love, it is essential that she should constantly hear the truths in which she believes, the grounds on which her hope is based and the new command of mutual love . . . . To put the matter briefly, if the church is to preserve the freshness, the ardour and the strength of her own work of preaching the gospel she must herself be continuously evangelized. (Evangelii nuntiandi, 15)

Evangelism seeks to win commitments (conversions) from those who have never heard, but the church begins by preaching the gospel to believers.

## CONVERSION

The work of evangelism is aimed at eliciting positive responses from persons who are presented with the gospel message. Those who receive the gift of salvation and accept the call to live Christian lives undergo major internal changes often called *conversion* (Sweazey, 1953). Conversion is the chief marker of successful evangelism.

Webster defines *convert* as "1a: to bring over from one belief, view, or party to another b: to bring about a religious conversion in." It defines *conversion* as "1: the act of converting: the process of begin converted . . . 2: an experience associated with a definite and decisive adoption of religion." At its base, conversion entails a change in orientation. Lewis Rambo (1993) describes the roots of the word *conversion* as follows:

In the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, the Hebrew and Greek words generally equated with *conversion* are words that literally mean *to turn* or *return*. The precise meaning of the turning or returning is contextually determined. (Rambo, 1993, p. 3)

His description echoes Sweazey's (1953) description. "'Conversion,' from the Latin *convertere*, 'to rotate,' is not a leap, it is a turning. It leaves a person about where he was

before, but now aimed in a different direction" (Sweazey, 1953, p. 17). In some cases, conversion means returning to a position or direction one held previously, in other situations, it means turning to a position or direction one has never held before.

A convert receives salvation and participation in the kingdom of God: "... by a total spiritual renewal of himself which the gospel calls *metanoia*, that is by a conversion of the whole man by virtue of which there is a radical change of mind and heart" (Evangelii nuntiandi, 10). The changes are not superficial but go to the very core of the person. Conversion influences the convert's perspectives and values, making "all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

The convert apprehends differently, values differently, relates differently because he has become different. The new apprehension is not so much a new statement or a new set of statements, but rather new meanings that attach to almost any statement. It is not new values so much as a transvaluation of values. (Lonergan, 1978, p. 13)

Conversion, in short, effects fundamental changes in the heart, mind, will, and spirit of the convert.

Students of religious experience are fascinated by conversion. For example, in *Varieties of religious experience: An essay in human nature*, William James (1907/1996) provides a psychological analysis of conversion. From his perspective as a psychologist, James (1907/1996) sees the experience of religious conversion as one form of a more general psychological phenomenon. In his explication of conversion, James (1907/1996) focuses on what he calls the "divided self." The pain of being divided can be solved by conversions of various kinds, including the religious. Conversion helps alleviate the convert's frustration and pain. Conversion, he says, is:

... the process, gradual or sudden by which a self hitherto divided, consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities. (James, 1907/1996, p. 157)

Whatever factors influence an individual's conversion, James (1907/1996) holds that persons who convert move through two fundamental stages:

- The uneasiness, reduced to its simplest terms, is a sense that there is *something wrong*

*about us as we naturally stand.*

- The solution is a sense that *we are saved from the wrongness* by making proper connection with the higher powers. (James, 1907/1996, p. 498, emphasis in original)

James' (1907/1996) analysis of conversion is helpful as an initial description of the kinds of experiences persons have when they undergo changes like religious conversions. However, he reduces conversion to two stages and focuses almost exclusively on the affective motivations and results of conversion. In order to gain a more complete understanding of conversion, we will look to more recent comprehensive studies of religious conversion, like Lewis Rambo's (1993) *Understanding Religious Conversions*.

Based on his interdisciplinary study of conversion, Rambo (1993) offers the following definition of religious conversion:

Conversion is a process of religious change that takes place in a dynamic force field of people, events, ideologies, institutions, expectations, and orientations . . . . (a) conversion is a process over time, not a single event; (b) conversion is contextual and thereby influences and is influenced by a matrix of relationships, expectations, and situations; and (c) factors in the conversion process are multiple, interactive, and cumulative. There is no one cause of conversion, no one process, and no one simple consequence of that process. (Rambo, 1993, p. 5)

This definition is helpful because it highlights the complex way ideas, persons, and events interact in the context of relationships to contribute to religious conversions. We will discuss the process of conversion more fully below, but before we do so, we will consider the persons of evangelism whose work sometimes results in conversions.

## PERSONS OF EVANGELISM

Preaching the gospel through evangelization will always involve at least two parties: 1) the evangelizers (or evangelists) and 2) the evangelized.<sup>49</sup> These two groups

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<sup>49</sup> I am taking "evangelized" to refer to those who have heard or may hear the message, who have experienced evangelistic efforts. Green (1951) assumes that to be evangelized is equivalent to being converted: "The purpose of evangelism is to lead men into this decisive 'coming to' Christ, and thus into

are the human players in the drama of evangelism and salvation, and we will spend most of our time talking about these two groups of persons. Evangelists, we should note, would argue that an essential player in the process of evangelism is the unseen divine party, namely, the Holy Spirit.<sup>50</sup>

The first category of persons of evangelism, the *evangelists*, are those who communicate the message. The category includes everyone who communicates the gospel, whether they are full-time evangelists, ministers of the gospel, or Christians who talk with others about their faith. Since the gospel is the message of the faith, those who talk about the faith are evangelists at some level.

The second category, the *evangelized*, are those who hear (or could potentially hear) the message of the gospel. It includes those who have heard and accepted the gospel message, those who have heard the message and not believed, as well as those who have never heard it.

### The Evangelists

The Christian New Testament includes texts that describe the work and teaching of 1<sup>st</sup> Century evangelists. First of all, the New Testament includes four gospel accounts of the life of Jesus: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Other gospel accounts were written, but only those four gospels were granted canonical status by Church Councils in the first few Christian centuries. For that reason, Christians today look to those four narratives as fundamental sources of written insight into the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. In addition to four gospels, the New Testament includes accounts of the early church and other letters written to first century Christians.

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discipleship in which they will be added to the Church . . . . Until this has happened . . . a man cannot be said in this sense to be evangelised" (Green, 1951, p. 6).

<sup>50</sup> For instance, Pope Paul VI said "There can be no evangelization without the cooperation of the Holy Spirit"(Evangelii nuntiandi, 75). For our purposes, we will bracket out the role of the Holy Spirit in conversion.

Christians count the New Testament as the primary source of Christ's teaching about salvation, the Christian life. The New Testament also describes the importance of sharing the message of the gospel. The responsibility of spreading the gospel was taken seriously in the early church. Evangelism was undertaken by the average Christian as well as more prominent New Testament figures:

One of the most striking features in evangelism in the early days was the people who engaged in it. Communicating the faith was not regarded as the preserve of the very zealous or of the officially designated evangelist. Evangelism was the prerogative and the duty of every Church member . . . . The spontaneous outreach of the total Christian community gave immense impetus to the movement from the very outset. (Green, 1970, p. 274)

The mandate to spread the gospel remains the teaching of the church today:

The church exists to preach the gospel, that is to preach and teach the word of God so that through her the gift of grace may be given to us, sinners may be reconciled to God, and the sacrifice of the Mass, the memorial of his glorious death and resurrection, may be perpetuated. (Evangelii nuntiandi, 14)<sup>51</sup>

and

The church has the duty by divine mandate of going out into the whole world and preaching the gospel to all men. And . . . the whole church is missionary and . . . the word of evangelization is a fundamental duty of the people of God. (Evangelii nuntiandi, 59)

The universality of the call to evangelize does not mean that all members of the church have the same role in the work of evangelism. Some are more directly involved in the work of evangelization than others are.

Today, when persons think of evangelists, they typically think of those who spread the gospel "professionally," that is, as part of their jobs. And many Christians do evangelize as part of their work. Some churches have dedicated evangelists who work to develop programs of "outreach" and help train members of their churches to evangelize their friends, neighbors, as even strangers. Others are less directly involved in the work of evangelism.

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<sup>51</sup> Most Protestants would take exception to the reference to the Mass in this context, but most orthodox Christians would agree with this quote up to and including the phrase, "sinners may be reconciled to God."

### *Missionaries*

Most professional evangelists are called "missionaries," because they are sent to proclaim the gospel. Some missionaries work as itinerant evangelists, traveling from place to place giving "missions," "crusades," or "revivals." Many missionaries are sent to particular places to share the gospel. They are often sent abroad to spread the gospel where it has never been heard before or where Christianity is in the minority. Some are sent to impoverished areas of the world to meet physical as well as spiritual needs. Missionaries are sometimes tied to local church bodies, sometimes to missionary agencies, and sometimes they are independent, in the sense that they are not sent by a particular faith community.

### *Ministers*

A second category of evangelists is ministers. These priests, pastors, and other pastoral workers preach the Word of God, and teach the faithful and those who visit their churches about the gospel and what it implies for daily life. They often engage those who are curious about the gospel or are struggling with how to apply the gospel to the circumstances of their lives. In their teaching, ministers often highlight the importance of living out and sharing the gospel message. They encourage the faithful to be witnesses to the faith in word and deed in order to influence others with the message of the gospel.

### *Lay Faithful*

There is a universal call to Christians to spread the gospel. Today, many Christians attempt to follow Christ's mandate, and share their faith with great eagerness. These believers are part of a long tradition that traces its to the earliest days of the Christian church. The New Testament stresses the importance of evangelism, and early Christians took the responsibility very seriously. Today, fewer than half of self-

proclaimed Christians "feel a responsibility to share their faith with others" (Barna Research Group, 2002).

There are many reasons why lay men and women might be reticent about the gospel. Some reluctance could stem from long-standing societal norms that proscribe talk about religion in polite company. Some persons may be unwilling to talk about their faith because they are not sufficiently concerned about whether their acquaintances, much less strangers, have believe the gospel. Others may not evangelize because they do not wish to align themselves with menacingly hostile evangelists whose "good news" seems to communicate hate and oppression rather than love, forgiveness, and salvation in Christ.

Every evangelist spreads the message, but the gospel call to repentance and the offer of salvation can be proclaimed in many different ways. For example, some evangelists take on the role of prophet. They emphasize calling sinners to repentance, to turn or return to God. The message is clear. Sometimes, they emphasize the pending judgment, but at other times they emphasize the offer of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. One New Testament example of the prophet is John the Baptist, who proclaimed, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).

Others do the work of evangelism as teachers. They demonstrate the reasonableness of the faith, and communicate to potential converts what the faith teaches and demands of those who convert. Paul is a good example of the evangelist as teacher. He provided much of the instruction about the faith in his missionary journeys and his letters to the early Christian churches and young pastors in the first century.

Others do the work of evangelism as if they were suitors for the faith. They strive to win the hearts, minds, and wills of potential converts. They seek, as it were, to win the affection and love of their hearers. They surround potential converts with support and love, and create contexts in which the evangelized are attracted to the faith (and to those who hold the faith). St. Paul is also an example of the evangelist as suitor. He tells the

church at Corinth that he would do or become whatever he needed to in order to communicate the gospel:

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those under the law I became as one under the law . . . . To those outside the law I became as one outside the law . . . that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. (I Corinthians 9:19-23)

Part of being a suitor is offering love and loving. Another part is persuasion. Paul says that the love of God impels him to evangelize.

For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one [Jesus] has died for all . . . . And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (II Corinthians 5:14-15)

Paul sees himself as an "ambassador" for Christ, seeking to win the reconciliation of his hearers to Christ.

We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Working together with him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain . . . . Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (II Corinthians 5:20-6:2)

Like Paul, evangelists often employ different modes of evangelism. Sometimes, the message requires the voice of the prophet, at others, it requires instruction and the work of the teacher. Often, it requires the persistence and creativity of a suitor. Ultimately, the offer of salvation is an offer of love from Christ who woos men and women with his message of forgiveness. Through his evangelists, Christ bids his followers to come to him to find rest (Matthew 11:28-30). In other places, he offers healing, food, treasures, and the like. But, ultimately, Jesus says he came to "seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

In sum, there are three broad categories of evangelists: missionaries, ministers, and lay faithful. The roles of the persons and the modes of appeal they employ differ, but each evangelist spreads the message of the gospel by witnessing, preaching, and/or

teaching about Jesus Christ and the life of Christians in the church and in the world.<sup>52</sup>  
Evangelists can act as prophets, teachers, suitors, or ambassadors for the faith.

### The Evangelized

The *evangelized* are those who hear (or may hear) the message of the gospel. Because of the mandate to take the gospel to all nations, "the evangelized" include all men and women in the world. In their work, evangelists are primarily concerned about one fundamental question: does the person believe the gospel? The question divides persons into two groups: believers and nonbelievers.

#### *Believers*

Evangelism of believers is not aimed at winning initial conversions but at calling them to ongoing moral and spiritual conversion. The message of the gospel needs to be taught and heard, because Christians often (even daily) need to turn from their sinful patterns to the ways of the gospel. Evangelism of believers is a part of the process of discipleship that requires continued learning about Christ, his teaching, and the practical guidance about living the Christian life day by day. The knowledge of the ways of God does not ensure Christians will obey the commands of God, but preaching and teaching can be useful for instruction and reproof, to encourage and enable obedient living (II Timothy 3:16).

#### *Nonbelievers*

Christians believe that nonbelievers should be evangelized. Though some nonbelievers attend churches, most are outside the church. Many live in cultures where

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<sup>52</sup> Evangelism can be done by way of texts. In fact, tracts are one common strategy for communicating the basic message of the gospel. However, even these texts recommend talking with a believer about the message of the gospel, especially at the point of decision and conversion.

other faiths predominate, while others live in places that were once predominantly Christian but are no longer. Many nonbelievers have never heard the gospel, but others live in places where the message of Christ has been preached. Some of those who have heard the message have never considered it seriously. Others who have heard the message have rejected it. Some nonbelievers actively investigate the claims about Christianity but many do not. The former group we call *seekers*, and the latter group, *nonseekers*.

### *Seekers*

Seekers have a wide spectrum of interest in and prior knowledge of Christianity. Some of those who are aware of the gospel message actively seek additional information about Christianity from their family, friends, or acquaintances who are Christian. For example, Bryan Green (1951) describes four groups of persons who come to the church or to someone in the church to get answers about Christianity or to receive the gift of salvation:

- There are the many people who turn to the Christian with their human problems--a marriage is breaking up, a parent-child relationship is proving very difficult, a grievance is held against society, there is inability to find a purpose for life. (Green, 1951, p. 140)
- There is a second group who come to us--people in search of faith. For one reason or another they have been driven to feel their need for faith in something or in someone, but that is as far as they have traveled. (Green, 1951, p. 141)
- The third class of individual will come to us for help are Christian people who come for assistance in the Christian life. They are converted, but wish to make progress in sanctification . . . (Green, 1951, p. 146)
- The fourth group who come to us are those who are seeking conversion. They will not, of course, phrase their need like this, but it is what they are seeking. They will probably say "I want God now," "I want to become a Christian," "How can I find the life you have been preaching about?," "I want what my friend has got." They are seekers who have pursued the pathway towards Christ a certain distance, and they are ready for something more decisive. (Green, 1951, p. 147)

Human needs like those listed above often motivate persons to seek information about Christianity. Some seek answers to their problems, while others seek experiences

and/or a sense of wholeness. Others seek help in living out the Christian life they have embraced but not yet fully enacted in their lives. In short, persons often seek the gospel (or other religions or religious experiences) because of "felt needs" (Aldrich, 1981, p. 89).

When seekers look to Christianity to make changes in their lives, they are actively searching for a solution. They may have searched for answers in many different paths, but those who are seekers are looking to Christianity to see if believing in and following Christ might be the answer for them. That was the experience of St. Augustine (trans. 1998), who, in his *Confessions*, describes his life-long search for happiness. An evangelist in his own right, he introduces Book I of *Confessions* with the observation that "We were created for you, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you" (Augustine, trans. 1998). Christianity offered Augustine rest and remedy for the ache and wound he felt in his soul. Augustine's life is emblematic of the *quest* Rambo (1993) describes.

### *Nonseekers*

Many other persons do not investigate the message of the gospel or seek Christian conversion. Some may be searching for religious solutions, but may not look to Christianity for those answers. Others may feel little or no need for religion or spirituality in their lives. Others are not simply uninterested in the gospel, but are actively resistant or hostile toward evangelists and/or the gospel. These are the nonseekers.

Nonseekers have been around since the time of Jesus Christ. The history of Christianity bears powerful witness to the reluctance of some persons to accept the message of the gospel. One need not look as far back as the persecution of early Christians to find examples of "nonseeking." A pattern of hostility toward Christianity was established early. From ancient days to the present, there have been periods and

pockets of hostility toward Christianity, Christians, and those who preach the gospel.<sup>53</sup>

## CONTEXT OF EVANGELISM

The substance of Christian teaching and its application to all aspects of life makes the entirety of human life a context of evangelism. But other contextual factors influence the ways persons respond to the work of evangelists in their lives. These include the history of Christianity in the U.S. culture, experiences in churches, and prior evangelists. All of these factors contribute to the reception potential converts give to the message and messengers of the gospel. Some of the contextual factors encourage the work of evangelism, while others are impediments. Regardless of the effect of contextual factors, evangelists must take contexts into account if they are to successfully communicate the gospel to those they seek to convert.

### Life as Context

The context for the gospel and evangelism is life itself. On one level, such a statement is trivial. However, because the gospel touches all aspects of life, there are countless potential points of contact for the evangelist. Evangelists can always find points of entry from life experiences to the gospel, because the gospel has "something to say" about all of life.

The gospel message is a message of salvation and redemption, so moments of crisis are important contextual factors for evangelism (James, 1907/1996; Rambo, 1993). During times of trial, persons often seek solutions to the difficulties and answers to their questions. Some are motivated by acute crises. Perhaps they are in legal or financial trouble or are having difficulty getting along with co-workers, children, or a spouse.

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<sup>53</sup> Of course, members of other faiths have also been martyrs for their faith. Not infrequently, the hostility and persecution of believers of other faiths (and even of fellow Christians) has been at the hands of

Others seek information because they are experiencing "existential angst," or because they are curious about Christianity or religion in general. Given their conviction about the gospel as the solution to human difficulties, evangelists are eager to offer the gospel as a remedy to the pain and loss potential converts are experiencing.

Persons often seek meaning for their lives, solutions to problems they are facing, and answers to questions they have about the meaning of life. Persons commonly pursue religion as a potential solution. In his discussion of religious conversion, Rambo (1993) describes the human situation as follows:

Human beings actively seek solutions to their problems and strive to find meaning, purpose, and transcendence. Questing for something more or something better than one's present situation seems to be endemic in human beings. While sometimes a convert is passive in conversion because of extreme personal vulnerability or a coercive environment, most converts are actively engaged in seeking fulfillment. Quest is, to some degree, influenced by a person's emotional, intellectual, or religious availability. The potential convert, like all other people, is motivated by the desire to experience pleasure and avoid pain, maintain a conceptual system, enhance self esteem, establish gratifying relationships, and attain a sense of power and transcendence. (Rambo, 1993, p. 167)

This psychological frame can help explain why some persons look to Christianity and other religions for answers. Generally speaking, persons want their lives to be more pleasant than painful, and they want their lives to matter. Turning to religion is one way to meet those needs.

#### United States as Context

In the United States, most persons are familiar with the gospel and evangelists.<sup>54</sup> The prevalence of Christian churches and the Christian media in the US combine to ensure that the gospel is familiar and that information is easily available to those who seek it. In addition to friends and acquaintances, there are many other sources of

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Christians. The point simply illustrates why contemporary evangelists are not surprised when their efforts are resisted. It has long been thus.

information about Christianity. Those interested can consult books, articles, videos, tapes, websites, and preachers of various sorts. Whether the sources of information about Christianity are positive or negative, those who seek to learn about Christianity have no shortage of information.

Much of the information about Christianity comes from evangelists who evangelize as parts of their jobs. Whether they are pastors, priests, street-corner preachers, or televangelists, these evangelists shape much of the popular perception of Christianity and the work of evangelism. The reputations of evangelists and the impression they leave of the gospel vary tremendously. Preachers and evangelists can be well respected. Take Billy Graham, for example, who is one of the most respected men in America. But preachers and other Christians can also be the butt of jokes. Saturday Night Live's "The Church Lady" skits offered a witty caricature of (especially fundamentalist) Christians.

Americans are familiar with the gospel in part because Christians often feel compelled to share the message. They are called to share the gospel, even though many of their hearers will reject the message they preach. In part, the reason why persons share the gospel is that keeping the good news of salvation to oneself would be selfish and disobedient to the Great Commission.

It is part of the task of the Church to proclaim her Gospel definitely to those on the fringe and believe that some will respond . . . . The Church bears her wider witness, and makes the contacts of pre-evangelism; she must also directly proclaim her Gospel, summoning men to come to God in Christ. Some will be interested and listen; some will not. Some will decide for Christ, and some against. (Green, 1951, p. 14)

The mandate of Jesus as well as the tradition of the church calls members of the church to share the gospel.

Believers can faithfully respond to this mandate by sharing the gospel. The

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<sup>54</sup> Though a Gallup News Service poll released April 21, 2000 indicated that about 85% of Americans call themselves Christian, only about half that amount (44%) said they had attended church within the last

mandate does not require that persons convert. (It hardly could.) So, evangelists take consolation when they faithfully obey the mandate of Christ, even when few persons respond favorably to their preaching. Sometimes, evangelists take rejection as proof that they are doing God's work. As a result, evangelism can sometimes be counterproductive. For example, Aldrich (1981) laments the poor witness of many Christians:

The world listens when Christians love. Consequently, the corporate image of the local church in its community is a critical factor in its evangelistic impact .... Our world is full of professing Christians who claim to believe the truth, but are producing ugliness. They can't get along. They fight, gossip, and often act like they were weaned on dill pickles. Instead of being an "ambassador in" the world, they are an "embarrassment to" the world. They'll fight for the "truth," but have *no* grace. (Aldrich, 1981, p. 101, emphasis in original)

Potential converts can be drawn or turned away because of the attitude and actions of evangelists. Some evangelists are winsome and others are not. That is the legacy of earlier evangelists. When men and women evangelize today, they do so in light of the long history of evangelism, both good and bad.

### Evangelism as Context

Past evangelistic efforts shape the context of current evangelism. Prior evangelism can make it easier to evangelize, because persons are familiar with the basic message. Past evangelistic experiences can also prove toxic to evangelism. Part of the toxicity is no doubt due to experiences persons have had with hostile, often hate-filled evangelists. Some have had bad experiences with members of churches, and have reason to distrust others who embrace the same beliefs as those who have wounded them or by whom they have been scandalized. There is also a general hostility toward fundamentalist Christians who are often the most visible evangelists. The negative perceptions of fundamentalists often spill over to include other evangelical Christians.

Evangelists can sometimes benefit from cultural familiarity with the gospel message, but their efforts can also be hindered by the work of prior evangelists (Aldrich,

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seven days. The disparity points to the potential need for evangelizing believers.

1981). Their efforts may be interpreted in light of cultural currents that discount Christianity and/or disparage the work of evangelism. Historical contexts of evangelism can be both helpful and harmful to evangelistic efforts.

### Church as Context

For many persons, knowledge of Christianity and the gospel message began in their own homes and in churches where they grew up. Sometimes children go quite willingly with their parents to church, but often they go simply because they are required. After they grow up, many children from religious homes lapse in their faith. They may cease practicing altogether, stop attending regular church services, or reject their faith in favor of a rival faith, agnosticism, or atheism.

Those who did not learn much about Christianity as children can hear about the message in many ways. Whether they talk with Christians, attend a church service, Sunday school class, revival, retreat, or crusade, listen to the radio, watch a TV program, or "surf" the internet, persons have many ways to hear the Christian message. Most often, however, persons hear the message in explicitly Christian contexts from those who believe the gospel. In short, persons learn most of what they learn about Christianity in places where Christian faith is embraced.

Not all churches are the same in the ways they support the faith of those who believe or the way they create opportunities for persons to learn about the gospel. Some evangelize quite openly, while others employ a more "soft sell" approach. Church contexts have several prominent features. First, these contexts include persons who embrace the gospel message; they are filled with believers. Often, the potential convert knows (and perhaps even respects) some of these believers. Second, church services often include an explicit presentation of the gospel with personal testimonies about the influence Jesus and Christian teaching has had on believers' lives. Third, churches often include an opportunity for persons to ask questions about the faith. Fourth, they often

include offers of prayer and other material help for needs persons are experiencing in their lives. Fifth, church activities typically include an invitation to future opportunities for persons to learn and/or experience more fellowship and worship (Aldrich, 1981; Strobel, 1993).

All encounters with the faith or persons of faith contribute to the context of future encounters with Christians and Christianity. Persons' perceptions of Christians and Christianity will be partly shaped by their prior experiences of faith and persons of faith. Those experiences will influence the ways they think about and respond to future messages and messengers about the gospel.

### STAGES OF EVANGELISM

Green (1951) divides evangelism into three stages.<sup>55</sup> He calls the first stage "pre-evangelism," which is primarily the preparation for the explicit presentation of the gospel. The second stage, which is called "evangelism," is the direct proclamation of the gospel message. The third basic stage of evangelism comes into play after persons have accepted the message of the gospel. Green calls this stage "pastoral care" (1951, p. x).

#### Pre-evangelism

As the term implies, pre-evangelism is work done prior to direct evangelism. Pre-evangelism is intended to break down barriers to hearing the gospel and to cultivate an interest in hearing the gospel message. At this stage many of the prejudices against the church and against Christians can be addressed and hopefully overcome. Green (1951) defines pre-evangelism as follows:

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<sup>55</sup> The work of evangelism rarely occurs in the smooth linear sequence these stages might suggest. Even though the work of evangelism is rarely linear, the division of evangelism into three stages is helpful. The stages describe aspects of the work of evangelists as well as experiences of converts as they encounter Christians and the gospel message, accept that message, and then learn about the ramifications of becoming Christian through the process of catechesis.

By pre-evangelism, I mean the breaking down of the walls which separate the Church from the people outside, the making of contacts between Christians and the world, the taking of the things of God and interpreting them to those who need to know. In the present post-Christian situation in the English-speaking countries, just as in the pagan situation elsewhere, pre-evangelism is a wide and costly adventure. It demands a distinctive quality of life from the Christian, both individually and corporately; it demands a friendliness and fellowship which attracts; it demands a sympathetic understanding which imaginatively puts the . . . good news in terms which can be received and understood. (Green, 1951, p. 8)

Central to the work of pre-evangelism is positive witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those who live out their faith provide examples of what it means to live Christian lives. Those who witness to their faith and live the Christian life provide, as it were, existence proofs of Christian living. Good witnesses can sometimes break down barriers to the reception of the gospel. They can diminish hostility and skepticism and may even create a sense of curiosity about Christianity and an openness to learn about the good news of the gospel.

By bearing . . . silent witness these Christians will inevitably arouse a spirit of enquiry in those who see their way of life. Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? Why are they among us? Witness of this kind constitutes in itself a proclamation of the good news, silent, but strong and effective . . . This witness is an essential element and often the initial element in the work of evangelization. (Evangelii nuntiandi, 21)

Pre-evangelism begins with the "silent witness" of Christian living, but pre-evangelistic efforts are also proactive. They include talking about God and faith in normal conversation, discussing church life and activities, and responding to the needs in others' lives. Conversations about God, life, church, and Christianity can sometimes elicit an attitude of openness to the gospel message (Aldrich, 1981; Sweazey, 1953; Strobel, 1993).

Pre-evangelism often occurs when non-believers are invited to "fellowship" with Christians. At these events, there may be no explicit reference to Christianity or to the gospel message (Strobel, 1993). The primary purpose of such events is to allow Christians and potential converts to spend time together cultivating friendships, to foster an occasion for witness (Aldrich, 1981). As such acquaintances grow into friendships, and friendships deepen, the personal credibility of the evangelist can also grow.

Sometimes, the credibility of the witness can translate into credence for the gospel (Aldrich, 1981; Strobel, 1993).

### Evangelism

The direct proclamation of the gospel message is the heart of the process of evangelism. Pre-evangelism may or may not occur; follow-up with converts may or may not occur, but preaching the gospel is fundamental to evangelism. Evangelism means the message of the gospel is proclaimed. In scripture, Christians learn that it is by hearing the Word of God that persons are convicted of their sins and become willing to turn toward God in repentance, in order to receive God's gift of salvation by believing in Jesus as their savior.

. . . witness, no matter how excellent, will ultimately prove ineffective unless its meaning is clarified and corroborated . . . . The meaning of a person's witness will be clarified by preaching, clearly and unambiguously, the Lord Jesus. The good news proclaimed by witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life. There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are not proclaimed. (Evangelii nuntiandi, 22)

Proclamation of the gospel is the heart of evangelization, and the way persons hear the gospel is by preaching. St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, states the case this way:

The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved .... The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame" . . . . For, "every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? . . . . So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ. (Romans 10:8-17)

If direct proclamation is the heart of evangelism, the very core is the evangelist's appeal to hearers to make decisions for Christ (Aldrich, 1981; Green, 1970; Griffin, 1980; Strobel, 1993; Sweazey, 1953). These decisions for Christ entail repentance and acceptance of Jesus' death and resurrection as the means of salvation. When evangelists directly evangelize, they invite their hearers to make decisions about the message they have heard (Aldrich, 1981; Strobel, 1993; Sweazey, 1953)

## Discipleship/Pastoral Care

The third fundamental stage of evangelism is follow-up or pastoral care. After persons have converted, they are often offered what is called "follow-up." Some call this follow up "pastoral care," while others call it "catechesis." Regardless of the terminology, follow-up includes support and instruction to new believers who often have only a sketchy understanding of the Christian faith. Discipleship and pastoral care are important because they help converts understand more fully what they have done by converting to Christianity.<sup>56</sup> Green (1951) exhorts evangelists as follows:

But immediately we must remember the pastoral work that should follow. Here we are thinking of the building up and strengthening of the convert within the worshipping community. So important is this pastoral care, or rather, so much a part is it of the whole task of evangelism, that it has been argued that our present business is not to evangelise so much as to revitalise the Church herself . . ."  
(Green, 1951, p. 8-9)

This exhortation is needed because evangelists often neglect the follow-up work of evangelism (Rambo, 1993; Sweazey, 1953). Some focus almost exclusively on getting their hearers to convert. For them, conversion is the end of evangelism, rather than the first step of a life-long discipleship in Christ. Discipleship is apprenticeship in the life of Christ.

Advocates of follow-up recognize the importance of ongoing instruction of believers, but they highlight the particular needs of new believers. Not only is the need greatest shortly after conversion to Christianity, it is soon after conversion that persons are "most humbly ready to be told what church members ought to be . . ." (Mumma, 1969). When persons join a new organization of any sort, they expect that they will be given instructions about the norms, beliefs, and expectations of the organization. It is no

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<sup>56</sup> This is not to say that persons are ignorant of the faith before they convert, but their understanding of the faith may be relatively minimal compared with the vastness of the faith's tradition and teachings. It is important to note at this point that persons who desire to convert to Catholicism enlist in a program of

different in the church. Persons who have converted to Christianity will be open to learn what church membership and discipleship in Christ means for them.

New members have a great deal of catching up to do which must be done in a direct, intensive way. They do not have the feel or the knowledge or the attitudes which healthy church participation requires. Unless they are given some sort of special treatment, they are likely to assume that their immature state is normal for Church members, and so they never will grow out of it. (Mumma, 1969)

New believers, on the Christian view, need to be taught basic beliefs, how to cultivate Christian virtue, and the norms for religious and moral behavior.

Catechesis often involves instruction regarding the philosophical presuppositions that make up the "Christian world-view."<sup>57</sup>

New Church members may not understand that Christians are a different sort of being, with a distinctive way of thinking and living and dying. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). Christ may be accepted as a good influence, instead of as the all-commanding center of existence . . . " (Mumma, 1969, p. 211)

Follow-up with converts is intended to instruct them in the contents of the faith. Part of the follow-up involves elaborating the contours and perspectives of the Christian view of the world. Embracing Christ entails embracing a Christian view of oneself and the world.

## FORMS OF EVANGELISM

Throughout the history of Christianity, the gospel has been spread in very different ways. They include St. Paul's early missionary travels, the Crusades, the Inquisition, colonial missionary work, more contemporary itinerant preaching, and revivalism, to name a few. These more programmatic methods have been supplemented by the testimony and teaching of individuals and local evangelists.

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catechesis to learn the basic Roman Catholic Creed before they convert. This is not typically the case in many of the evangelical Christian churches.

<sup>57</sup> This does not mean that there is one and only one Christian world-view, just that some catechesis of new believers addresses dimensions of a Christian world-view.

## Evangelism in the Early Church

Accounts of the early church contained in the pages of the New Testament reveal how energetically the early disciples worked to spread the gospel message. The Acts of the Apostles documents the spread of the message to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth as they knew it. Apostles were sent to spread the gospel, and, among these appointed messengers, no individual was more responsible for the spread of Christianity than Saul of Tarsus. The account of his persecution of early believers and his dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus is documented in Acts 8 and 9.

At the time of his conversion, Saul was given the name Paul. He was also given a special mission from God. Through a vision, God declared: "[Saul] is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." (Acts 9:15-16). The remainder of the Acts of the Apostles documents the work of Paul spreading the gospel in the early church. Paul took at least three missionary journeys, and his letters to the churches he founded and workers in the early church comprise the bulk of the New Testament.

Writing to the church at Rome, Paul reveals his heart for preaching and for those he would visit and to whom he would preach:

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish: so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:14-16)

Paul had a sense of calling from his dramatic conversion onward. His writing is filled with exhortations and explanations of the gospel. His evangelism went beyond simply reporting the message of Christ and calling persons to accept it. His activities included debates with intellectuals of the time (cf. Acts 17, which describes Paul's discussions with Greeks at the Areopagus in Athens). Paul believed that Christianity was a reasonable faith, one informed by divine revelation and compatible with human reason. Others in

the early church held the same perspective:

Primitive evangelism was by no means mere proclamation and exhortation; it included able intellectual argument, skilful study of the scriptures, careful, closely reasoned teaching and patient argument .... The hearers would inevitably want to know a good deal about Jesus before putting their faith in him .... [The Apostles] looked for faith which was self-commitment *on evidence*, not a leap in the dark. (Green, 1970, p. 160, emphasis in original)

During Paul's life, he suffered repeatedly for gospel. He reports that he had undergone "countless beatings, and [was] often near death. Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned . . ." (II Corinthians 11:23-25). Later in that book, he concludes his reflections on his sufferings: "For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong." (II Corinthians 12:10).

The history of the early church is filled with stories of persecution. The martyrdom of the early believers helped spread the message of the gospel. The early church father Tertullian once said, "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church." And it makes sense. The suffering of those who were willing to die rather than recant their faith lent a credibility to the Christian message. In 313, Emperor Constantine gave official status to Christianity throughout the Roman Empire (McBrien, 1995).

The history of the Catholic Church has been anything but peaceful. Time and again, it was necessary to convene Ecumenical Councils (gatherings of bishops from the various geographical churches) in order to settle debates about doctrine. Faced with teachings that deviated from the commonly held views, doctrines were scrutinized and debated in the light of tradition and scripture. These various councils contributed to a growing body of teachings that guided the church in its teachings on faith and morals (McBrien, 1995).

Centuries after Paul and Constantine, the Catholic Church continued to defend orthodoxy, fidelity to Church teaching, as well as freedom to visit pilgrimage sites in the Holy Land. From as early as the 11<sup>th</sup> Century to as late as the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Christians

were involved in a series of Crusades to free the sacred lands of Christianity from Muslim domination, and to ensure faithful teaching in accordance with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church (Riley-Smith, 1987).

In 1215, at the Fourth Lateran Council, the Catholic Church established the Office of the Inquisition, an institution for the eradication of heresy. The punishments meted out by the secular authorities in defense of orthodoxy " . . . ranged from public penances to imprisonment and, for those who were obdurate, the death penalty carried out by secular authorities" (McBrien, 1995, p. 668). The tribunals even employed torture to find out the truth, beginning in 1252, when Pope Innocent IV approved the practice (McBrien, 1995).

The impulse to search out heretics found renewed strength in Spain, beginning in 1479 under Ferdinand and Isabella. The stated purpose of the Spanish Inquisition was to ensure that believers were truly committed to the Catholic faith. In 1391, for example, pogroms were undertaken against Jews, in the major cities of France. "Those who were not murdered were compelled to accept baptism" (Kamen, 1965, p. 14). Christians in the day were not confused about the coercion that was involved, and a "convert" was "regarded with suspicion as a false Christian and a secret judaizer or practiser of Jewish rites" (Kamen, 1965, p. 14).

The practices of the Crusades and Inquisitions, coerced confessions, conversion, and the like, appear tyrannical, especially when judged by contemporary standards. The extreme "evangelistic" efforts of the Crusades and Inquisitions were ostensibly guided by a commitment and desire for purity in belief and practice of the Catholic faith. Persons were coerced to turn or return to Catholic faith, and the consequences were severe for those who refused (Kamen; 1965; McBrien, 1995). The coercive tactics of the period often won outward compliance with Christian forms and rituals, but they rarely won genuine conversions to Christianity (Kamen, 1965).

Paul and others in the early church used the weapons of words and witness of lives poured out (sometimes literally) for the sake of the gospel. The Crusades and

Inquisition employed different weapons. Coercion, fear of ecclesiastical power, and (at times) literal weapons of war took the place of appeal and persuasion. The concern for freedom of Christian shrines and doctrinal orthodoxy drove the evangelism of those eras.

### Colonial Evangelism

The tradition of militant evangelism continued during the period of European colonization. Wherever explorers went, Christian missionaries followed. Often the early missionaries suffered themselves, but the era saw an uneasy alliance of evangelism with oppression. Coerced conversions were common in those days. Missionaries of the colonial period were guided by an interpretation of the doctrine of salvation that held all who rejected the gospel culpable for their unbelief. They believed it would be better for "heathens" and "pagans" to convert under pressure than to die in their sins and go to Hell. Their understanding of the gospel led to evangelistic methods that are now considered exceedingly problematic (Sullivan, 1992). The conquistadors, for example, demanded that natives convert, and the consequence for those who did not yield was often slavery or death (Sullivan, 1992).

The practice of evangelism at the time was coercive, resembling blackmail more than heart-felt appeals to hearers. It was guided by a very strict interpretation of the doctrine "no salvation outside the Church." Some theologians of that time recognized the problematic nature of the missionary work that was being undertaken by those who colonized the New World. For example, the Dominican theologian Francisco de Vitoria lamented the scandalous treatment of the aboriginal Americans by the Spaniards:

It is not sufficiently clear to me that the Christian faith has yet been so put before the aborigines and announced to them that they are bound to believe it or commit fresh sin . . . I hear of many scandals and cruel crimes and acts of impiety. Hence, it does not appear that the Christian religion has been preached to them with sufficient propriety and piety that they are bound to acquiesce in it, even though many religious and other ecclesiastics seem both by their lives and example and their diligent preaching to have bestowed sufficient pains and industry in this business, had they not been hindered therein by men who were intent on other things. (Sullivan, 1992, pp. 72-73)

De Vitoria did not repudiate all evangelism. He was as convinced as anyone of the truth of the Christian message and the importance of spreading the gospel to those who had yet to hear and accept it. But he found the contemporary practices unacceptable. He was not alone in questioning the mistreatment of the colonized. Others agreed that conversions borne of coercion were fear-based rather than heart-felt and free.<sup>58</sup>

Not all missionaries of that day practiced the pattern of evangelism De Vitoria denounced. In fact, many heroes of the church took the faith to lands where the gospel had never before been heard. Their message was one of love rather than oppression. Often in those circumstances, persons converted in response to the love they received from church missionaries. To be sure, there were also practical benefits for those who came to hear and accept the message of the gospel. Even though missionaries provided benefits to potential converts, many conversions that followed were genuine and lasting.

### Revivalism

Throughout American history, there have been repeated calls for the revival of Christian faith among believers and to preach the gospel to non-believers. Revivals and the Great Awakening swept the English speaking world through the preaching of George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, and others. These itinerant preachers were concerned that their fellow Christians were not living Christian lives. Many Christians were not regularly gathering together in worship. Their answer was revival.

### *Charles Finney*

In his *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, Charles Finney (1960) notes the extent to

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<sup>58</sup> The Second Vatican Council addressed questions of religious liberty, and reiterated its teaching in the face of the historical facts of abuses of the sorts observed in the Crusades and Inquisition: "Although in the life of the people of God in its pilgrimage through the vicissitudes of human history there has at times appeared a form of behavior which was hardly in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel and was even

which the emotion and excitement that come with revivals help further and heighten the response of those who hear preaching.

Almost all the religion in the world has been produced by revivals. God has found it necessary to take advantage of the excitability there is in mankind, to produce powerful excitements among them, before he can lead them to obey. Men are so sluggish, there are so many things to lead their minds off from religion, and to oppose the influence of the gospel, that it is necessary to raise an excitement among them, till the tide rises so high as to sweep away the opposing obstacles. They must be so excited that they will break over these counteracting influences, before they will obey God. (Finney, 1960, pp. 9-10)

Finney considered it his vocation to revive the church, and he worked faithfully to call persons to obedient service to God. He criticized the church of his day as being weak and dangerously in need of revival, and thought revival was the proper antidote to "backsliding." "[Revival] presupposes that the church is sunk down in a backslidden state, and a revival consists in the return of the church from her backslidings, and in the conversion of sinners" (Finney, 1960, p. 15).

Finney worked diligently, but never pretended that he was able to change hearts of persons on his own. Instead, he considered the Holy Spirit the central agent in the process of revival and conversion. He was, as he saw it, simply the vehicle. through which the Holy Spirit spoke. Finney (1960) describes the work of three agents in the process of revivals:

Ordinarily, there are three agents employed in the work of conversion, and one instrument. The agents are God—some person who brings the truth to bear on the mind—and the sinner himself. The instrument is the truth. (Finney, 1960, p. 17)

Finney was known for nothing more than his preaching. He developed a list of guidelines for preaching and preachers, which reveals what he thought was most important in winning the conversion or revival of personal commitments to Christ.

1. It should be *conversational*. Preaching, to be understood, should be colloquial in its style. (Finney, 1960, p. 208)
2. It must be in the *language of common life*. Not only should it be colloquial in its style, but the *words* should be such as are in common use. (Finney, 1960,

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opposed to it, it has always remained the teaching of the Church that no one is to be coerced into believing" (Dignitatis humanae, 12).

p. 208)

3. Preaching should be *parabical*. That is, illustrations should be constantly used, drawn from incidents, real or supposed. Jesus Christ constantly illustrated his instructions in this way. (Finney, 1960, p. 209)
4. The illustrations should be drawn from *common life*, and the common business of society. (Finney, 1960, p. 209)
5. Preaching should be *repetitious*. If a minister wishes to preach with effect, he must not be afraid of repeating whatever he sees is not perfectly understood by his hearers. (Finney, 1960, p.210)
6. A minister should always feel deeply his subject, and then he will suit the action to the word and the word to the action, so as to make the full impression which the truth is calculated to make. (Finney, 1960, p. 211)
7. A minister should aim to *convert his congregation*. (Finney, 1960, p. 213)
8. A minister must *anticipate the objections* of sinners, and answer them. (Finney, 1960, p. 213)
9. If a minister means to preach the gospel with effect he must be sure *not to be monotonous*. If he preaches in a monotonous way, he will preach the people to sleep. (Finney, 1960, p. 214)
10. A minister should address the feelings enough to secure attention, and then *deal with the conscience*, and probe to the quick. Appeals to the feelings alone will never convert sinners . . . . The only way to secure *sound* conversions is to deal faithfully with the conscience. (Finney, 1960, p. 214)
11. If he can, it is desirable that a minister should learn the effect of one sermon, before he preaches another. Let him learn if it is understood, if it has produced any impression, if any difficulties are felt in regard to the subject which need clearing up, if any objections are raised, and the like. When he knows it all, then he knows what to preach next. (Finney, 1960, p. 214)

Finney targeted his preaching at the needs of his hearers. He was clear and practical, with the aim of winning religious conversions. To get his hearers to the place where they could make a commitment to Christ, he sought to understand them. He tried to anticipate their concerns and always attempted to answer their questions and clear away their doubts.

Finney was conspicuously successful. "Those brought to renewal through his ministry perhaps numbered half a million souls" (Sharpff, 1966, p.109). He established a successful program of evangelism in his revival work. He had a good organization that helped cultivate fertile soil for revival. He encouraged different churches (and different

denominations) to work together in anticipation of his arrival. And he called them to pray united in spirit for the work to be a success. He also made clear the need for follow-up with those who responded to his call for conversion and renewal of commitments to Christ during the revivals:

To bring those who were spiritually touched to definite decision, Finney invited them to the front pews after the service. Here he or his personal workers dealt further with them. In clear terms he called those who had decided for Christ to give themselves in full dedication to God and helped them to take the 'first step,' namely, to rise for prayer. Thus he used the so-called sinners' bench and likewise gave the quickened an opportunity for public testimony as their first forward step in the new life of faith. (Sharpff, 1966, p.109)

By following this pattern, Finney pressed the converts to make three outward evidences of their inner commitment. First, they had come forward to the sinners' bench. Second, they were asked to rise and pray. Third, they were asked to give testimony to what Christ had done in them (and what they had done in response to the gospel message). These rituals of incorporation helped converts seal their decision and make their surrender to Christ a public event, not just an inner reality.

*D. L. Moody*

Finney had a tremendous influence on the Christian church in America, but D. L. Moody's influence was even greater. Moody is estimated to have addressed between twenty and fifty million people in his life of preaching (Sharpff, 1966). Like Finney, his success was a result of strong organization, preparation for meetings, and a powerful program of training of volunteers for the events and subsequent follow-up with converts.

The main factor in Moody's success, however, was his preaching. He believed that if presented in simple, everyday speech, the basic truths of the Gospel—repentance, faith, justification, and rebirth—would penetrate men's hearts . . . . He preached each time as if it were his last opportunity, and the last opportunity for some sinner to hear the Gospel. (Sharpff, 1966, p.177)

Moody, like Whitefield, Edwards, and Finney before him, emphasized the need for persons to reach a moment of decision, at which they would say yes to Christ's offer of salvation. Men like Moody preached as if each opportunity to preach was potentially

their last. For them, evangelism was a matter of (spiritual) life and death. Their zeal and earnestness was felt by their hearers, and their efforts were not in vain.

### Modern Evangelism

Others followed these stalwarts of American revivalism. Billy Graham reached untold millions in the United States and around the world. His name is virtually synonymous with evangelism. He started the work of modern day crusades in the 1940s, and continued his work into the 90s. Beginning with tent meetings, his crusades were aired on radio and then television. His influence and reputation grew steadily, and he eventually shifted from a strict fundamentalism to a more moderate evangelicalism (Marsden, 1991). He is, among American evangelical preachers, the best known and most well respected. His ministry has remained scandal-free, and continues after his retirement under the leadership of his son, Franklin.

Not all evangelists have such good reputations. Mixed in with the genuine motives of evangelists like Billy Graham and D. L. Moody, are those who seemed more concerned about their own power as preachers than they were about the welfare of their hearers. Recent examples include James and Tammy Faye Bakker, and Jimmy Swaggart (Marsden, 1991). Doubts about the genuineness and/or the virtue of itinerant evangelists and faith healers have also been common fare in such Hollywood films as *Elmer Gantry*, *Leap of Faith*, and *The Apostle*.

At times, preachers have used tactics that stress the harsh judgment of God and fear based appeals to those who have yet to make their commitment to Christ. The tradition of such "fear tactics" goes back at least to Jonathan Edwards, whose sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" is featured reading in many American Literature courses. That sermon is a good example of a mode of preaching that placed the contrast between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of humanity in high relief. Often called a "fire and brimstone" preacher, Edwards attempted to literally scare the hell out of people.

His message, of course, was repentance from sin and turning to Christ. Only thus could sinners be made right with God. To neglect repentance was to risk the fires of hell.

Such preaching creates an emotional and psychological trauma like the one that often leads to so-called "foxhole conversions." The fear of losing one's life in the foxhole mirrors the fear of spiritual death such preachers stir up in their hearers. Both groups are motivated to "get right with God." However, the fear-filled approach to evangelism is notorious for its fleeting conversions. These converts often lapse when the danger (or the preaching) subsides.

### "Life-style" Evangelism

Partly in response to the lack of sustained commitment that follows "fire and brimstone" preaching, many evangelists have tempered their tone (Aldrich, 1981). The basic message remains the same, though the rhetoric and strategies have changed. The "steps" of salvation (repentance, confession, acceptance of Christ's atonement, discipleship) are the same, but the appeal and the mood are different. A "soft-sell," relational approach to evangelism has steadily replaced the highly organized and large-scale evangelism of the revival or crusade variety.

This shift was particularly evident in the early 1990s, when many evangelical preachers grew increasingly concerned about what they called the "unchurched." The unchurched are those who may have been involved in churches at one point in their lives, but who found the experience of church irrelevant to their lives. A movement arose to help win the conversion of the unchurched.

A convert himself, Lee Strobel wrote a book about ways to reach the unchurched with the message of Christ. His recommendations echo dimensions of evangelism that was called "life-style evangelism" a decade before (Aldrich, 1981). Strobel (1993) offers a list of suggestions for how Christians can attract their unchurched friends to their churches to hear (and respond to) the gospel:

- Understand their hearers' concerns and skepticism
- Love others. Meet them "where they live," building a bridge of connection to them. Cultivate the relationship out of genuine concern, not just to "save" them.
- Study to know answers to many questions skeptics are likely to raise, or know how to get them.
- Understand their lack of desire and willingness to believe, to know what to believe, or to become a Christian because of negative stereotypes they hold.
- Communicate honestly about Christian life—its challenges as well as the peace and joy.
- Live the life. Be an example.
- Talk honestly about experiences with and beliefs about God. Don't attempt to coerce others by making them feel guilty. When/if they ask, however, describe for them God's offer of forgiveness, and the steps to salvation.
- In general, talk honestly and responsively to others about their questions, interests, and needs. (Strobel, 1993)

Joseph Aldrich (1981) also offers very practical tips about strategies for questions, possible books for study, recommendations about the importance of refreshments, and the order of events for the bible study. Concluding his chapter on home bible studies, he encourages his readers to be open with non-Christians, even if the Christians never hold an evangelistic study in their homes:

Make your home circle an open circle whether or not you actually have a "formal study." Believe me, if they become your friends, they already are disposed to become a friend of Christ. Isn't that what evangelism is about? Living beautifully and opening up our webs of relationships so that others can see His beauty . . . in us! (Aldrich, 1981, p. 199)

Throughout his book, Aldrich emphasizes the importance of cultivating relationships and spending time with non-Christians. He says Christians should convey openness and love toward their neighbors. The goal should be to develop friendships first, and then to share honestly about the benefits of becoming Christian. At the conceptual level, the goal is to

eliminate misconceptions and myths about Christianity.

There are many kinds of evangelism, from soft-sell, relational approaches to the coercion of the Crusades. Common to all evangelistic efforts, however, is a self-professed concern for hearers and presenting the scriptural message of repentance and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

### BASIC PHASES OF EVANGELISM

Regardless of its form, evangelism aims at communicating the gospel. Seen from that perspective, evangelism can be viewed as a four-phase process. First, the gospel message must be communicated, and spread to all the world. Among the central questions at this stage are: What message? Sent by whom? Sent to whom? Sent how?

Second, the message of the gospel must be interpreted. Among the central questions at this stage are the following: Interpreted by whom? Interpreted in what ways? What is the level of clarity about the gospel message, the level of specificity? What shapes and influences the interpretations of the gospel and its demands?

Third, the message of the gospel must be applied. Among the central questions at this phase are the following: Applied to what? By whom? Applied how? Like interpretations, applications can be shaped and influenced by local expositors of the gospel ideas.

Fourth, the message must be enacted. The ultimate goal of the gospel is to have persons live Christian lives. Among the central questions at this phase are the following: Have things changed? Says whom? What's the proof?

### Spreading the Message

From the definition of *evangelism* itself, the importance of spreading the message is clear. In short, there is no evangelism without communicating the message of the gospel. The message combines the declaration that humans are sinful and in need of a

savior with the proclamation that Jesus Christ, through his death and resurrection, offers the remedy for that sinfulness. Spreading the message involves both themes of sin and salvation. At different times, evangelists may emphasize one over the other, but the message of salvation assumes sinfulness and the divine remedy, found in Jesus Christ.

Practically speaking, evangelists spread the gospel by employing one or more angles of approach with their hearers. Sweazey (1953) enumerates twenty different positive angles of appeal and four questionable ones that evangelists use to spread the gospel. They sometimes begin with explicitly religious themes, like "appreciation of the teaching of Jesus Christ" or "missing significance of God." At other times, they focus on more existential themes, like "self-perplexity," "boredom," or a "sense that something is lacking." Sweazey (1953) lists "fear," "social pressure," "worldly motives," and "superstition" as questionable approaches (pp. 70-71). Whatever the approach, the goal is to cultivate an openness and interest in the gospel.

When persons reject the gospel, Christians continue to evangelize, confident that the work is important and trusting that some approach will work. In fact, evangelists can be tenacious, and continue to evangelize even when persons seem closed to the gospel.

. . . An evangelist will be doomed to disappointments if he assumes that everyone is oppressed by a sense of sin, or appreciates Christian fellowship, or is dissatisfied with secular living. The only assumption the evangelist can make is that God has provided some way to approach every human being. When one way fails he must try another. (Green, 1951, p. 59)

The commitment to evangelize arises from a conviction that the gospel holds the answer to all of life's challenges and burdens and a hope that their hearers will one day respond to the gospel. When their appeals are rejected, evangelists often search for different approaches that might work the next time (Green, 1951; Rambo, 1993).

### Interpreting the Message

Potential converts must interpret the messages they receive about the gospel. They must make sense of the double message of the need for, and the offer of, salvation in

Jesus Christ. If the gospel is proclaimed explicitly, interpretation is not as problematic as it is when the "message" is the witness of a Christian life. Either way, however, the gospel must be interpreted to be understood. The gospel as preached or lived is not self-interpreting.

Evangelists spread the message as they understand it. In other words, they spread an interpreted message. Their words will influence what their hearers understand and can understand of the gospel. If preachers communicate nothing of the love of God, but focus simply on God's looming judgment, their hearers will have a particular perspective of God. If on the other hand, evangelists highlight the mercy of God, the message hearers will receive, and the impression they will have of God, will be very different. Different presentations of the gospel provide hearers different "raw materials" from which to craft interpretations.

Given the centrality of interpretation to understanding, evangelists must pay attention to the ways their messages are being interpreted by their hearers. If evangelists wish to win a favorable response to the message, they will need to take into account the cultural perspective and understandings of their hearers (Aldrich, 1981; Evangelii nuntiandi; Strobel, 1993). Acknowledging and tailoring the gospel message to the perspective of hearers decreases the chances that the message will be misunderstood. Even so, it is impossible to ensure that the message gets through in "pure form."

The theological challenge for evangelists is communicating the message in fidelity to the orthodox view of salvation in Jesus Christ. Evangelists work to communicate clearly the message of loving forgiveness without creating impediments for their hearers. They do so by getting to know their audience and anticipating potential criticisms and responding to questions. Knowledge of cultural assumptions as well as awareness of the typical impediments to faith in Christ help the evangelist foster clear (and sympathetic) interpretations of the gospel. Interaction and conversation can help clarify the message, and allow evangelists to correct misunderstandings and to respond to

questions as they arise (Aldrich, 1981; Strobel, 1993).

Without any sacrifice of the essential truths [evangelists] must transpose this message into an idiom which will be understood by the people they serve and thus proclaim it . . . . This is a question which calls for no small measure of prudence, because evangelization will lose much of its power and efficacy if it does not take into consideration the people to whom it is addressed, if it does not make use of their language, their signs and their symbols, if it does not offer an answer to the questions which are relevant to them, if, in a word, it does not reach and influence their way of life. (Evangeliis nuntiandi, 63)

Evangelists will be most effective when they are able to convey the message in terms that their hearers find acceptable and even attractive. "The truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it makes its entrance into the mind at once quietly and with power" (Dignitatis humanae, 1). The gospel must be communicated in terms that make sense to hearers, and that requires evangelists to establish points of contact between the gospel and the lives and minds of their hearers. Evangelists must know their faith and their hearers, and address the preconceptions, questions, and concerns of their hearers.

### Applying the Gospel: Conversion

Evangelists are not completely satisfied when the gospel is intellectually understood by their hearers. Though understanding the message is important, it is rarely sufficient to win personal conversions. Persons can understand the gospel message and remain indifferent to it or reject it outright. The evangelist therefore must work for something more than mere understanding. As a result, evangelists work to win positive responses to the gospel. In a word, they seek conversions.

Evangelists want their hearers to apply the gospel message to themselves. That is, they want their hearers to understand the offer of salvation and to accept the gift of salvation as their own. They want their hearers to have faith in the truth of the message and in the God who offers them salvation. Saving faith is an act of the will in response to God's offer of salvation. The offer must be understood by the mind and received by the

will.<sup>59</sup>

Multiple layers of awareness must come together to support religious conversion.

1) Persons must understand the claims of Christ and understand the offer of salvation that is central to the gospel. 2) They must understand themselves in light of the Christian teaching about creation, fall, and redemption. In other words, they must apply the Christian hermeneutic to their life. And that means they must acknowledge their own need for a savior because of their sin. 3) They must make a choice to embrace the gospel message. That is, they must repent and accept the offer of salvation contained in the gospel message. Embracing the gospel and the Christ of the gospel is an act of the will. The choice is not entirely blind, even if it ultimately requires converts to take a "leap of faith" (Kierkegaard, 1992).

### Enacting the Gospel: Discipleship

Personal application and enactment of the gospel are often made public when converts bear testimony to their conversion. This occurs most often through rituals of incorporation (Rambo, 1993). The normal ritual of incorporation is baptism, by which persons identify with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection (cf. Romans 6). In addition to baptism (and in some traditions, prior to it), converts are expected to share their testimony of how Christ saved them. These testimonies include retracing their former lives, the way grace entered their lives, and the results, which include conversion (Rambo, 1993; Strobel, 1993; Sweazey, 1953; Ullman, 1989).

After conversion comes what is called "discipleship," or "catechesis." Beyond the incorporation into the faith community, converts also need to be shown how to live Christian lives. And that means they need to be taught what their conversion (and the

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<sup>59</sup> Christian teaching holds that persons can only accept the offer of salvation because of the grace that is offered them by God. This recalls the comments earlier that the Holy Spirit is the central player in conversions. We talk more about the factors that support conversion below.

gospel) implies about the choices they will make in their lives. The question for the evangelist is how to support the new believer in living a genuinely Christ-like life. Part of that entails helping the new believer learn what Jesus taught and how he lived. In some cases, interpretation and application of Christ's teachings are straightforward, but often things are less clear.

### *Enacting Interpretations*

The interpretive problem with New Testament writings is not simply due to the separation in time and place. Even in his own day, disciples struggled to understand what Jesus meant by what he said. His parables were not self-interpreting. He said himself that he taught in parables in part because they were enigmatic. Understanding the teaching of Jesus required God's illumination (Matthew 13: 10-11). It is therefore not surprising that some teachings of Jesus and of the New Testament are difficult to understand and apply.

For example, Jesus told his hearers they must "love the Lord [their] God with [their] whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love [their] neighbor as [themselves]." What does that demand in practice? When the Ten Commandments prohibit murder, the application seems quite clear. But what does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself? Does it mean tolerating anything they do, or does it require correcting them in love? How does a person know when to apply each approach? How should you treat someone who has just stolen your property? What does Christ's teaching demand when a good friend betrays you? When you can't get along with your spouse? Is it really possible to love God "with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength" when someone you love has cancer? How, in other words, should Christians apply the two great commandments of Jesus to the concrete challenges of life?

### *Modeling the Message*

In their struggle to find answers to such questions, Christians can look to the gospel narratives for help. One unique characteristic of the New Testament gospels is that they do not simply report the teachings of Jesus. They integrate the moral teachings of Jesus with narrative accounts of the way he lived. For example, Jesus does not merely tell his hearers to love their enemies, he shows them what that means. This is most evident in the accounts of his capture and crucifixion. After the apostle Peter drew his sword and severed the ear of a soldier who had come to arrest him, Jesus rebuked Peter and healed the soldier's ear (Luke 22:51). Most poignantly, from the cross Jesus cried out to God, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). His teachings about loving enemies and forgiving those that wrong us are brought to life, made manifest, in his actions on the cross.

The gospels provide many images of what his teaching looks like in action. Jesus healed the sick and the lame. He exorcised demons. He fed the hungry. He defended those who were caught in sin. He forgave sins. He even raised the dead. He offered himself as a sacrifice for others. His message and his life were means of healing and salvation for those who came to him in faith. His life and teaching were remarkably consistent. His hearers, somehow sensing the authority his life gave to what he said, "the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes" (Matthew 7:28-29).

Those who read the gospels and hear them preached today also gain a sense of the life of the man Jesus, not just a list of things he taught and demanded of those who followed him. Jesus was self-consciously living out the heart of His message. He was the Word incarnate (John 1:14), and told his disciples, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." (John 14:6). His life was his message and his message was his life. Jesus was message, medium, and model. And all Christians are called to emulate his life, to become incarnate messengers of the gospel.

### *Centrality of Interpretation*

The narrative accounts in the New Testament help convey the depth and nuance of the life and teaching of Christ. But they do not remove the need for interpretation about particular circumstances in which Christians find themselves. The teachings themselves are difficult, and the application to daily life is often problematic. For that reason, there are often disagreements among individuals and between different denominations about how the gospel applies in particular circumstances. Such disagreements are not limited to social and moral questions. There are many disagreements about doctrine, as well.

Many deep and complex theological questions are based on differences in biblical interpretation. One fundamental disagreement between Catholics and Reformed Protestants centers on the doctrine of justification. To simplify the matter, Roman Catholics teach that faith must be accompanied by works that prove faith in Christ. On this view, Christians must strive daily to follow the path set down by Christ in order to be saved. Conversion is a first step in the new life, but it provides no guarantee of salvation for Catholics.

Many Protestants, on the other hand, hold a "once saved, always saved" view of justification (Sungenis, 1997). That is, once one has converted to Christianity, there is nothing one can do to lose the gift of salvation. This view stems from Martin Luther's interpretation of justification as *imputed* to those who have believing faith. Christ's righteousness is placed on believers as a cloak, or covering. Luther described Christ's righteousness covering believers as snow covers a pile of dung (Sungenis, 1997). The snow makes the sinner seem pure, but does not really change the sinner's sinful condition. (Luther believed that human beings were totally depraved, and incapable of any goodness at all.) In contrast, the Roman Catholic view is that Christ effects a work of transformation in the cooperating Christian's life by grace. This action makes them, in

fact, righteous. Grace effects a genuine change in the interior of the person, not merely a different outward appearance.

*Traditions of Interpretation and Enactment.*

Luther's doctrine that persons are saved by faith alone (*sola fide*) was a major shift from the Catholic tradition of which he had been a part. To ground the doctrine of *sola fide*, he had to interpret scripture (especially Romans 3:28) in a fundamentally different way from the traditional Catholic interpretation. Because of the revolutionary impact of the change in the doctrine of justification, *sola fide* is considered the "material principle" of the Reformation. Concomitantly, Luther established a general rule for interpretation and doctrinal development that further set him apart from Roman Catholic thought. Luther concluded that only doctrines that could be established from scripture alone (*sola scriptura*) were valid. This came to be known as the "formal principle" of the Reformation. This stance toward doctrine freed him from the authority of the Catholic church, and effectively allowed him to develop doctrine based on his private understanding of the scriptures.

By making scripture alone the ground of truth, Luther rejected the Magisterium of the Catholic Church and its doctrines. Since Luther, there have been many official traditions of Christian interpretation and belief. These traditions are established and maintained in the context of communities of believers. Persons grow up within particular religious and theological traditions, and these traditions inform their understanding of the scriptures and their perspectives on other faiths, denominations, and doctrinal views. Believers are taught the rituals and beliefs implicitly through worship and teaching in their traditions. The effects of different traditions of Christian teaching and Christian practice are evident in many ways. There are differences in doctrine, worship, and views of what it means to live Christ-like lives.

For example, some Christians develop lists of do's and don'ts that constitute

"proof" that one is (or isn't) Christian. The Puritan and Fundamentalist tradition is strong in the United States. These groups often prohibit alcohol, gambling, smoking, dancing, and the like (Barr, 1978). These lists of prohibitions are often based on cultural views of what constitutes holiness rather than on scripture. In some cases, their prohibitions contradict the scriptures. For example, scripture is clear about the goodness of wine and drink (Psalm 104:15; John 2), even if it warns against drunkenness (Proverbs 23:21; Galatians 5:21).

Christians often disagree in their judgments about moral questions and particular moral actions. One reason for disagreement is the complexity of the human heart and the circumstances of life. Another reason for disagreement is the multi-vocal nature of scripture (i.e., persons can appeal to different scriptures to support their judgments). For example, a scripture that criticizes drunkenness can be taken to prohibit alcohol, whereas a text that says God made "wine to gladden the heart" can be used to defend its use (Psalm 104:15).

Differences in interpretation and application of scripture can often be traced back to the traditions of thought and interpretation persons have learned in the context of their faith communities. Regardless of denominational background, all believers inhabit cultures and are part of traditions of interpretation that influence their judgments about doctrine and morals.

These cultures also shape the socialization of new believers. When converts convert, they learn what they do within particular cultures. In other words, converts do not convert to Christianity in a vacuum. They convert in response to particular messages from particular persons in particular contexts. Because faith communities have established traditions for understanding the gospel and for judging Christian behavior, what converts learn about the faith and what the faith demands of them is profoundly influenced by other believers. Their faith and practice grows out of their interaction with members of faith communities.

## Summary

Throughout history, the gospel has been spread in many ways. The means have changed across time as have evangelists' views of potential converts, but the goal of evangelism has remained constant. The goal is the salvation of souls through conversion to Christianity. Whatever its mode or method, evangelism is inextricably tied to the message of the gospel. The work of evangelism centers on communicating the gospel to potential converts. Evangelism demands that the message be 1) spread so that persons can hear it; 2) interpreted so that persons can understand it; 3) applied so that persons can experience it; and 4) enacted so that persons can demonstrate they are incorporating the message into their lives. All these phases of evangelism occur in the context of evangelists and communities of faith and ultimately depend upon personal responses to the gospel as potential converts come to understand it.

### CONVERSION: THE EVANGELIST'S GOAL

Ultimately, the purpose of evangelism is to spread the gospel and to convert hearts to God. So conversion is the pivotal point in the process of evangelism. Evangelists believe that everyone needs to be converted, both those who are already believers and those who have yet to believe. Religious transformation begins when persons embrace the gospel, at the moment of conversion. Transformation is sustained in the context of faith communities by the continued moral and spiritual conversions of those who are already believers.

### Stages of Conversion

Conversion is a process in its own right. Recall that James (1907/1996) centers his discussion of conversion on two stages: the *divided-self* (a sense of something being wrong) and *deliverance*. He focuses almost exclusively on quick conversions of the sort

experienced by Saul of Tarsus (also known as St. Paul). And, in fact, some conversions seem almost instantaneous. Many others, however, experience progressive conversions. C. S. Lewis (1955) describes such a conversion in his book, *Surprised by Joy*.

### *Griffin's Four-Stage Model*

Influenced in part by Lewis' conversion, Emilie Griffin (1980) offers a nice set of reflections on her own long process of conversion in her book, *Turning: Reflections on the experience of conversion*. In that book, she documents her journey to faith in Christ. Various authors have described stages or steps through which converts proceed. Griffin (1980) describes stages through which she progressed in the process of her conversion: *Desiring, Dialectic, Struggle, and Surrender*.

"Conversion," she says, "begins with longing or desire, a heart's ache for something we have never quite experienced and cannot fully describe" (Griffin, 1980, p. 31). This formulation owes much to the imagery offered by St. Augustine in his *Confessions* as well as the image portrayed in C. S. Lewis' search for what he calls *Joy*. In her description, Griffin paints a picture of the beauty of longing and her desire for completeness. By reading stories of other converts, such as Lewis, Thomas Merton, G. K. Chesterton, Dorothy Day, and Avery Dulles, she found echoes of her own deep longings. These longings stood in tension for her with her intellectual doubts about the existence of a God who could fulfill the desires she felt inside.

The tension inside brought her to the second stage, *Dialectic*. For Griffin (1980), the dialectic was first of all an intellectual pursuit of understanding her desires, and testing the reasonableness of her hypothesis that God could satisfy her longings. The dialectic also involved her search for natural ways to satisfy the longing for wholeness she could not deny. Her pursuit was not strictly analytical, but even a bit desperate at times. She was filled with discouragement and sought relief. But she needed to test whether belief in God could withstand critical scrutiny. "I could not take shelter under a

leaky roof. Until I was intellectually convinced that the shelter was sound, religion would be for me no shelter at all" (Griffin, 1980, p. 74). The focus at this stage was her mind. She tapped into historical proofs of God's existence, discussions of Natural Law morality, and concluded with Mortimer Adler that "both atheism and belief . . . are faith positions" (Griffin, 1980, p. 87).

I had come to a crossing and I did not know how I could get across. Up to now, I had been encouraged to find that people of reason could be believers. But I now saw that they do so with a power in themselves that is beyond the rational . . . It was the will which now had to be brought into play . . . A choice had to be made. And though I saw the issue clearly, I did not yet have the courage, the heart, the conviction to make the choice which lay before me. (Griffin, 1980, p. 87)

And, with that, she entered what she calls her period of *struggle*, of wrestling. Part of this wrestling occurred with persons who gave testimony to God's presence in their lives. Part of her struggle was her awareness of her own sin.

What characterizes the Struggle, then, is a growing realization of the truth of God's existence, and, at the same time a last-ditch reluctance to accept him. It seems as though the nearer we come to the Lord, the more we sense his overwhelming power, the more we begin to believe that he is real, the more we resist him. (Griffin, 1980, p. 126)

This struggle highlights the seriousness of the choice to convert, and the fundamental reorientation it entails:

The choice is between following our own way, living for ourselves entirely ... and following the Lord's way and living for him. As with every, other phase of conversion, the Struggle is an inward movement: a tension between the Lord's way and our own which is the first such confrontation we have made in our lives. (Griffin, 1980, p. 126)

This experience of anxiety is drawn to a decision point, a moment she says is common to those who experience religious conversion. "To recognize such a moment, our hearts and our minds must be wide open. Then, and only then, can the convert be led from the Struggle to his own Surrender" (Griffin, 1980, p. 127).

Unsurprisingly, she states that surrender is the

. . . real turning point of conversion. It is the moment after which, whatever happens, whatever ups and downs we may have, we know that we belong to the Lord. Our allegiance is given; it is committed; we cannot turn back.. That is not to say that we may not slip . . . [b]ut in Surrender, something fundamental happens. After that, nothing is ever the same. (Griffin, 1980, p. 129)

Clearly present in Griffin's reflections is the fundamental change that occurred inside her. Her conversion was bound up with what she calls struggle, and she documents the losses that accompanied the joy she found. She describes the results of *surrender* in celebratory terms, but does not stint concerning the difficulties that followed her conversion.

### *Rambo's Seven-Stage Model*

Rambo (1993) says a stage model is valuable because conversion is a process that occurs over time. The stages of conversion are not fixed, nor strictly linear. There can be a spiraling effect, a "back and forth" movement, between stages. He offers seven: context, crisis, quest, encounter, interaction, commitment, and consequences (Rambo, 1993, p. 17). The context of evangelism was explored above. We turn to the remaining six stages in order to gain a sense of the process of conversion.

*Crisis* is the "catalyst for change" (Rambo, 1993, p. 166). Crises create conditions in which persons reevaluate their lives and consider alternatives. Some crises are the direct cause of reevaluation, but others are triggered by events that may not be serious in themselves, but are the proverbial last straw. Rambo calls these triggering events "crises in retrospective" because they point back to a series of events or experiences that together constitute a crisis that leads, potentially, to a quest for answers (p. 46).

Sometimes these crises are events that surface in the course of human life, but crises can also be triggered by external forces:

It is clear that some crises are caused by external forces, most notably when colonial powers disrupt and in some cases destroy the existing socio-cultural reality of indigenous peoples. Another important form of externally triggered crisis is the activity of missionaries or advocates. The presence of an advocate may trigger dissatisfaction in a potential convert that had not previously been clearly felt . . . the persuasion process is designed in part to foster a sense of dissatisfaction with the contemporary situation and thus to stimulate the search for a new alternative. (Rambo, pp. 54-55)

In the context of evangelism, we can see that evangelists or missionaries can foster a sense of crisis in individuals and groups. The awakened sense of crisis can sometimes

lead to a quest for answers. Typically, in fact, persons in crisis do seek solutions. They may not seek resolution in the way evangelists have in mind, but they are apt to seek some remedy.

The *quest* is marked by the human search for solutions to problems, and the human need to find meaning. This stage is marked by an active search of persons for solutions, ways to feel more complete as human beings, to find meaning, or heal wounds. Quests are searches for answers to the challenges, questions, and problems of human life. Conversions often occur because persons actively seek for solutions. "While sometimes a convert is passive in conversion because of extreme personal vulnerability or a coercive environment, most converts are actively engaged in seeking fulfillment" (Rambo, 1993, p. 167). Crises, especially when followed by quests for answers, often set the stage for encounters between seekers and evangelists.

*Encounter* is the stage when persons who are in crisis or are seeking answers through quests meet those who are advocating a religious solution. This is the stage in which potential converts and evangelists can establish relationships out of which the next stage, interaction, can develop. Encounter represents the social dance, as it were, of those who have mutual interests but may not know it. The personal dynamics at play in any social situation are prevalent at this stage.

Because of their zeal, evangelists creatively seek ways to win the interest of potential converts. They are convinced that the message they are offering and the solutions they are recommending are of ultimate importance. They rarely give up, because the consequences are--in their eyes--too important for casual engagement.

*Interaction* grows out of positive encounters. When persons have established or possess adequate mutual interest, they can move to deeper levels of conversation and learning about each other's interests and desires. Interaction is premised, in this respect, on relationship and credibility. Advocates can purposely cultivate relationships with the goal of interaction, but the relationship ultimately must bear the weight of the interaction

if the potential convert will continue to seek conversion.

Interaction is not strictly limited to one-on-one conversations. Instead, interaction often happens in groups when potential converts begin to explore more deeply the teachings about Christ (or other religions). At this stage potential converts begin to learn the contours of the religious world-view and to develop language to understand the Christian view of humanity and relationship with God. In addition to gaining exposure to rhetoric about the faith, persons gain a sense of the "life of Christianity" by participating in rituals and worship. These experiences supplement the intellectual learning that occurs at this stage. Exposure to the teachings and experience of life in community allow potential converts to see the options available to them. They could remain "on the outside" of the Christian life, or they could take the next step, commitment, to become a Christian themselves.

*Commitment* is the "consummation of the conversion process" (Rambo, 1993, p. 168). It marks the point, as Griffin (1980) said, of surrender to a new way of understanding the world and oneself as a convert. Commitment and consolidation involve developing a new system of understanding oneself and one's place in the community of believers.

In the liminal or transitional period, the convert learns more intensively how to think, act, and feel like a new person. Central to the converting process is the convert's reconstruction of his or her biographical memory and deployment of a new system of attribution in various spheres of life. (Rambo, 1993, p. 169)

In addition to this internal act of surrender, commitment is often marked by rituals of incorporation that mark the passage from one state or position to another. In the Christian tradition, the ritual of incorporation typically entails some public renunciation of the convert's former life (i.e., repentance) and ritual baptism, which symbolizes the convert's identification with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection (cf. Romans 6). In the Catholic tradition, the newly baptized are clothed in white to symbolize the purity of the newly baptized heart and soul (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1243). They have been "washed clean" in the waters of baptism.

## Central Factors in Conversion

In studies of conversion, four factors are especially prominent. The first is the experience of crisis or struggle (James, 1907/1996; Griffin, 1980; Rambo, 1993; Ullman, 1989). Crises set the stage for conversion by creating or awakening a sense of need. Second, conversions occur within the context of relationships. Relationships and interaction between potential converts and persons of faith are fundamental to conversion (Lofland, 1977; Rambo, 1993; Ullman, 1989). These relationships enable persons to learn about the faith and see faith as an answer to their needs. Third, faith communities are important because they help support the potential converts in their decision to embrace the Christian understanding of themselves, the world, and relationships with God (Rambo, 1993; Strobel, 1993; Sweazey, 1953; Ullman, 1989). Fourth, converts must in fact decide to convert. They must ultimately will to believe the claims of the gospel (Griffin, 1980; James, 1907/1996; Rambo, 1993; Sweazey, 1953).

### *Crises*

As James (1907/1996) argued nearly a century ago, persons desire to be whole, and religious conversion is one way to provide healing. More recent studies of conversion confirm that converts almost universally report a sense of brokenness or desire for meaning prior to conversion (Griffin, 1980; Rambo, 1993; Ullman, 1989). Chana Ullman (1989) argues that converts commonly experience "intense negative emotions prior to the change" (p. 194). Conversion is often a way for converts to mitigate such negative emotions and develop a new sense of themselves.

Griffin (1980) does not call what she experienced a crisis, but does describe the tension she felt. She says that conversions like hers begin as a "longing or desire, a heart's ache for something we have never quite experienced and cannot fully describe" (Griffin, 1980, p. 31). She desired something "more," a peace and harmony that was

missing from her life. And she searched for ways to satisfy the longing in her heart.

Crisis is the "catalyst for change" (Rambo, 1993, p. 166). Crises create conditions in which persons can and often do reevaluate their lives and consider alternatives. In general, crises set the stage for conversion by bringing a potential convert's needs and desires (as well as their frustrations) into high relief. Everyday crises often spark a search for wholeness and healing, but crises can also be created by evangelists (Rambo, 1993; Sweazey, 1953).

Evangelists sometimes excavate a buried sense of guilt or hidden longing or desire in potential converts. On other occasions, evangelists paint a picture of a better life or one full of meaning that cultivates a sense of desire and/or need in the potential convert. Occasionally, evangelists employ scare tactics to create a sense of crisis and fear of God's judgment. Whatever the source or kind of crisis, conversions are most frequent when potential converts are experiencing crises (Rambo, 1993; Ullman, 1989). Crises are central to the process of conversion because they provide incentives for potential converts to seek out remedies to the struggles in their lives (Rambo, 1993).

### *Relationships*

Relationships are important to conversions. Converts typically learn about the faith from persons they know or from those who get to know them in order to evangelize them (Aldrich, 1981). Relationships are the primary context in which the quest and questions of converts can encounter the gospel. Especially when relationships of trust are established, evangelists and potential converts can proceed to deeper levels of conversation in which hopes, fears, doubts, and desires can be addressed (Aldrich, 1981; Griffin, 1980; Strobel, 1993). Often these relationships involve a give and take at intellectual, affective, and spiritual levels.

Evangelism and conversion are social processes. As such, they are inherently relational. Given the intimate nature of the subject matter--personal crises, longings,

desires for a better life, and the like-interactions between evangelists and potential converts are often profound and deep. In a sense, potential converts' entire selves are implicated in their interactions with evangelists. Given the intimacy of such conversations, it is little surprise that Ullman (1989) claims that the typical convert in her study was . . .

. . . transformed not by a religion, but by a person. The discovery of a new truth was indistinguishable from a discovery of a new relationship, which relieved, at least temporarily, the upheaval of the previous life. (Ullman, 1989, p. xvi)

Potential converts commonly encounter ideas about faith through relationships. When they are positive, relationships are more than simply contexts in which religious messages can be communicated. Good relationships make it easier for potential converts to hear the gospel message, because they hear it from evangelists they have come to know and (often) like.

Ullman (1989) highlights the interpersonal, emotional aspects of conversion, and nominates three common experiences in conversion accounts:

First, and most frequently, conversion stories rested on an infatuation with a powerful authority figure . . . .

Second, there was a relationship with a group of peers who lavished acceptance and love . . . .

Third, conversion stories revealed a passionate attachment to an unconditionally loving transcendental object. (p. xvii-xix)

It is obvious that relationships are central to human life. Consequently, the most troubling crises are often those of relationship (Fullan, 1997; Wheelis, 1973). Not surprisingly, the solution to the anxiety and struggles of life can often be found in the context of new (or newly ordered) relationships. When persons convert, they trade-in (as it were) old modes of relating for new ones, and establish new relationships in hopes of alleviating the suffering in their past (Ullman, 1989). Converts establish new (or newly ordered) relationships on the "horizontal" level (i.e., between persons) as well as the "vertical" level (i.e., between themselves and God).

Conversions are fundamentally about relationships and ways of living. They

typically grow out of relationships between evangelists and converts, occur in the social context of faith communities, and focus ultimately on new (or renewed) relationships with God and other persons.

### *Community*

Faith communities are important for conversion because they create contexts in which potential converts can view and experience the life of faith (Rambo, 1993; Sweazey, 1953; Ullman, 1989). In the context of fellow believers, potential converts begin to learn the contours of the religious world-view. Potential converts (as well as the newly converted) learn distinctive language that enables them to describe their own lives in terms that are consistent with the Christian view of humanity and its relationship with God (Griffin, 1980; Rambo, 1993). In addition to gaining exposure to rhetoric about the faith, persons gain a sense of the life of Christianity by participating in rituals and worship among fellow believers.

Simone Weil's conversion to Christianity from Judaism is a good example of how experiences with religious groups can contribute to conversion. She recounts her experience spending time attending liturgies in a French monastery. Her experience stirred her heart and mind with visions of love that ultimately led to her conversion:

In 1938, I spent ten days at Solesmes, from Palm Sunday to Easter Tuesday, following all the liturgical services. I was suffering from splitting headaches; each sound hurt me like a blow; by an extreme effort of concentration I was able to rise above this wretched flesh, to leave it to suffer by itself, heaped up in a corner, and to find a pure and perfect joy in the unimaginable beauty of the chanting and the words. This experience enabled me by analogy to get a better understanding of the possibility of a loving divine love in the midst of affliction. It goes without saying that in the course of these services the thought of the Passion of Christ entered into my head once and for all. (Quoted in Coles, 1987, p. 118.)

Weil reveals a profound inner conflict between the world of the flesh and that of the spirit. Her experiences at Solesmes, both of suffering and of joy in the midst of her affliction, contributed to her conversion. The liturgy and the life of the community allowed her to appreciate, and in a sense experience, the Passion of Christ.

After this mystical experience of joy in the face of affliction, Weil noticed a young man who seemed visibly changed after he received the Eucharist. In the course of their conversation, the young man introduced Weil to a 17<sup>th</sup> Century poem by George Herbert, entitled "Love." The poem is a poignant glimpse into God's overwhelming love and mercy toward sinners, especially those who feel unworthy. Love (Jesus) invites sinners to dine unashamed at the heavenly banquet, to rest while he serves them.

There were many influences on Weil in her time at Solesmes. Among them were the writings of a 16 century mystic (St. John of the Cross), a 17th Century poet (George Herbert), a monastic community (Solesmes), a young English Catholic who both silently and verbally witnessed to his life in Christ, and a spiritual encounter with Christ who appeared to her as Love. These things confirmed Weil in her conviction that the love of Christ was real, true, and worthy of embrace. And she did embrace it. She was changed and committed herself to the work of Christ for the remainder of her life.

Once Simone Weil met Christ, her life began anew . . . I think it fair to say that she fell in love with Jesus; that he became her beloved; that she kept him on her mind and in her heart. She spent the last five years of her life thinking about Jesus, writing about him, praying to him, fitting him into her social and economic and political scheme of things. She was a nun of sorts, following her vocation alone. She was an ambitious, dedicated follower, anxious to meet him - maybe become one of his saints. (Coles, 1987, p. 119)

Weil's life changed markedly after her conversion. She, like Griffin (1980) and Augustine, experienced tremendous joy and a radical reorientation in her life after her conversion.

Weil's is a powerful account of how faith communities and witnesses (both contemporary and historical) contribute to conversions. Though her story is unique, the pattern of her experience is not uncommon. Griffin (1980) and Augustine tell similar tales. The particular set of experiences and relationships that contributed to her conversion belong to her alone, but all converts have their own set of persons and influences that contribute to their conversion.

Faith communities are helpful to converts prior to conversion, and they also

contribute to the ongoing formation of converts afterward. Conversion involves forming new beliefs and conforming to new patterns of behavior (Rambo, 1993). All religious groups maintain their identity as groups by establishing norms, rituals, and rhetoric that mark them as distinctive (Durkheim, 1915; Rambo, 1993; Ullman, 1989). And these distinctive markers of faith serve as catechetical aids both prior to conversion and afterward.

Religious groups vary greatly in the nature and extent of social influence exerted on new as well as veteran members . . . . But all groups exploit to some extent the tendency in all of us to imitate behaviors that are perceived as successful in peers, to conform to the group's expectations, . . . and to attempt to minimize discrepancies between beliefs and actions. (Ullman, 1989, pp. 91-92)

Faith communities provide contexts in which potential converts can see the faith "at work." Faith is experienced affectively through the love and support of other believers, and it is observed and learned through the ways believers speak about themselves, others, and their relationships with God. Through the group, potential converts gain a sense of what the Christian life entails intellectually, affectively, and spiritually.

### *Personal Surrender: The Will to Believe*

Faith communities often create hospitable contexts for conversion, but conversions do not follow simply from hospitable contexts. Relationships can contribute to conversions, but if persons are to convert, they must (choose to) do so for themselves. Conversion ultimately hinges on personal responses to the gospel. As much as social support and pressure can contribute to conversions, they cannot ensure them.

Evangelism is an uncertain process largely because of the importance of the will in conversion. When potential converts are presented with the gospel, they respond in light of their past and present life experiences. Their responses are influenced by conscious as well as unconscious factors. Those who reject the gospel or ignore evangelistic efforts do so for many different reasons. Some will choose to embrace the faith, but the number is only a fraction of those evangelized. Many who hear the gospel

will reject or ignore it.

Resistance based on powerful personal or group proclivities result in either outright rejection of the new option or mere apathy toward it. Advocates are often persistent and creative. Seeking new ways to elicit the interest of potential converts, they seek to understand them better and communicate better with them. Potential converts as active agents are also skillful in seeking out what it is that they want and rejecting what they do not desire. (Rambo, 1993, p. 167)

Evangelists must contend with the incentives that potential converts have for not converting, and must figure out ways to connect with them at their point of need, to address them at their point of interest. But whatever evangelists say or do, many potential converts will choose to reject or ignore the gospel.

One major reason why persons do not accept the gospel message is that the gospel demands radical changes. It is no criticism to say that all persons are heavily invested in their current ways of living in (and understanding) the world. Radical transformations like those of conversion inevitably unsettle the status quo. As a result, even the best and most earnest evangelistic efforts will often fail.

Adult identity is very resistant to change. The mere presence of direct or indirect forms of social influence is hardly enough to make a convert. In the conversion experiences that involve group process, it is not merely the presence of the group that transforms observers into avid converts. The potential convert is hardly a passive recipient of social manipulation. The effects of deliberate or inadvertent social pressures are not automatic. (Rambo, 1993, p. 93)

The radical demands of conversion make it unlikely that evangelists will be able to force potential converts to convert by applying pressure from the outside.

Conversion is not something converts *endure*; it is something they *do*. It is an active rather than a passive change, a conscious and intentional desire for change.

Bracketing out the supernatural work of grace in converts' lives, conversion is fundamentally a matter of choice. Ultimately, those who convert must choose to embrace the Christian view of the world, which begins with an understanding of themselves as sinners in need of a savior. Converts must also believe that the offer of salvation is genuine and true.

The promise of conversion is a new (and better) reality, but the price for this

promise is the certainty of one's current life. Losing oneself leaves one in a realm of profound uncertainty. Converts must, in short, be willing to lose their present life in order to gain a new one. Surrender is not too strong a word to convey the reality of conversion.

On a strictly cost-benefit analysis, exchanging one's present life (no matter how problematic) for an *ostensibly better one* may not seem wise to potential converts. Shrewd potential converts might well say that the devil (of a life) they know is better than the one they don't. Simply put, converts have no guarantees that the new life of faith will be better than the life they presently lead. For that reason, when converts embrace a new life and convert, they often do so based on the testimonies of others who have already converted.

### *Passional Decisions of Faith*

When we humans face questions that elude strictly rational solutions, we often make decisions with what James (1907/1996) calls our "passional nature" (p. 134). Our "will to believe" is not strictly rational, but is shaped by "all such factors of belief as fear and hope, prejudice and passion, imitation and partisanship, the circumppressure of our caste and set" (James, 1907/1996, p. 133). James (1907/1996) says that the passional nature comes into play whenever questions cannot be answered by appeals to "the facts."<sup>60</sup> Ullman (1989), for example, says that conversions are often influenced by factors like the emotions. In the face of uncertainty, persons must make choices of what they will believe.

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<sup>60</sup> John Henry Newman (1870/1979) makes a similar point in his *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*. He argues that our assent to things is often not strictly dependent upon the evidence we can bring to bear. We embrace some beliefs because others believe them or because they seem right in our gut. On other matters, we may be given all sorts of proofs, but we find we cannot bring ourselves to believe. He paraphrases the famous line from Samuel Butler (1633), when he says: "A man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still." Newman argues that belief is often as much a matter of the will as it is a matter of the evidence one can adduce.

Our passionate nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds; for to say, under such circumstances, "do not decide, but leave the question open," is itself a passionate decision-just like deciding yes or no-and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth. (James, 1907/1996, p. 134)

The gospel is a good example of a question that requires a passionate decision.

The gospel cannot be proven in the same way that, say, Boyle's Law can. Those who convert cannot base their decision solely on the facts, because conversion is a matter of faith. So, when persons are presented with the gospel, they must make passionate decisions, whether their responses are those of embrace, deflection, or rejection.

Converts make passionate decisions and exercise their will to believe the gospel, and those who do not convert make passionate decisions not to believe. As James (1907/1996) notes, to not decide is also a decision. Though decisions not to believe and/or to ignore the gospel can be made casually, the decision to convert is an act of turning (away from sin and toward God) that requires a conscious engagement of the will.

The intellect plays a central role in any decision, but even when persons are convinced intellectually that converting is the right response to the gospel, they often struggle to do so. Whatever the cause of reluctance, conversion only occurs when persons make passionate decisions to embrace the gospel, when they make passionate decisions to submit their wills to God. Augustine describes his experience this way:

I had grown used to pretending that the only reason why I had not yet turned my back on the world to serve you was that my perception of the truth was uncertain, but that excuse was no longer available to me, for by now it was certain.  
(Augustine, trans. 1998, p. 154)

Though Augustine was "certain" of the truth, his certainty did not win his conversion.

His conversion required that he surrender his will to God's will, and, in the end, he yielded. Describing the results of his conversion and the subsequent baptism of himself and his close friend who converted on the same occasion, Augustine says:

And so we were baptized, and all our dread about our earlier lives dropped away from us. During the days that followed I could not get enough of the wonderful sweetness that filled me as I meditated upon your deep design for the salvation of the human race. How copiously I wept at your hymns and canticles, how intensely was I moved by the lovely harmonies of your singing Church! Those

voices flooded my ears, and the truth was distilled into my heart until it overflowed in loving devotion; my tears ran down, and I was the better for them. (Augustine, trans. 1998, p. 180)

Griffin (1980) tells a similar tale. She says her surrender was only possible after intellectual impediments had been cleared away. The experience of surrender is common among converts, even if they do not all use the term. For example, Sweazey (1953) and Rambo (1993) use the term *commitment*, which, like *surrender*, communicates the volitional dimension of conversion.

Conversion requires more than intellectual assent. It requires a simultaneous turning away (from sin) and a turning toward (God as savior). It is a turning away from life as it has been lived and understood, to a new understanding, a different reality, found in the "New Man," Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10). For reasons both rational and extra-rational, those who convert make passionate decisions to turn, to convert. By doing so, they exercise their will to believe.

In the language of Christianity, converts must repent and believe the gospel. They must, in other words, have faith. The willing to believe at the moment of conversion is a paramount expression of faith. A convert's expression of faith is simultaneously *belief that* some claims are true and *belief in* the person about whom (and/or by whom) those claims are made. Converts believe that the gospel applies to themselves and offers them salvation in Jesus Christ. In this sense, faith in the gospel entails belief in Jesus and others who share that belief.

### *Finding the Will to Believe*

Believing the gospel and believing in Jesus are relatively easy for some persons, but not for all. Some converts are eager to convert. They see conversion as something they want to (and sometimes must) do. They are frequently seeking answers to their problems, and embrace religious conversion as a solution.

The majority of those who convert are more akin to hopeful psychotherapy patients than to the prisoners or captives of totalitarian regimes in that they

typically arrive at the group function eager and hopeful for a personal cure.  
(Rambo, 1993, p. 94)

In general, persons who convert want to be healed; they are looking for answers.

Sometimes persons even have the internal strength to risk surrendering to faith.

Often, however, converts lack the courage (or will) to surrender on their own. In response, communities of faith are often eager to offer them support (call it courage or call it grace) from the store of faith present in their life together. In this way, faith communities fertilize the soil of converts' souls. The ultimate decisions to believe are converts', but their decisions are often supported by others who willed to believe the gospel before them. In this way, the surrender of faith, the will to believe, often flows out of the faith, hope, and love potential converts experience within faith communities. A convert's belief in Jesus often owes a great deal to the convert's belief in those (evangelists) who shared Jesus and the gospel with them.

#### Consequences of Conversion: Consolations and Challenges

There are several typical consequences of conversion, many of which are affective changes. James (1907/1996) lists four central "characteristics of the affective experience" of conversion. They are 1) loss of worry and a sense of peace, "even though the outer conditions should remain the same"; 2) "sense of perceiving truths not known before. The mysteries of life become lucid"; "A third peculiarity of the assurance state is the objective change which the world often appears to undergo"; "The most characteristic of all the elements of the conversion crisis . . . is the ecstasy of happiness produced" (James, 1902/1996, pp. 242-249). These findings are consistent with his general view of conversion as the solution to a crisis. The invariable initial response to conversion is tremendous peace, relief, and a general sense of wellbeing (Augustine, trans. 1998; Griffin, 1980; Rambo, 1993; Sweazey, 1953; Ullman, 1989).

For most converts, the post-conversion experience is filled with tremendous consolation, peace, and joy. But it also presents challenges. Clearly, converts will

struggle after conversion if they lack the support of a good faith community. But even when there is support, the degree of change entailed in conversion makes it inevitably difficult. For example, Griffin (1980) describes challenges after her conversion to Christianity. Others could not understand her choice or the direction she believed she must take after she had surrendered herself to God. While her conversion brought her inexpressible joys, she suffered heartaches as well.

In her attempt to capture the positive revolutionary changes she (and other converts) experienced, Griffin takes a cue from Dickens. She thinks Dickens has captured it best in his description of what happened to Ebenezer Scrooge that Christmas Eve:

The chuckle with which he (spoke) and the chuckle with which he paid for the turkey, and the chuckle with which he paid for the cab, and the chuckle with which he recompensed the boy, were only to be exceeded by the chuckle with which he sat down breathless in his chair again, and chuckled till he cried . . . . He went to church and walked about the streets and watched children hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head and questioned beggars . . . and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He never dreamed that any walk—that anything—could yield him so much happiness. (quoted in Griffin, 1980, pp. 151-152)

The euphoria that Scrooge felt does not last long. The daily realities of life return, changed, but in many ways the same.

The internal communion that converts experience with God, powerful as it is, is rarely sufficient to sustain commitment. It must ultimately translate into communion in a faith community. This transition is sometimes quite difficult and not always satisfying. While a church can help maintain a convert's commitment, the challenge of establishing new relationships is often difficult.

In addition to the benefits of conversion, Griffin (1980) describes what she calls the emotional and relational aftermath of religious conversion. Part of this tension stems from the exuberant zeal of the new convert. However, sometimes converts are resented by those they have left behind as well as those they come to join in the church pew (Griffin, 1980).

## Zeal of Converts

New believers have a zeal that helps them take the step of conversion and also helps sustain them in the preliminary period after their conversion. They are often eager to learn more about their faith and to share it with both those who are believers and those who have yet to believe (Sweazey, 1953). New converts are often among the most zealous evangelists. Commonly, they are positively eager to share the good news they have found experienced in the gospel.

The zeal of conversion helps the process of change, and fuels the work of evangelism. It also helps converts begin the difficult work of living out the life entailed by conversion. Conversion is not the end of the process, so much as the fundamental first step toward living the Christian life. Conversion commits persons to let go of the old and embrace the new.

Ironically, this demand for a radical change can at times make conversion seem the simplest way to deal with crises. They simply exchange one way of understanding the world for another, one way of relating to others and the world for another. The seemingly digital nature of conversion makes it attractive, and such wishful thinking often leads to so-called "foxhole conversions." Sometimes the change "takes," but many times it does not.

One cause for fleeting conversions is the array of challenges that follow conversion. Though converts' former lives were often problematic, letting go of the familiar always entails loss (Griffin, 1980; Marris, 1975; Wheelis, 1973). Because the changes are so many and go to the core of the person, the process of working out the implications of conversion is slow and difficult. Even when converts desire to effect radical changes in their lives, they are rarely able to make a clean break with their past. Though it happens sometimes, rarely are converts able to jettison their "old selves" instantaneously. Instead, converts bring much of their old selves with them when they

convert.

The central challenge of life after conversion is ongoing conversion, which is the daily decision to live "for Christ" rather than "for oneself." These ongoing conversions of the heart to God complement the initial Surrender, and reinforce and underscore the commitment. Griffin (1980) admits she has failed to live the life entirely and watches for daily chances to turn back to God. In this challenge, she notes that it . . .

. . . is helpful . . . to have others to watch with you. Very few of us are strong enough or sane enough to advance in the Christian life without the support and help of others. Directors, prayer groups, fellow Christians, the faith of others and their insights strengthen us, keep us out of trouble, illuminate the way. (Griffin, 1980, p. 170)

Griffin's (1980) account is an honest look at the stages through which she traveled on her way to becoming Christian and the process of living the Christian faith, with all its challenges, afterwards. Conversion brings inexpressible joys, but these are typically accompanied by misunderstanding and occasional rejection by others who are unable to understand or embrace the values and life the converts have chosen for themselves.

### Stamp of Conversion

Conversion brings predictable cognitive changes for converts. Converts commonly experience changed perspectives of themselves, their relationships, and the world around them. Griffin (1980) summarizes the experience of conversion this way:

What has changed is not ourselves but our view of ourselves and where we stand with relation to the rest of the universe. To the extent that the universe now seems to us animated with God's energy and life, shot through with his tender affection and love, we may be able to make a beginning in the conquest of despair, anger, irritability, unkind words and thoughts towards others, promiscuity, dishonesty, and other destructive habits of thought and behavior with which we have been struggling unsuccessfully up to now. (Griffin, 1980, p. 140)

Griffin's account is an example of the sort of testimony converts are often asked to make. The process of developing and delivering such testimonies helps converts transform their language and thinking in ways that conform to the Christian understanding of the world. The new language helps converts reinterpret their lives in Christian terms (Rambo, 1993).

Although all of ordinary life can be seen as a subtle process of reorganizing one's biography, in religious conversion there is often an implicit or explicit requirement to reinterpret one's life, to gain a new vision of its meaning, with new metaphors, new images, new stories. (Rambo, 1993, p. 138)

Converts' views of themselves, God, and their world are changed, and the ways they talk about themselves bear the stamp of conversion (Griffin, 1980; Rambo, 1993). The stamp of conversion goes even deeper than affective and intellectual levels. Conversion goes to the very core of a person's soul (Griffin, 1980; Lonergan, 1978). It occurs when one dies to oneself and "put[s] on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). One trades an old life of sin for a new life of grace in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17).

The gospel has implications for all aspects of life, so conversion reorients converts' entire lives, from their most public to their most intimate selves. Christian conversion demands that persons admit their need in the face of the challenges and difficulties of life. In response, converts are offered God's love in the form of salvation, a love that is often made real in the context of relationships and communities of faith. The love that potential converts experience in communities of faith often provides converts strength and encouragement to convert. Conversion is a profoundly personal change, because it affects persons at their deepest and most vulnerable levels.

### Becoming Part of a Community

Even though the decision to convert is a personal one, conversion is not primarily a private affair. In fact, in most instances, conversion is a very public event. One of the common stages of conversion is the identification of the convert with the faith tradition through some ritual of incorporation (Lonergan, 1978; Rambo, 1993; Sweazey, 1953). Conversion is intimate and personal, but is consummated in the context of communities of faith. It is therefore both a private and a public act, as converts choose individually to identify with a faith and (often at the same time) a faith community.

Converts both embrace the faith and a local body of believers. They do not become "at-large Christians," but are "adopted" into a local congregation where they can

grow in the faith. Faith communities are important in developing and maintaining the behaviors associated with the life of faith. Training in the faith occurs through the weekly (or more frequent) teaching and preaching of the Scriptures. This "discipleship" into the life of faith helps seal converts in their decision, and prevent them from quickly abandoning their decision to convert.

Continued group support helps maintain the new beliefs by creating environments in which either new information can be avoided or other persons support one's own beliefs, by soliciting active participation in actions and sacrifices that enhance the commitment to the ideology that justifies them. Finally, group support creates solidarity and a commitment to the group that prevents "relapsing" which will let the group down. (Ullman, 1989, pp. 85-86)

Some communities are more supportive in helping new converts become socialized into the new life than others. Sweazey (1953) says there are two prerequisites for successful integration of persons into communities of faith. First, there must be a definite sense of conversion, of turning to Jesus in a "warm and personal way" (Sweazey, 1953, p. 213). That is to say that unless persons have really converted, they will not be able to participate in the life of the church in productive ways. They will never "take root" in the soil of Christianity.

The second important factor has to do with particular churches themselves. There must, Sweazey (1953) says, be a "genuinely spiritual quality in the church" (p. 214). It will not help if persons make a genuine conversion if they are then placed in a context that is not receptive and nurturing of the new life that is begun through conversion.

We can be shocked into self-examination by a grim phrase Samuel Chadwick used. Blaming himself for allowing some of his young converts, who had soon lapsed, to get into a church which was cold and apathetic, he said that "It was like putting a baby in the arms of a corpse." (Sweazey, 1953, p. 214)

Without a community in which there is a common perspective and performance of rituals and behaviors that mark them as members of a group, converts find it difficult to continue in their faith (Rambo, 1993; Sweazey, 1953; Ullman, 1989).

Communities of faith are central to the work of evangelism, to the message of the gospel, and to the life of the believers after conversion.

. . . evangelization will never achieve its full force and significance unless it is received, accepted and adopted, and unless it evokes the wholehearted allegiance of those who hear it . . . . In a word, a man gives his allegiance to the kingdom, that is to 'a new world,' a new state of things, a new manner of existence, a new way of life, of communal life, which the gospel inaugurates . . . . those who have experienced this conversion enter into a community which by its very nature is a sign of transformation and of a new life: that community is the church, the visible sacrament of salvation. (Evangelii nuntiandi, 23)

Converts enter communities of faith through rituals of incorporation, which make their conversions public. The communities then can share the joy of the new converts, support the new converts in their decision, and teach them by pattern and precept how to live the new life they have embraced.

## SUMMARY

In this chapter, we investigated the process of evangelism as well as the process of conversion. We found that evangelism is inextricably linked to the message of the gospel. Evangelism is a response to the explicit mandate of Jesus to spread the good news (i.e., "The Great Commission" in Matthew 28:19-20).

The cross is the central symbol of Christianity because it proclaims the power of Christ's suffering, death and the resurrection Christians believe followed on the third day. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead gives those who believe in him hope for their own resurrection. The promise of eternal life in Christ is not simply for resurrection after death--for eternal life hereafter--but for eternal life in the present. This message of new life in Christ and forgiveness for sins is the heart of the good news of the gospel. And it is the message that Christians throughout the history of the church have continued to spread through evangelism.

Though the forms and methods have changed over time, evangelism has been a constant part of the Christian tradition. Whatever their era or specific role in the church, evangelists have worked to communicate the gospel's double-message. Evangelists call men and women (both believers and nonbelievers) to repent from their sins and to embrace the offer of salvation and new life in Jesus Christ. Salvation promises healing,

wholeness, peace, and a sense of purpose, among other things. It is little surprise, then, that many persons would find solutions to the difficulties, challenges, and crises in their lives in religion (in this case, Christianity).

Evangelism has been coercive at times, as it was during the Crusades and Inquisition. And, though today some evangelists speak in ways that are coercive and threatening, evangelism is not a demand to be imposed but an idea to be proposed (cf. *Dignitatis humanae*, 1). This view of the gospel as an offer is consistent with the word *gospel*, which means "good news." It is good news because it offers persons the gift of salvation. For that reason, coercive evangelism is self-contradictory. If fear or force drive conversions, the "gift of salvation" is less a liberation than a new prison with different burdens. Conversion should be something freely sought, and the will to believe the gospel should ultimately grow out of a personal choice of conscience.

From our survey of the process of evangelism and conversion, several prominent themes have emerged. First, evangelism is inextricably linked to the message of Jesus Christ, found in the gospel. Because evangelism is the spreading of the gospel, all of the conclusions we drew about interpretation in Chapter 3 are relevant to the communication of the gospel. Context is bound to influence the ways that evangelists and the evangelized interpret, apply, and enact the message. Because converts convert, when they do, as individuals, evangelists must tailor the way they communicate, interpret and apply the gospel accordingly. That is to say, each potential convert has his or her own reasons to convert (or not to convert). Their decisions are influenced by the ways they hear, interpret, and apply the message they receive.

Second, there is no simple cause-and-effect relationship between evangelism and conversion. There are many contextual, interpersonal, and personal influences on the responses potential converts make to the gospel. In some circumstances, historically, culturally, and interpersonally, some potential converts respond favorably to the gospel. At other times and places or with other evangelists, potential converts reject or ignore it.

The demands of conversion are total, and it is unsurprising that persons deflect or reject the efforts of evangelists to get them to convert. Evangelists are not surprised when persons do not convert. Neither are they confused about the radical nature of the changes entailed in conversion. But their confidence in the truth of the gospel inspires them to develop relationships through which potential converts can see and learn the benefits of living their lives as Christians.

A major challenge for evangelists is that potential converts have different experiences and challenges in their lives and different questions and presuppositions about faith and Christianity. As a result evangelists must attend to the particular concerns and interests of the individuals who might convert. Though persons may convert in the company of others, and often do so based on the experience and testimony of others, converts convert as individuals. Conversion is a phenomenon of the smallest unit, even if some aspects of evangelism and follow up in communities of faith occur in larger groups.

Third, evangelism and conversion grow out of relationships and into new (or newly ordered) relationships. Conversion is sustained in the context of relationships in faith communities, in which the collective faith as well as individual faith can grow and be expressed. It is no surprise that evangelism and conversion are centered in relationships, because as a faith, Christianity centers its message on relationship and the church is identified with the Body of Christ, a family, or community of faith.

Initial conversion as well as other ongoing conversions of those who are believers are informed by the faith as taught and lived by other believers. In this way, evangelism and conversion are based on patterns set down by those who already believe. The process leading up to and following conversion is often one of emulation. Faith communities provide contexts in which the message can be communicated, the faith can grow, and the message can be modeled by those who are believers.

From the earliest days, the call to emulate other believers has been prominent in the Christian community. Christians hold that Jesus is the "incarnate Word," the Word-

made-flesh, and he bid his followers to live that message too. Jesus himself bid others to follow him, and to live as he lived. The principle of emulation, of incarnation, has been central to the preaching of the gospel since Jesus' day. The apostles recommended that believers should follow their example. For example, the Apostle Paul says:

I urge you, then, be imitators of me. Therefore I sent to you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. (I Corinthians 4:16-17)

And, later in the same book, he repeats the message, saying "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). In another place, Paul says "Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us" (Philippians 3:17).

Christianity is a religion of community. Evangelists understand the message of the gospel they proclaim in light of the tradition of which they are part, and spread the gospel in ways that their tradition approves. Believers reveal the life of the gospel in the context of their church worship, and bear silent witness to their understanding of the gospel in the ways they live the Christian life in their communities.

Fourth, faith is central to evangelism and conversion. Evangelists share their faith with others, seeking to win faith responses from their hearers. And conversion demands that potential converts come to the point of faith, in which they are willing to believe the gospel. Potential converts may understand the message of the gospel intellectually and experience the love of Christian community affectively, but to convert, they must also embrace the gospel volitionally. That is, converts must admit their personal sinfulness, acknowledge their need, and embrace Christ as the satisfaction of their need. In that way, converts turn away from sin and toward God.

Though others can help bring potential converts to the place where they are ready and able to turn, the will to change must rise from the core of the convert herself. In other words, converts must make personal passional decisions to believe the message of the gospel. By converting, converts are expressing their faith in the message of the gospel and in the Jesus of the gospel.

Faith is not an abstract willingness to believe; it is a willingness to believe particular things about oneself and the world. Faith that leads to conversion includes the will to believe that arises from a passionate decision to embrace the message of the gospel. Faith is this act of believing. But *faith* also refers to tenets of Christian belief, the contents of the gospel message. In other words, converts must *believe that* the message of the gospel is true. Given the central role of Jesus in the message of the gospel, Christian faith is also *belief in* Jesus as savior.

Fifth, persons differ in their preparedness to hear and receive the gospel message. Even though the message of the gospel is one full of faith, hope, and love, many who hear the gospel ignore or reject it. Some reject it because they are not experiencing any crises or challenges to which the gospel seems a good solution. Some reject it because they reject the spotty history of Christianity and/or because of Christians they have known. Others reject it because they deny the claims of the Bible about Christ. Still others are atheists or believers in other faiths. Whatever their reason, many of the evangelized do not receive the message and apply it to themselves.

Others do choose to believe. Those who convert are typically looking for solutions (Ullman, 1989). Sometimes, evangelists are able to convince potential converts that the message of the gospel is the answer they have been looking for, even if they were not aware of it (Augustine, trans. 1998). The interaction between evangelists and potential converts sometimes leads to the willingness of the potential convert to make a choice to believe the claims of the gospel, to embrace the offer of salvation offered in Christ, and to become a part of the Christian community. Relationships are central to this interaction, and potential converts often grow in their understanding of the gospel and their willingness to believe the gospel based on the things they experience and learn from those who are already believers.

Sixth, the post-conversion experience is filled with consolations and challenges. Converts almost without exception describe a sense of peace after their conversion. They

see themselves, the world, and God through different eyes. They have, as it were, shifted paradigms. They see and live life in light of the gospel. Their joy often leads them to zealously share the great gift of the "good news" with others. Their zeal is both a great encouragement to other believers and can also be a source of tension (Griffin, 1980).

Once persons make passional decisions to believe the gospel (i.e., convert), the challenge of living the Christian life then begins. Conversion involves changing oneself from the inside out, realigning values, and remaking one's relationships. All of those things are entailed by a commitment to live seriously the Christian life.

The success of Christians in seeking to live truly Christian lives is mixed. And the reasons are clear. For a start, it is very difficult to change deep-seated patterns of life. The gospel calls for total conversion of one's mind, heart, and life to conform to the pattern of Jesus Christ. The gospel is a radical call to conversion, to total transformation. And that's not easy.

Though the gospel offers converts transformed lives, changes occur over time, and often include struggle and frustration. Conversion provides a new perspective on the world, but the world converts inhabit is much the same as the one they "abandoned." In short, converts bring themselves (their "old selves") with them after they convert. Even when they wish to remake who they are, the transformation is slow. It requires commitment and effort to conform their lives to the pattern laid down by Jesus (cf. Romans 12:1-2).

Christian teaching holds that converts are given supernatural grace through the work of the Holy Spirit to help them live the life of faith. Even with the help of the Holy Spirit, however, the battle between new and old ways of thinking and living continue (cf. Romans 7). The fundamental Christian instruction of how to continue to battle with temptations to live the old ways is to pray, to study, and to yield one's will to the will of God (cf. Matthew 6:9-13).

Though conversion promises a new world, that world is not practically realized

unless believers continue to experience ongoing conversion and conform their entire being to the pattern found in Jesus. Such ongoing conversion is best experienced in fellowship with other believers who are likewise committed to growth into the image of Christ. In this way, converts can depend upon others who "watch with them" (Griffin, 1980). Converts (like other believers) gain support from those who are fellow-strugglers, daily seeking to convert their hearts, minds, and wills to gospel living. The challenge of becoming Christian is never fully realized. There is always more growth possible, a more perfect emulation of the life Jesus lived. This is why new believers (in fact, all believers) must be continually taught the message of the gospel and how it applies to the many moral and social questions of life.

Finally, one of surest proofs of conversion and belief is that new believers become evangelists themselves. Because they have been changed by the good news of the gospel, converts seek to share that good news with others who have yet to receive the grace of forgiveness and new life in Christ. These new believers offer what they themselves have received.

Finally, the man who has been evangelized becomes himself an evangelizer. This is the proof, the test of the genuineness of his own conversion. It is inconceivable that a man who has received the word and surrendered himself to the kingdom should not himself become a witness and proclaimer of the truth. (Evangelii nuntiandi, 24)

New believers follow the lead of those who have gone before them in faith, and work to win others to the Christian vision of life and love. In just this way, the evangelical life is lived and perpetuated. Each new generation of believers looks to those who have believed and lived the Christian life before them. Then they seek to be good witnesses themselves so that others might be able to follow *their* word and witness and commit themselves in faith to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

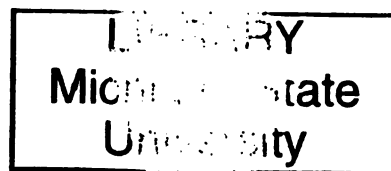


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**A CHANGING METAPHOR: INSTRUCTIONAL REFORM AS EVANGELISM**

**VOLUME II**

**By**

**Steven Matthew Mattson**

**A DISSERTATION**

**Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Department of Teacher Education**

**2003**

## Chapter 5

### Instructional Reform as Evangelism

After reviewing the content, contexts, and processes of instructional reform and evangelism, the case must be made for why the *instructional reform as evangelism* metaphor is apt and what lessons might be drawn from it. Clearly, the two domains share similarities that make it seem a plausible metaphor from the outset. Both instructional reform and Christian life provide sites for considering the relationships between "policies" and "practice." In the former, the policies are calls for changes in teaching and learning in schools, and in the latter, the policy is the gospel.

The two processes are not identical or interchangeable, for there are many important differences in assumptions, purpose, and means employed by reformers and evangelists. These differences, the tensions in the metaphor, provide the ground for insights and lessons from the metaphor (Black, 1962). In this way, generative metaphors help those who employ them understand the tenor of the metaphor in new ways (Schön, 1993).

In this chapter, we will review observations about instructional reform and evangelism to demonstrate why the metaphor is apt, appealing, and helpful in understanding the process of instructional reform, especially the process of deep reform in schools. We will then see how the metaphor can illuminate the challenges and limits of attempts to remake schools in fundamental ways. We will then nominate "evangelical principles of reform" that arise from our investigation of the generative metaphor. Finally, we will explore the moral implications and virtues of instructional (especially deep) reform from the perspective of the metaphor.

### REVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL REFORM

In our review of instructional reform, we described the social and interpretive

difficulties of identifying social problems and adopting reforms as remedies to those social problems. We described the stages of reform, which included problem identification, initiation and adoption of a reform, implementation of the reform, continuation and consequences of reform.

Reforms are planned changes targeted at problems with the intent of making improvements of some kind. In that sense, reforms are derivative of problems. They are drafted, promulgated, adopted, and implemented to remedy particular problems or to make specific improvements. Because reforms are typically initiated in response to problems, the first step in the process of reform is often problem identification.

Though it is not obvious why some social conditions are identified as problems and others are not, problem identification is obviously a social process. In general, problem identification involves the combination of human perceptions of social conditions with human judgments about those conditions. Because of the subjective nature of problem identification, problematic social conditions can exist for long periods of time without being considered social problems. They are only considered social problems when some prominent opinion leader or group concludes something should be done about them. Social problems do not define themselves, but are socially-constructed (Kingdon, 1984).

Reform adoption, like the process of problem identification, is thoroughly subjective. Values and interests influence not just how social conditions are understood, but also influence how reform agendas get set and reform solutions are selected. The process is not strictly rational, but is driven by the assumptive worlds and commitments of the reform players who define social problems and select reform solutions (Lindblom, 1990).

Reform adoption, of course, is not the end of the story. Once they are adopted, reforms must be implemented. In our survey of instructional reform, we described three basic approaches to reform implementation. Each is based on a different set of

assumptions about what change requires. The empirical-rational approach highlights the importance of knowledge in change. It assumes that teachers lack knowledge, and responds with information and training, saying "know (or learn) this." On this view, there is little need to say "do this" because the implicit assumption is that teachers will change what they are doing in light of what they learn. Teachers will (ostensibly) do what follows logically from the things they have been taught.

The power-coercive approach highlights the importance of the will to change (whether that "will" is exercised internally or externally). It assumes that teachers lack sufficient guidance about what to do or not do in classrooms, and responds with clear prescriptions and proscriptions. It says, in unambiguous terms, "do this" or "don't do that." This approach certainly includes descriptions of practice, but the problem for change, on this view, is one of will more than a lack of knowledge or understanding.

The normative-re-educational approach moves beyond the problems of knowledge and will. It acknowledges the reluctance of practitioners to change as well as the profound difficulty of breaking established patterns of practice. It assumes that teachers will need to be awakened to the need for change, wrestle with new ideas and practices, and then establish new patterns of practice based on the reformed ideas. While the first and second approaches provide teachers with information and guidance, the third approach embraces the complexity of human agency in responding to change. It acknowledges the challenges of making deep change. Patterns of practice help people cope with the exigencies of their lives, and changing those patterns is profoundly difficult and often personally upsetting (Marris, 1975).

Regardless of the approach reformers take in implementing reforms, all implementation efforts must go through four phases. In short, messages of reform must be 1) sent, 2) interpreted, 3) applied, and 4) enacted. Obviously, spreading the message of reform is just one aspect of the implementation process. Reform messages must be interpreted by the agents and objects of reform and applied in particular classrooms.

Interpretation, application, and enactment of reform interact dynamically as teachers work out the ideas and demands of reform in their classrooms.

It is difficult to judge the success of implementation and enactment, because evaluations of enactment are muddled by the subjective elements in interpretation and application of reform messages. Questions of who is or should be the arbiter of the what the reform means, and what counts as evidence of reformed practices complicate judgments about the extent to which reforms have been successful. It is never possible to eliminate the subjective dimension of reform evaluation entirely, but observers can observe the teaching and learning that is occurring in classrooms and make claims about how reforms are (or are not) being enacted.

In Chapter 3, we highlighted several factors that influence the ways reforms are enacted. They include the following:

- The type of reform (deep reforms struggle more than surface reforms).
- Teacher involvement in the on-going development of reforms.
- Teacher commitment.
- Pressure.
- On-going training and support.
- The culture of the school.

These characteristics of the reform process influence the ways teachers respond to reform ideas and practices in their classrooms.

Looked at from the standpoint of what teachers need for reform, we found that teachers have three basic needs when they seek to implement reforms. First, they need to *understand the reform message*. Teachers who successfully implement reforms must have some understanding of what the reform demands of them. Where teachers have no understanding of the ideas and practices of a reform, it makes little sense to speak of reform implementation. Second, teachers need the *capacity to enact the reform message*. Teachers and others who are called upon to implement reforms need the material and

social capacity to make requisite changes in their practice. And third, teachers need *emotional safety to attempt change*. In order for teachers to make a positive response to reforms, they must feel that the risks entailed in making the change are worth the potential benefits. They must, in other words, believe the change warrants their commitment. When teachers have those three needs met, it is often easier for them to commit themselves to the reform.

From our review, we saw that among the most important factors was school culture. This is partly a result of the definition we employed for "nurturing school cultures." Many of the factors that are important for reform fall under the mantle of "school culture." Without doubt, the context where reforms are enacted is important for the success of reform implementation. The context of reform for teachers is the local school. The message comes to teachers there, the support and pressure they experience is felt there, and the values and norms that influence teachers' responses are resident there. In this way, school cultures are of central importance to the success of reform. School cultures are the milieu in which all instructional reform is interpreted and ultimately gets played out. School cultures differ in the ways they help teachers interpret reforms, develop capacity for change, and respond to reform. Of course, cultures do not respond to reforms, nor do they dictate the ways individual teachers will respond. School cultures make different paths possible, but they do not command particular paths to individuals. Teachers must ultimately make choices on their own about how they will respond to reforms.

When teachers implement reforms, they necessarily implement them in ways that begin with their current practice. They then make changes in their practice that accord with their interpretation of the reform, always with an eye to those practices that "fit" them personally and professionally (Lortie, 1975). Just as they did when they learned to teach, teachers respond to reforms as individuals in particular contexts. They interpret reform messages through the grid of their prior experiences and cultural influences,

including those in school and outside of school. Because of the personal nature of teaching, teacher response fundamentally influences implementation of instructional reform.

In many schools, teachers have good reasons to deflect reforms that ask them to change their practice in fundamental ways (House, 1974). As a result, it is unsurprising that teachers often deflect or ignore calls for deep change. We saw that teachers' responses are filtered through the grid of practicality. Teachers respond most favorably to reforms when the reform meets their perceived needs (i.e., the reforms are "practical"), when the benefits of the reform outweigh the costs of changing, when teachers feel they have adequate support, and when they feel they have sufficient capacity to make the change. Because deep reforms rarely satisfy these four criteria, they are more difficult to implement (and generally less successful) than surface reforms.

Because this study is especially interested in the challenges faced by deep reforms, we looked to the metaphor to assess whether evangelism could provide insights into the process and difficulties of instructional reform. So, in Chapter 4 we investigated the process of evangelism as well as the process of religious conversion. It is to a review of those findings that we now turn.

## REVIEW OF EVANGELISM AND CONVERSION

We began our review of evangelism and conversion with a discussion of the basic Christian salvation story. The Christian salvation message involves three basic stages. Though God created the world and called it "good," sin entered into creation and so creation experienced the "Fall." This Fall affected all of creation, most especially human beings.

Christians believe that Jesus represents God's loving act to redeem human beings and all creation. Christians believe that Jesus was the son of God, born of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. After a life of loving ministry and moral teaching, Christians

believe that his willing death for the sake of creation was the means of redemption for all of creation. Because Christ loved others so much that he was willing to die for them, God raised him up and exalted him. Because he became human, humanity could be redeemed. Because he was divine, he could bestow on them a share in divine life. It was thus that Christ's self-sacrifice became the hope of salvation for those who shared his human nature. He promised that those who believed in him would share in his divine life, and the seal of that promise was the gift of his Holy Spirit. Christians believe that the grace and power of the Holy Spirit empower those who believe so that they can follow Christ's example. They can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, live their lives for others, and follow Christ's pattern of self-sacrificing love. Christ taught that the two greatest commandments were to love the Lord God with all one's heart, mind, soul, and strength and one's neighbor as oneself. He lived that sort of life himself, and gives believers his Holy Spirit so that they can live that way too.

The message of the gospel, the good news, is that Jesus Christ offers believers salvation from their sins and new life in him. After conversion, new believers are incorporated into a new life in Christ by baptism. This message of hope was to be spread throughout the world. After his resurrection, Jesus bid his followers spread the gospel, the message of the good news, throughout the world, baptizing converts, and teaching them to be disciples of Christ, followers of his way of life and love (cf. Matthew 28:19).

The basic pattern of evangelism has three stages: persons are "pre-evangelized," "evangelized," then "discipled." Pre-evangelization is preliminary and gives potential converts exposure to Christians and the Christian life without the explicit proclamation or expectation that they will respond. It is primarily the stage of "witness," when persons can see the life of Christ lived out in loving communities. The evangelism stage is the direct proclamation that occurs when potential converts and evangelists interact and converse about the applicability of the gospel message to whatever difficulties and challenges persons are facing in their lives. The goal of evangelism is the conversion of

sinners. After conversion, believers are taught the ways of Christian living through discipleship. Discipleship includes teaching about the moral and ethical demands of Christian living as well as modeling of that life by members of faith communities. In this way potential converts and the converted learn by word and example what it means to live Christian lives.

Though the forms and methods of evangelism have changed over time, evangelism has been a constant part of Christian tradition. Whatever their era or specific role in the church, evangelists have worked to communicate the gospel's double-message. Evangelists call men and women (both believers and nonbelievers) to repent from their sins and to embrace the offer of salvation and new life in Jesus Christ. The promises of salvation include healing, wholeness, a sense of purpose, community, and peace.

Ironically, evangelism has been coercive at times, as it was during the Crusades and Inquisition. And, though today some evangelists speak in ways that are coercive and threatening, the gospel today is rarely preached as a demand to be imposed. Instead, most believers contend that the message should be proposed so that persons can freely choose to embrace it (or not). When fear or force drive conversions, salvation is not liberation so much as a different kind of bondage. Coercive evangelism is ultimately self-contradictory.

In our survey of the process of evangelism and conversion, we noted several prominent themes. First, evangelism is inextricably linked to the message of Jesus Christ, found in the gospel. It is premised on the belief that Jesus was the Word of God incarnate, that Jesus lived the message of love and forgiveness perfectly.

Because evangelism is the spreading of the gospel, all of the conclusions we drew about interpretation in Chapter 3 are relevant to the communication of the gospel. That is to say, context is bound to influence the ways evangelists and the evangelized interpret, apply, and enact the gospel. Each potential convert has his or her own reasons to convert (or not to do so). Their decisions stem in part from the ways they hear, interpret, and

apply the message they receive.

Second, the relationship between evangelism and conversion is not simply cause and effect. There are many contextual, interpersonal, and personal influences on the responses potential converts make to the gospel. In some circumstances, historically, culturally, and interpersonally, potential converts respond favorably to the gospel. At other times and places or with other evangelists, potential converts reject or ignore it.

Third, evangelism and conversion grow out of relationships and into new (or newly ordered) relationships. Conversion is often sustained in the context of relationships within faith communities, in which the collective faith as well as individual faith can grow and be expressed. It is no surprise that evangelism and conversion often occur in the context of relationships, because as a faith, Christianity centers its message on relationship. In addition, central images of the church are the Body of Christ, the community of faith, and the family of God. In these communities of faith, persons are offered models of what it means to live the Christian life. These models are both witnesses of the faith and patterns for emulation.

Fourth, faith is central to evangelism and conversion. Evangelists share their faith with others, seeking to elicit a response of faith from their hearers. Conversion demands that potential converts come to the point of faith, in which they willfully choose to believe the gospel. Potential converts may understand the message of the gospel intellectually and experience the love of Christian community affectively, but they must also embrace the gospel volitionally if they are to convert. That is, converts must admit their personal sinfulness, acknowledge their need, and embrace Christ as the satisfaction of their need. In other words, converts turn away from sin and toward God.

Fifth, persons differ in their preparedness to hear and receive the gospel message. Some are open to the message of the gospel. Some are even seeking to become Christian. Others are less open. Some are not experiencing any crises or challenges to which the gospel seems a good solution. Others may be closed to the gospel because of the spotty

history of Christianity and/or because of Christians they have known. Others may simply be skeptical about the claims the Bible makes about Christ. Some are believers of other faiths while others are agnostic or atheistic. There is a wide range of dispositions toward the gospel message.

Sixth, persons respond to the gospel with *passional decisions*. Because the claims of the gospel cannot be demonstrated empirically, persons respond to the gospel based on what James (1907/1996) calls *passional decisions*. This means that extra-rational considerations supplement rational considerations as persons formulate their responses to the gospel. Sometimes these extra-rational factors encourage potential converts to convert. But they can also impede the message in various ways. Persons may be skeptical of the claims of religion or those of Christianity in particular. Some may have had bad experiences with Christians in the past. There are many factors that contribute to the decisions persons make about the gospel. But all who hear the message make some response. And those responses are *passional decisions*.

Seventh, conversions are catalyzed by experiences of crisis and support from believers. Crises set the stage for conversion by creating or awakening a sense of need. When persons are supported by evangelists and other believers in their time of struggle, they are often open to the gospel message. Relationships with believers often help dispose persons to learn about the faith and view faith as an answer to their needs. Faith communities are important because they help support the potential converts in their decision to embrace the Christian understanding of themselves, the world, and relationships with God.

Eighth, those who are evangelized and convert often become evangelists themselves. One of surest proofs of conversion and belief is that new believers evangelize others. When converts have been changed by the good news of the gospel, they often seek to share the gospel with others who have yet to receive the grace of forgiveness and new life in Christ. These new believers, in turn, offer others what they

themselves have received.

### A PLAUSIBLE METAPHOR

From this brief review of the processes of reform and evangelism, we see that the two processes share many common characteristics even if there are many important differences. The similarities provide a basis for the plausibility of the metaphor. They signal points of contact between the two domains, and reveal why the metaphor *instructional reform as evangelism* "works." In other words, the similarities help explain why it is possible to hold the metaphor in one's head.

First of all, instructional reform and evangelism are both processes designed to elicit changes in those who hear their messages. Instructional reform aims at improving the teaching and learning that occurs in classrooms. Any particular reform recommends some set of changes that the author(s) of the reform hope will improve classroom practice. Evangelism aims at changing the ways persons view their relationships with God and other people, as well as the ways they live their lives. The gospel touches on the entire spectrum of human experience, and recommends Christian responses to the difficulties, challenges, and questions of human life. Evangelists seek to elicit positive responses from their hearers to the message (and life) of Jesus Christ who is the "author" of the gospel message of repentance and salvation. Evangelists ultimately attempt to get their hearers to follow their example as they emulate the self-sacrificing love of Jesus Christ.

The calls for change in both domains are based on messages that agents of reform consider to be solutions to problems or crises. Both evangelists and reformers offer visions of (what they consider) a better classroom, pedagogy, or world. These visions sometimes arise out of efforts to solve current problems or to awaken people to a vision of a different, better life or world. Each stems from judgments that the current life is either problematic or not all that it potentially could be. Both processes involve the

spread of value-laden visions. As such, both encourage new beliefs and new practices, and have some kind of "orthodoxy" or "orthopraxy," even if what counts as orthodoxy is not always well-defined.

Second, both instructional reform and evangelism have two basic categories of players in the drama of change. Some persons are agents of change and others are the objects of change. Generally speaking, instructional reform is a process through which reformers seek to change teachers and evangelism is a process through which evangelists seek to win converts and help them change their lives.

In their change efforts, evangelists and reformers often proclaim their normative visions to hearers in one of two basic ways:

- they seek to turn hearers from their current path to a new or different (ostensibly better) one, or
- they seek to get hearers to return to a path they have abandoned or forgotten.

Both efforts are based on appraisals of a problem for which they offer a solution. These messages of reform have both positive and normative dimensions, and recommend changes in the ways the objects of change think and live.

Third, in their attempts to elicit responses from their hearers, both instructional reformers and evangelists often focus on crises. Calls for change assume that problems exist. Sometimes, evangelists and reformers must awaken targets of change to problems or crises. Without some recognition of a problem, however, it is difficult to win a receptive hearing to a call for change. There is a long history of appealing to crises of various sorts as the rationale for instructional reform, even if the label "crisis" is not always warranted by the facts (Berliner & Biddle, 1995).

Evangelists also focus on personal crises potential converts are facing in order to win a positive hearing for the gospel. Sometimes potential converts are already seeking answers to the uncertainties and difficulties in their lives. Often, however, through interactions with potential converts, evangelists speak about their faith and life in order to

elicit or highlight a (perhaps previously only vague) sense of dissatisfaction and/or crisis in their hearers. Without some problem to which the instructional reform or the gospel is the solution, it is difficult for persons to find motivation to change. As a result, both reformers and evangelists often excavate or highlight crises in order to gain a hearing and (they hope) a positive response to their messages of change.

Fourth, contexts are fundamentally important for reform and evangelism. In our review of school contexts, we found that some schools nurture good teaching and an openness to reform, while others are less supportive of good teaching and reform. Most schools feature a cellular structure that reinforces the individualization and personalization of teaching practice. When teachers seek to change, they require support and guidance from others, so relationships of mutuality and support are central features of places where teachers are willing to take the risks of making (especially fundamental) change.

Similarly, contexts make a big difference in the response of potential converts to the message of the gospel. Relationships between potential converts and evangelists and members of faith communities were often central factors in personal religious conversions. Evangelists and the believers in the community of faith serve as both examples of the Christian life and offer support to potential converts, which gives them a sense of what it means to be part of the Christian "family."

Fifth, both instructional reformers and evangelists are largely dependent on hearers for success. Any changes that occur in a teacher's practice or a convert's life are fundamentally tied to the personal decisions they make regarding the way they will respond to calls to change. In other words, the responses of teachers to reform, like the responses of potential converts to the gospel, make a big difference in whether the effort

of reform or evangelism will be successful.<sup>61</sup>

A different way to highlight the dependence of reformers and evangelists on their hearers is to see enactment as a hermeneutical problem. Because instructional reform and evangelism work for change through messages of change, both suffer the predictable challenges of interpretation, application, and enactment of the messages they communicate. In our review of each domain, we explored four basic stages of instructional reform and evangelism: messages must be 1) spread, 2) interpreted, 3) applied, and 4) enacted if they are to move their hearers to change their lives/practices.

Sixth, any discussion of success in reform or evangelism inevitably raises questions of standards, of what measure should be employed to determine whether efforts to change others have been effective. In instructional reform, there are various views of what it means to say a reform has been successful. For example, one might test how widespread and deep a reform's enactment has been or how long a reform sticks around (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Criteria for success in reform and evangelism are contested. In both contexts, the criteria include issues of stated beliefs and demonstrated changes in practice. As a result, success in both arenas requires judgments based on comparison between expectations or hopes and what happens in fact. Observers of both processes must ascertain (albeit imperfectly) whether persons are "truly" living "reformed lives."

These six points of similarity between the two domains argue for the plausibility of *instructional reform as evangelism* as a generative metaphor. Both processes seek to effect changes in the ways persons think and act in the world. In both processes, some persons (reformers or evangelists) seek to effect changes in others (teachers or potential converts). Often, they seek to motivate change by pointing to crises or problems to

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<sup>61</sup> This is not to deny that "groups" sometimes convert to Christianity or that sometimes groups can pressure persons to convert (or not). Nevertheless, conversion is typically a process that acts upon the smallest unit rather than collectives.

which their message of change is their recommended solution. These calls for change, whatever their content, are communicated in messages. And those messages must be spread, interpreted, applied, and enacted for planned change to occur. Both processes occur within contexts that surround the efforts of agents of change and influence the responses of the objects of change. Success in each domain depends on how persons respond to the messengers and messages of change. For that reason, both processes of change ultimately depend on the responses of individual objects of change.

These points of similarity between evangelism and instructional reform support the contention that the metaphor is plausible. The vehicle and tenor of the metaphor have sufficient points of contact to "work" as a metaphor. We can, in short, hold the metaphor in our heads; it makes sense. Moving beyond its sheer plausibility, we do well to consider reasons why the metaphor has heuristic appeal.

#### AN APPEALING METAPHOR

There are at least three reasons the metaphor is an especially attractive one to explore for its generative and heuristic potential. First, the implication complex of evangelism comports well with the personal aspects of teaching outlined in Chapter 2. The gospel goes to the very heart of persons, and faith addresses the deepest longings of human beings, and centers on relationships. Evangelism offers a new way to see the world as well as a new way to live in it.

Evangelism and conversion are both ultimately ordered to a way of life, not simply to a set of ideas about Jesus Christ. For this reason, anyone who becomes Christian is adopting the ultimate goal of becoming like Jesus Christ. Evangelism and conversion are not primarily aimed at gaining more believers, but at helping believers live out the life Christ modeled for their emulation. When persons take on the name Christian through conversion they make a declaration that they seek to live a particular kind of life. In short, they commit to live their lives after the pattern of Jesus Christ.

In our review of teaching, we saw how much what teachers do in their classrooms is bound up with who they are as persons. Teachers adopt particular stances and activities in their classrooms that fit them and their style of teaching. They establish relationships with students, and often attempt to parlay those relationships into deep engagement with subject matter. Bryk (1988) calls this deep personal engagement of teachers in the work of teaching and the lives of their students "teacher personalism."

The personal connections teachers forge with students increase the likelihood that teachers will experience the precious psychic rewards that help convince them that their work is worthwhile and fruitful. To that end, they work to craft personalized practices that help them bridge the gap between the students they are teaching and the subject matter they hope their students will learn. Teachers work to make connections with their students, and they are personally invested in their manner of teaching.

The personal dimensions of teaching and the degree to which teachers are personally invested in teaching points out the vocational dimensions of teaching. Teaching is a way of being in the world, which Hansen (1995) has called the vocation of teaching. The religious (and deeply personal) associations of the metaphor comport well with his discussion of vocation. Teachers, like others in the helping professions, are committed to their work because they want to make a difference.

Because teaching is such a personal practice, and because teachers as persons are deeply invested in their teaching, calls for deep change demand transformations. These transformations do not simply have implications for what teachers do in their classrooms. They also entail changes in the ways teachers think about their students, their subject matter, and themselves. Deep reform goes to the heart of teacher practice and to the core of teachers as persons. There is, in short, a powerful resonance between deep reform and religious conversion.

Second, the metaphor is appealing because evangelism places emphasis on changing lives. Evangelists seek not just conversions, but converted lives, just as

reformers hope for reformed teachers and classrooms. For evangelists, conversion is just the first step in the process of change. They work to bring persons to the point of conversion and then model how to live Christian lives. The instruction that occurs through discipleship is for not just for new converts, but is intended to help even those who are mature believers in the faith. The Christian life is one of ongoing conversion in response to never-ending evangelism.

A great deal of research into the implementation of innovations centers on the difficulty of successfully implementing (or enacting) reforms. When reforms are not enacted, questions get raised about what was done to help effect change and what might have been done differently. The dual emphasis evangelists place on bringing potential converts to the point of conversion and then helping them learn what it means to be disciples of Christ goes directly to this challenge.

Third, the metaphor is attractive because evangelism targets both individuals and their communities. It emphasizes the community's role in fostering conversions, and does not simply focus on individuals and their response to the gospel. Moreover, evangelists do their work in the context of faith communities, and seek to bring new converts into those communities. An essential aspect of the community of faith is the collective worship experience, in which believers (new and old) are challenged and taught how to live their faith. Because of the practice of evangelizing believers along with potential and new converts, evangelism is a "technology" well-suited to the demands of changing communities as well as individuals.

Evangelism emphasizes the fundamental role of faith communities in winning conversions of nonbelievers and sustaining their growth in discipleship, as new believers follow the example and receive explicit instruction from those who are more mature in the Christian faith and life. The gospel is a message for all believers, and the goal is changing persons, their communities, and the broader society.

School cultures play important roles in the enactment of (especially deep)

reforms. Deep reforms often demand changes in the structures of entire school communities, not just in what individual teachers do in their classrooms. Because of evangelism's systemic and on-going nature, the metaphor is attractive because of the insights it provides into the challenges of deep reform.

These three aspects of evangelism make the metaphor appealing, not just plausible. Evangelism comports well with the deeply personal nature of teaching and the difficulties of changing deeply engrained patterns. The metaphor emphasizes a long-range commitment to conversion and discipleship in the life of believers. The work of evangelism and the ongoing work of conversion in the lives of believers occur within communities of faith. These communities have been formed by the gospel message, which in turn form the evangelists, and those who convert in response to their work of evangelism. All believers are called to live out the life of faith in order to witness to the truth of the gospel. In this way, the metaphor emphasizes the transformation of individuals and their communities.

The plausibility of the metaphor as well as its appeal are premised on similarities between the two processes, on the ways they "fit" together. But the power of generative metaphors often stems from differences, or points of tension, between two domains. Because there are differences between instructional reform and evangelism, the metaphor has generative potential. And it is these differences between evangelism and instructional reform that provide the basis for new perspectives on instructional reform.

### A GENERATIVE METAPHOR

Schön (1993) says some metaphors can create new meanings and ways of seeing the world. He calls them "generative metaphors." Drawing from the Greek meaning of the word metaphor, he states that generative metaphor is the "'carrying over' of frames or perspectives from one domain of experience to another . . . " (Schön, 1993, p. 137). Through generative metaphors, he says, we are invited to apply one way of thinking

about an idea or process to another. Summing up, Schön argues that "generative metaphor"

. . . refers both to a certain kind of product--a perspective or frame, a way of looking at things--and to a certain kind of process--a process by which new perspectives on the world come into existence. (Schön, 1993, p. 137)

Generative metaphors provide new ways to see and can help orient hearers differently to the "tenor" of the metaphor.

The constructive work of developing any generative metaphor is necessarily heuristic. In other words, there are no "correct" insights from generative metaphors. The work is exploratory and speculative. In this case, we are attempting to learn about reform by looking at instructional reform as evangelism. Though the metaphor could never claim to provide a *true* picture of instructional reform, it may provide particular insights concerning instructional reform that are only visible when it is viewed as evangelism.

Because the most important insights from generative metaphors stem from tensions between the two domains, comparing instructional reform with evangelism considered in its ideal state will be most helpful. It does not matter that, empirically speaking, the practice of evangelism often fails to live up to its own ideal. The same thing can of course be said of reform. For us, the question is what the "ideal" of evangelism can teach us about the practice of instructional reform. It's an open question, one that will be informed, in part, by considering the tensions between the processes of instructional reform and evangelism.

The difference in subject matter between the two efforts (instructional reform and evangelism) is an important one, but it is just one among many. Other differences, or tensions, can be seen by comparing the stages, strategies, assumptions, and contexts of instructional reform with those of evangelism/conversion. The following six tensions between instructional reform and evangelism will provide the basis for generative insights into the process of instructional reform.

The first two tensions center on the power and authority for change. The third

focuses on the stance agents of change take toward their message and those they hope will heed it. The fourth and fifth center on contexts of change and the sorts of support potential converts/reforming teachers receive as they consider and then embrace the proposals for changing their lives. And the sixth focuses on the standards for measuring success and issues of "orthodoxy" in interpreting and enacting reforms.

The value of a generative metaphor is that it allows one to view an object (or process) in a new way, from a different perspective. In this particular case, evangelism offers a new heuristic for viewing instructional reform. The tensions highlight aspects of instructional reform that come to light when it is viewed from the perspective of the evangelism. Based on the tensions between the two domains, we can draw some heuristic "implications" for instructional reform that arise from within the implication-complex of evangelism/conversion.

If the metaphor is, in fact, generative, the implications we draw from the metaphor should prove useful to policymakers, reformers, and others who are interested in understanding past and current reform efforts, or are interested in changing the way future reform efforts are promulgated and enacted in schools.

### Problem Identification and Reform Adoption

One major tension between instructional reform and evangelism is how problems are identified and reforms get adopted as solutions to those problems. In the process of instructional reform, social problems are often identified by social critics and policymakers, rather than teachers themselves. Similarly, instructional reforms are commonly adopted by authorities rather than by teachers. In evangelism, on the other hand, potential converts are the central actors in the process of problem identification and the sole determiners of "reform adoption."

The goal of reform adoption is remediation of identified social problems. Instructional reformers typically focus their efforts on specific problems or weaknesses in

teaching and learning. Problems are identified through a social process, and solutions are adopted by those in authority, at the school, district, state, or federal level. The reform solutions are then disseminated to teachers for them to enact. Instructional reforms are commonly implemented in top-down fashion.

Because teachers are typically marginal to the process of problem identification and reform adoption, the impetus for reform is often external to them. For this reason, the planned changes in instructional reform are often *planned by someone else*. This is the case even though teachers' responses to reforms are often the most important influence on what happens to reforms in classrooms. When reforms are mandated, teachers are forced, not invited, to respond. Even if some teachers genuinely desire to enact mandated reforms, many more will respond because they are required to do so.

Evangelism takes a very different stance toward problem identification and reform adoption. Potential converts are privileged players in problem definition in the process of evangelism. Evangelists try to get potential converts to name their own struggles and needs. Though evangelists do have a "reform" they are hoping potential converts will embrace, their stance is to offer their hearers the reform and help them see why it might help solve a problem potential converts are experiencing. Evangelists want potential converts to want what they are offering them; they want them to want the gospel. Whether potential converts have been looking for answers on their own or evangelists succeed in excavating in them a sense of need, evangelists try to get their hearers to name difficulties and problems for themselves. When that happens, potential converts often become more disposed to embrace the gospel message.

Evangelists know that potential converts often choose not to embrace the gospel. But they also know that potential converts must embrace the gospel for themselves. Genuine conversions cannot be coerced. These convictions about the process of conversion mean that evangelists see potential converts as the primary definers of their own problems and the ones who must adopt solutions to those problems. These

convictions are not unique to the evangelist. In their studies of the difficulties of change, Wheelis (1973) and Marris (1975) argue that persons need to recognize problems for themselves and they must personally integrate solutions to those problems.

But since a problem is something for which a solution is sought, only the patient can designate it. The therapist may perceive that a certain conflict leads regularly to such and such situations which cause suffering. But a cause of suffering is not a problem unless it is taken as such by the patient. (Wheelis, 1973, p. 19)

In other words, both problems and solutions to problems are both in the eye of the beholder. Both are always filtered through the subjectivities of individuals.

The application of these insights to the challenges of instructional reform are fairly obvious. If teachers are not involved in problem definition and reform adoption, they may not know what problem a particular reform is attempting to address. Moreover, if teachers lack an appreciation of a problem, it should not be surprising if they lack commitment to proposed solutions. Though teachers are sometimes recognize the problem a particular reform is designed to address, they may disagree with the proposed reform solution or doubt that it would work in their classrooms. Both the problem identification and the reform adoption are important in this regard. When teachers do not recognize a problem in their own teaching, they would naturally be slow to embrace a reform tailored to remedy that "problem." Moreover, even when teachers recognize a problem in their own teaching, their motivation to change will be diminished if they have doubts about a particular reform solution.

If, on the other hand, teachers were involved in problem definition and reform adoption, their "buy-in" to reform would be less problematic and more likely. When teachers help identify problems, motivation to work to solve those problems often arises within them. When reformers involve teachers in problem definition and reform adoption, they increase the chances that reforms will center on "felt needs" and appeal to teachers "where they live."

Evangelism works most effectively when evangelists and potential converts establish a relationship and have ongoing personal interactions. Evangelists try to get

potential converts to identify problems in their lives and consider the gospel as a potential solution. In this way, potential converts are privileged players in both problem definition and reform adoption. This work typically occurs in the context of small group (often one-on-one) conversations, in which evangelists focus on the needs of individual potential converts.

Evangelists take potential converts' concerns into account because they know that is often the best way to get potential converts come to the point where they desire to make passional decisions for the gospel. In other words, evangelists listen to the needs of potential converts convert for the convert's sake, not for the success of the gospel (or for their efforts as evangelists). In this way, evangelists and potential converts cooperate to find solutions to the felt needs of the potential converts.<sup>62</sup>

The metaphor points to the value of allowing individual teachers to define their own problems and adopt their own reform solutions.<sup>63</sup> This would mark a major change for reformers. Teachers are sometimes involved in the formulation of reform proposals, but the metaphor suggests that all teachers should be involved at some level in defining their own problems and adopting (or not) their own solutions.

It is interesting to note that the metaphor comports well with the ways teachers actually respond to reforms. In other words, the metaphor assumes that the objects of change have authority over the way they will respond to messages for change. Some teachers will embrace reforms as real solutions to problems in their classroom, but others will deflect or reject reforms because they do not make sense to them, seem unnecessary,

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<sup>62</sup> This is an example of the "twin quest" that James Rambo (1993) cites in his study of religious conversions.

<sup>63</sup> Such a proposal raises huge questions. Just what would it mean to have teachers adopt their own reforms? In what sense could such an approach be "reform" at all? There is no doubt that such a proposal would have tremendous ramifications for the process of reform. But such difficulties do not mean that the proposal is imprudent. It is based on insights from the evangelism metaphor. It also seems to comport well with common human responses to demands that they change their lives, especially when those demands are at the heart of one's (professional) life.

and/or because the teachers are unsure what the reforms would demand of them or mean for their students. It is true that some teachers will obediently enact reforms even when they do not recognize the problem or suspect that the reform will be successful. However, there is an important difference between this kind of "blind obedience" and attempts at change that arise from understanding and free choice.

And it is precisely this kind of understanding and commitment that evangelists seek to elicit from potential converts. Evangelists recognize the power and freedom of individuals to respond to calls for change according to their understanding and conscience, and work with them to seek solutions to the problems they face. In similar ways, teachers make choices about how (and whether) to adopt reforms. As a result, there are good reasons to engage them actively in the processes of problem definition and reform adoption. The evangelism metaphor takes seriously the realities of teacher autonomy in classrooms.

Applying the insights from the metaphor might mean reformers would work with teachers to figure out what problems they are facing, what solutions they might find both practicable and palatable, and what help teachers need in order to make those changes. The reason for such an approach is obvious: teachers who are unconvinced they need to change and are not taken with reform ideas and practices are unlikely to invest themselves deeply in the process of reform.

### The Moods of Reform

A second major tension between instructional reform and evangelism arises from the different ways they seek to effect change. This tension is largely a result of the differences in problem identification and reform adoption we noted above. However, naming this as a separate point emphasizes important differences in the basic stance or mood they take toward change. Simply put, invitations are different from commands. Generally speaking, instructional reform is carried out in the imperative mood, while

evangelism is carried out in the optative mood. That is to say that instructional reforms are often commands for change, while evangelism expresses a desire or wish that potential converts would embrace the gospel.

Reform implementation is often colored by power and authority. As we noted above, reformers typically adopt instructional policies to solve problems they have identified. Then they expect their adopted reforms to be enacted in classrooms. They seek changed behaviors, and the message of reform is often the primary means to effect those changes. Reformers see problems in the ways teachers act in classrooms, and they mandate reforms to effect changes. In short, instructional reform is typically performed in the imperative mood.<sup>64</sup>

Evangelism is very different. Evangelists center their efforts on appealing to persons to commit to a broad, holistic vision for life. Once persons have embraced the gospel, then evangelists work with them to help them make changes in their lives they willingly desire to make. Evangelists do not force persons to make changes in their lives, but they offer the gospel as a potential solution for the problems they are facing in their lives. So evangelism is typically performed in the optative mood.

The distinction is of more than grammatical interest. Instructional reforms focus on external changes that instructional reformers have adopted as remedies to particular problems. But evangelists focus primarily on the inside of potential converts, on their values, visions, and commitments. Only later are evangelists (and converts) concerned about behavior, as they discuss the implications of conversion. For evangelists, the focus shifts to behavior only after persons have willingly converted.

In Chapter 4, we saw that evangelism has three basic stages: pre-evangelism, evangelism, and discipleship. These stages are premised on the assumption that converts

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<sup>64</sup> There are some notable exceptions to this rule. Reform movements, professional organizations, and teacher networks often more in the optative mood than the imperative mood. In this way, they are

must be won to the gospel and then disciplined in Christian living. Pre-evangelism is the stage at which persons are exposed to the witness of Christians and Christian living. Evangelism includes the direct proclamation of the offer of salvation in Jesus Christ. It is after persons convert when they receive ongoing instruction, support, and formation about ways to live out their life of faith.

Evangelists hope those they evangelize will ultimately make passionate decisions to convert to Christianity, but they know that persons will not convert unless they are convinced and are freely able to commit to the Christian view of the world. They attempt to provide personal witness of the benefits of embracing the gospel message. Because they hope to win volitional commitments, to get persons to make passionate decisions for Christ, their strategy is fundamentally one of appeal rather than mandate. Evangelists propose the gospel for persons to consider, they do not impose it.

Furthermore, the work of evangelism never takes place far from communities of faith where potential converts can observe and/or experience what it means to live the Christian life. These communities serve as witnesses to the Christian life and also provide a supportive context in which potential converts can consider the gospel message and way of life. Evangelists eventually invite converts to accept the message of the gospel and thereby become a part of a faith community. In these contexts, potential converts are surrounded by those who already believe. Evangelists draw them into a network of faith and invite them to become part of that community.

The approach evangelists take toward potential converts acknowledges that choices to convert are never simply knowledge-based. Passionate decisions, such as conversions, are also bound up with emotions, values, and visions for the future. They concern what persons ideally hope to be as much as what they know. For all these reasons, evangelists talk about values and affective commitments in addition to making

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providing an invitation, they are proposing a potential way to work for the improvement of teaching and learning.

rational arguments in favor of the gospel.

If reformers applied the evangelism model to interactions with teachers around reform, we might expect them to begin by talking with teachers about their practice. They might simply ask teachers how things were going, whether they were satisfied with what they were able to do (and were doing) in their classroom, what problems they were facing, and what changes they might like to make in their classrooms and their teaching. Reformers might ask teachers how they could best help the teachers make changes or help them think differently about what they are doing in their classrooms.

Agents of reform might then describe their own experiences with teaching, and mention some of the ideas and practices advocated by the reform. In these conversations, they might explain and advocate for the reform in the hopes that teachers would begin to appreciate its value. In such conversation, agents of reform would attempt at some point to convince teachers that reformed practice has advantages over their current practice, perhaps that it would help them meet their goals for students more effectively or that it could help them meet alternative (better) goals. The purpose of such conversations would be to get teachers to consider reform ideas and practices, in hopes of winning their commitment to change.

In their work, evangelists have to be ready to answer potential converts' questions, including why they should care about what evangelists are claiming. And, simply put, evangelists must be able to answer the practical question of what's "in it" for potential converts. Without some sort of practical payoff, the challenges of conversion (and there are challenges) may not seem worthwhile. Without hope that the Christian life promises a better life, potential converts may never be able or willing to commit themselves to that way of life.

Studies show a similar reluctance among teachers when they face demands of deep reform. For this reason, all other things being equal, agents of reform might meet with greater success if they purposed to win teachers' commitment to reform by appealing

to them on the reform's merits. They could do this, as evangelists might, by answering teachers' questions about the value of the reform, by showing that it can be successfully enacted in classrooms, and demonstrating that it promises to help them meet educational goals more successfully than their current practice.

*Interlude: Power of Persuasion*

Both of the preceding tensions center on the power and authority for change. Problem identification, reform adoption, and the strategic difference between imposing and proposing change each revolve around authority for change. In situations where teachers define problems and adopt reforms on their own, they are genuine authors of reform. But even when they have not defined problems or adopted reforms, when they commit themselves willingly to making change, they authorize the changes in their lives. They commit themselves to making change. In these respects, teachers have power and authority about the direction and degree of change that will occur in their classrooms.

When structures of reform are established in which teachers are explicitly involved in problem definition and reform adoption, reform strategies mirror the *de facto* power of teachers in their classrooms. That is, teachers will (or will not) adopt reforms based on their own view of the problem and their appraisal of reforms. Shifting to a reform strategy of appeal and persuasion would change the way teachers get exposed to the ideas for change. By involving teachers more actively in conversations about problems and solutions, reform would comport better with the authority teachers wield over changes that are made in their classrooms.

These sorts of conversations about practice would demand changes in the ways agents of reform interact with teachers about teaching and reform. If agents of reform sought to get teachers to personally commit to a vision for change, they would take a stance of appeal toward them. They would assume teachers could (and would) decide how to respond to the ideas they are recommending. Such a shift in authority would

mean agents of reforms might have to work differently to get teachers to understand how a reform could help them meet real needs in their schools and classrooms. In many cases, agents of reform would be forced to work more creatively with teachers to identify or cultivate a sense of need before they offered their reform as a potential solution.

The governance structure of most schools gives wide-latitude to teachers to do largely what they deem best behind their classroom doors. The U.S. has no system of inspection to ensure that teachers are using approved practices in their classrooms. Even if such a system were in place, teachers would still be free to comply with expectations only while they were being observed. Teachers in most classrooms have the ability to subvert even the strictest policies mandating instructional change. Partly for that reason, mandating (especially deep) reform is problematic at best.

The analogue to mandated reform in the domain of evangelism would be coerced conversions. And coerced conversion is problematic precisely because conversions require converts to make personal commitments to the gospel. Because of the priority of conscience in conversion, genuine religious conversion is not amenable to mandate. In other words, evangelists cannot coerce conversion because they cannot force persons to make passional decisions for the gospel. Evangelism proposes the gospel, it does not impose it. Though evangelists do attempt to cultivate a felt need for, and then a willingness to embrace, the gospel, they believe that potential converts must come to the point where they can (and desire to) make passional decisions to accept the gospel message and apply it to themselves.

The metaphor gives us reason to believe that mandated deep reform would suffer similar limitations to those of coercive evangelism. Teachers who were forced to embrace a reform might adopt practices that looked like the reform simply out of fear or deference to authorities. However, without becoming genuinely convinced that they (and/or their students) would benefit from reformed practices, their embrace of the reform could be hampered by doubt, resentment, and/or misunderstanding. Some might,

in the end, come to embrace the ideas of the reform based on their experience "aping" the change, but their embrace of reforms seems more likely if they could be convinced to make changes rather than being coerced into them.

### Stance Toward Reforms and the Reformed

A third tension is the different way instructional reformers and evangelists view messages of reform and those who receive them. While reformers may simply be spreading reform messages because they are paid to do so, evangelists are, to a person, believers in the message they proclaim. There are also important differences in the ways the two groups think about those they are seeking to reform.

Some agents of reform are heavily invested in the reform they are charged with implementing. Often, however, agents of reform do what they do because their jobs require them to spread the message and help teachers effect changes in their classroom. This does not mean that those who are paid to advocate for reforms are uncommitted to the reforms. But the fact that they are paid means it is not obvious that they are committed to reform ideas and practices. Even if they are ambivalent or even skeptical about reform ideas and practices, their employers might demand that they work to support their enactment.

The uncertain commitment of instructional reformers to reform ideas stands in stark contrast to the commitment of evangelists to the gospel. Evangelists evangelize because they believe the message they proclaim. To a person, evangelists are willing advocates and messengers of the gospel. Some evangelists, it is true, evangelize as part of their job. However, the nature of their work is commitment to the message and the work of proclaiming the gospel. They do so as one dimension of their vocation, their calling to proclaim the gospel to all the world. Evangelists (even those who are professionals) would assert they are motivated by what they consider a divine mission (the "Great Commission"), their confidence in the gospel, and their conviction that others

truly need the good news. They often do their work out of love--love for Christ and for those with whom they share the message. Seen this way, evangelists and reformers differ as missionaries differ from mercenaries.<sup>65</sup> Though both groups communicate the message and seek to effect change, their motives and efforts are often very different.

In addition to differences in levels of commitment to the message, evangelists and agents of reform also differ in the ways they think about the persons they hope to change. Instructional reforms, especially those that are promulgated by state and federal government, arrive at schools with the power of mandate. As a result, agents of reform do their work with administrative authority. They are charged with spreading particular reforms and getting teachers in schools to enact them. They may have little or no relationship with the persons they are charged with training and changing. Though agents of change will inevitably establish some sort of relationship with teachers, those relationships will always be colored by authority and the demands of the policy.<sup>66</sup>

On the other hand, evangelists spread the gospel because they love the message and want other persons to benefit from hearing and living it. They seek to elicit conversions primarily because they hope that the gospel will help others as it has helped them. They are genuine believers. Evangelists share the gospel with others because they are concerned about them. Agents of change in evangelism have a commitment to the gospel and to spreading that message that few paid agents of change could ever be expected to have.

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<sup>65</sup> Sometimes "missionaries" seem more mercenary than missionary, and some agents of reform seem as much missionary as the most zealous evangelist. The observation is meant to highlight the basic difference between being paid (and thus externally motivated) to share reform messages and doing so because of conviction about the message and genuine desire to share that message with others.

<sup>66</sup> Some agents of reform do have great concern for the teachers they are charged with changing. Consider, in this context, the zealous work of agents of change in various reform movements, like the Coalition of Essential Schools, Effective Schools, or changes like those undertaken by District 2 in New York City or Deborah Meier at Central Park East in Harlem. Many districts also have curriculum and reform specialists who are charged (often quite willingly and sometimes zealously) with helping effect

It is no criticism of the average agent of instructional reform to say that they are often less invested in planned innovations than the authors of reform, those who drafted and approved reform proposals. Still less is it a criticism to say that they care in a different way about teachers than the average evangelist cares about potential converts. Part of the difference is surely a result of the level of personal investment agents of change have in the message itself and those they are seeking to change.

There are significant differences in the way reformers and evangelists view their messages and their hearers. Whether agents of change are evangelists or reformers, their level of belief in, and commitment to, the ideas they are spreading will influence their attitude and ability to persuade. All other things being equal, those who believe (*a fortiori*, those who *believe in*) what they are saying will be more persuasive than those who are ambivalent, unsure, or skeptical about their message of change. The conclusion may seem pedestrian, but it makes a difference when agents of reform are genuinely convinced the reforms they seek to implement in schools are valuable for the teachers and students in classrooms.

### Contexts and Continuation of Change

A fourth tension is the relative importance instructional reformers and evangelists place on contexts in the process of change and its continuation. Instructional reformers sometimes explicitly attend to questions of context and culture in the problem of change, but for evangelists context and culture are always central to their work. The entire process of evangelism is based in and aimed at incorporating converts into communities of faith. Persons are exposed to the Christian life and message in communities of faith, and that is where potential converts are supported in the steps toward conversion. In this way, Christian life is born and nurtured in communities of faith.

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change in classrooms. Such persons are committed to the ideas they are spreading and often have a concern and burden for the teachers they seek to help.

Though some schools provide supportive and nurturing cultures for change, the vast majority of schools feature isolated cellular structures that make (especially deep) reforms difficult to implement. Because they offer teachers relatively little institutional support for change, most schools are not rich contexts for reform to grow. Unsurprisingly, where reform fails to take root, there is little chance that the reform will continue or make a positive difference for teachers or students.

On the other hand, community is central to the work of evangelism, and establishing a nurturing culture is what most churches strive intentionally to achieve. For that reason, persons typically experience the life of faith and often come to faith in the context of faith communities. The relationships that helped support converts during the process of conversion often grow deeper after conversion within those same communities of faith. Converts feel a sense of debt and gratitude to those who shared the gospel with them, and they continue to look to the faith community for guidance in their life of faith.

The evidence of "continuation" after conversion is progress in Christ-like living. All believers, new converts and others, are continually exhorted to become more like Christ. As part of Christian worship, believers are taught what the gospel requires of them in their daily lives. Conversion and baptism usher believers into a new life in Christ. And this new spiritual life, like a new physical life, must be nurtured in order to grow. Maturity in the faith, like maturity in the physical life, occurs over time. This growth occurs best in nurturing contexts of faith communities, where all believers are informed about and formed by the teachings, disciplines, and traditions of Christianity.

Every evangelist says, at least implicitly, "I am an example of the life I'm offering you in Jesus' name. Are you interested in living this way too?" As a result, evangelists are living examples (whether good or bad) of the message they are spreading. Although many Christians are imperfect examples of what it means to live the Christian life, those who actively evangelize consciously strive to be good witnesses. They know their lives argue either for or against the message they are proclaiming.

If evangelists are not living the message they proclaim or cannot point to those who are living the life they recommend, their efforts will be compromised. In this way, evangelists affirm the importance of emulation as a means of learning ways of life. The witness of Christian living often contributes to conversions. And after conversion, discipleship is an apprenticeship in Christian living. In the context of faith communities, relationships between believers include ongoing conversations about ways to apply the gospel to daily life.

The application to instructional reform is straightforward. One of the problems with implementing (especially deep) reform is that teachers are unsure what reform practices look like. They are often unsure what reforms demand of them and wonder whether they can do what the reform expects of them. They may also wonder whether their students can do the things recommended by the reform. The uncertainties of deep reforms often present huge hurdles for teachers.

If, on the other hand, teachers were able to observe reformed practices in classrooms, they would have more information about the reform and what it entails for classroom practice. They might still have uncertainties and doubts, but the doubts would be different. Their concerns and questions would be more focused because they would be based on concrete examples of reformed practice. Though teachers might still wonder whether they and/or their students could make the reform work in their classrooms, they would at least have evidence that such practice is possible.

Teachers who never see examples of reformed practices are forced to depend upon descriptions of practice and their own imagination. On the other hand, those who see examples of reformed practices are freed from those limitations. Moreover, they might be more inclined to give reform a try. Of course, there are no guarantees. Even teachers who have witnessed reformed teaching may be unwilling to enact deep reform in their classrooms. Still, having observed reformed practices (whether virtually or in person), teachers could no longer say they had no idea what sort of practices the reform

envisioned for their classrooms.

The value of nurturing cultures for the process of instructional reform is not an insight freshly drawn from this metaphor. On the contrary, school cultures have long been implicated in the problem of change (Sarason, 1971). So, in this case the metaphor underscores what studies of instructional reform have long observed. When teachers feel safe in their attempts to make change, are supported in their efforts, have models to emulate, and can see that reformed practices "work" in real classrooms, they will be more prepared to seriously consider the reform and may even commit to enacting it in their classrooms.

Perhaps more importantly, because many deep reforms target the cultures and structures of schools, the metaphor may be particularly valuable. Because of the centrality of school cultures in reform, change often requires both the establishment of supportive school cultures and changes in what teachers do in their classrooms. What is needed in these situations is a technology that is able to affect both communities and the persons in them. Evangelism, with its attention to new converts as well as its vision for ongoing formation of mature believers, provides a "technology" suited to changing both individuals and the communities/cultures in which they live and work.

### Standards of Success

A sixth tension is evident in the way instructional reform and evangelism handle questions of success. Estimations of success are important in both instructional and evangelism, and they can only be assessed if there is some authoritative interpretation of what it means to be "reformed" or "converted." Without some standard, no judgments about success can be made. That is to say that evaluation requires a comparison between

expectations (the "ideal") and what is observed (the "actual").<sup>67</sup> For example, claims that a teacher's teaching was "reformed" (or "remained unchanged by the reform") are based on judgments about how well her practice comports with some (ostensibly authoritative) interpretation of reformed practice. The same is true of those who would evaluate the extent of "maturity" in one's Christian life. Despite the similar demands of making judgments, there are major differences in the ways instructional reformers and evangelists address questions of "success" in their work. In a sense, the tension highlights differences in the way reformers and evangelists think about and apply standards of "orthodoxy" and "orthopraxy."

In educational reforms, questions of orthodoxy/orthopraxy often remain tacit. This is especially true when reforms are weakly specified. Nonetheless, whenever officials or policy analysts ask how well a reform has been implemented, they assume that evaluators/observers of classroom practice have some idea of what the reformed practices should look like and that they can discern signs of reformed practices in classrooms they observe.

Some instructional reforms contain explicit descriptions of reformed practices. But many (often deep) reforms are only weakly specified (Cohen & Ball, 1999; Cohen & Spillane, 1992). This lack of specification can often create hurdles for teachers in their attempts to understand and enact reforms. If teachers lack good descriptions of the particulars of reformed practice, if they have never experienced it themselves, and if they lack models to emulate, they will be forced to imagine the reformed practice on their own. Without an authoritative interpretation or model for emulation, the meaning of the reform is up for grabs and gets constructed in many different ways in schools and

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<sup>67</sup> Because the gospel and instructional reforms are based on messages, part of success is communication of the message of the reform. So, in both arenas, persons often undergo changes in how they think about themselves and their lives, even if their lives have not visibly changed. Ultimately, however, in both instructional reform and evangelism, agents of change are most concerned about changes in practice, in the ways persons live their lives.

classrooms. In addition, when reforms are poorly specified teachers may wrongly believe they have enacted reforms when their teaching shows little evidence of change (Cohen, 1990).

Things are very different with evangelism. Those who instruct new believers in the content of the faith draw on authoritative interpretations of scripture texts and traditions of belief and practice to instruct converts in the content and disciplines of faith. This does not mean that all interpreters of the gospel agree with one another. In fact, it is precisely because of differing "authoritative interpretations" that there are so many different denominations of Christianity. Nonetheless, from the early days of Christianity to the present, there has been a self-conscious commitment of church leaders to define what beliefs were orthodox and which practices were appropriate for Christian worship and living. Questions like these have been addressed at councils from the earliest days of the church. In many mainline churches, the Nicene Creed is recited weekly, to affirm the orthodoxy of their faith and their practice of worship.

Because Christianity is guided by well-defined orthodox beliefs, evangelists have a way to evaluate their success. After conversion, evangelists and preachers focus their attention on getting converts to enact the gospel. To do this, they tie their teaching to exemplary models of Christian living. Frequently, they offer themselves as patterns for emulation. In that way, evangelists do not simply bear a message to potential converts. They live the message they are bearing. They enact (or "incarnate") the gospel for their hearers. For them, the gospel is not primarily an idea but a way of life that is lived in communities of faith. As a result, evangelists combine clear teaching about the content of the gospel with models of what it means to live it out.

These differences highlight the value of clear specifications for communicating messages of reform. Clear specifications help teachers understand what reformed practices look like. And if reformers drew insights from evangelism, they might purpose to offer clearer, fuller specifications of what reform ideas and practices demand. In

addition, they would give teachers opportunities to observe reformed practices at work in classrooms. They would also encourage prospective reformed teachers to speak with reformed teachers about the challenges and benefits of teaching in reformed ways, as well as what difficulties they faced in changing the way they teach.

Though clarity concerning the orthodoxy and orthopraxy of reform can help teachers learn what it takes to teach in reformed ways, clarity can also create difficulties. Believers (in the gospel or reforms) often differ in their interpretation and application of messages of change. Sometimes groups have competing interpretations of what reform looks like. At other times, the tension arises between those who embrace change and those who do not. For this reason, "clarity" about reform can create unintended divisions among teachers along with the intended improvements.

Divisions among teachers sometimes arise when reform(ing) teachers zealously promote reformed practices in their schools. With the introduction of changes in some classrooms, lines can be drawn between old and new (or "reformed") practices and those who embrace them. When a new "orthodoxy" is adopted by some teachers in a school, those who practice in the old ways can be seen as "heretics."

Developing a sense of mission builds loyalty, commitment and confidence in a school community. It is a powerful spur to improvement. But if missions develop loyalty among the faithful and confidence among the committed, they also create heresy among those who question, differ and doubt. The narrower and more fervent the mission, the greater and more widespread the heresy. (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 163)

Decades earlier, House (1974) said roughly the same thing:

While advocacy flourishes, it constitutes a force within the school. Some people are, however, excluded from it, and they become either hostile or apathetic toward innovation. An advocate group spawns a counter group within the school. The counter group promotes isolation of the innovation within the school and confinement to the advocacy group itself. (House, 1974, p. 53)

Even when serious divisions are not evident, some tension is inevitable because teachers respond to reforms in different ways. Teachers appropriate reforms in personally distinctive ways, so their responses to reform differ. Their responses range from zealous embrace (and practice) of reform ideas to total rejection of the ideas and practices of

reforms.

When reformers adopt reforms, they have particular hopes for improving instruction. Inevitably, they place some limits on which sorts of responses they consider "faithful" to the spirit and/or letter of their reform. This is even the case when reformers fail to clearly specify their expectations for reformed practices. Every reform entails some standard of interpretation, and any evaluation of reform (implementation) requires that those standards of interpretation and application be made explicit. Otherwise, no measure of success would be possible.

When reforms are well-defined, those who deviate from orthodox interpretations and applications of reform ideas risk being labeled "heretics." Especially when persons are heavily invested in their interpretation, the differences can create tensions among faculty. In some cases, teachers who embrace the "old orthodoxy" exist quite happily alongside those who embrace a new (reformed) orthodoxy. In others, non-reforming teachers might be ostracized by reforming teachers. Or members of the "old guard" might criticize or otherwise challenge those teachers who actively seek to reform their teaching. When serious divisions like these occur, the unintended social tensions could overshadow the benefits of reform. There are both costs and benefits of clear specifications of reform practices. Without clear specifications or examples of reformed practices, teachers are often uncertain about what reforms demand. But clear specification can also mean creating divisions between "believers" and "nonbelievers," between "the faithful" and "the heretics."

When evangelists take the positive (advocacy) approach with nonbelievers, they are acting in line with their over-arching mission, which is to gain converts to the gospel way of life. They want to woo and win potential converts, without chasing them away with messages of damnation and labels of pagan or heretic. The point for evangelists today is to share the good news without focusing on the consequences of failing to adopt the message of the gospel. Their intention is to foster a sense of openness among their

hearers to the message they are proclaiming. Their purpose is to maintain future opportunities for evangelism without making today the (last) day of decision.

So, if reforming teachers were evangelical, that is, if they were interested in winning the conversion of non-reforming teachers, they would avoid drawing battle lines between themselves and non-reforming teachers. They would seek always to maintain their witness with other teachers. If non-reforming teachers respond to reforming teachers by sniping and criticism, the metaphor would recommend that reforming teachers always view their non-reforming peers as potential converts. The metaphor would even recommend that they tolerate abuse of skeptics in order to retain some (even thin) basis for future witness and evangelism. The general principle is one of benign engagement, appealing when possible, and inviting unbelievers to observe their lives in their classrooms, always seeking to win their conversion to the reformed classroom life they have embraced.

## EVANGELISM AND DEEP REFORM

In this study, deep reform is of particular interest. Reformers often seek to change schools and classrooms in deep ways, but the success of deep reform is spotty at best. Because deep reform entails tremendous challenges for reform implementation, it is an important site for investigating what the metaphor might teach us about ways to change schools and classrooms in significant ways.

Typically, teachers teach as they were taught (Cuban, 1984). This is partly because of their experiences as students and their socialization as beginning teachers within schools. For many teachers, traditional instruction also has the eminently practical benefit that it "works" for them. However, teachers in some schools teach in significantly different ways from modal practice. Some teach in "ambitious" ways. Those who do so often belong to schools with nurturing cultures. In such schools, teachers are encouraged to make changes in their practice. Furthermore, beginners in nurturing schools frequently

benefit from the counsel of more experienced teachers. In places where experienced teachers model practices for beginners to emulate, beginning teachers can "borrow competence," as it were, from their more experienced mentors.

These supportive school cultures do not, of course, develop in a vacuum. They are often formed (or transformed) by strong leaders who recruit staff members who share their values and visions for teaching and learning (Newman & Wehlege, 1995). Leaders invite teachers to join them in building communities of mutual support where quality teaching and learning can occur. Teachers who gather around leaders are often drawn by a vision for teaching and learning and/or by the school leader herself.

For example, Deborah Meier, founder of Central Park East high school in Harlem, is a leader who worked to fulfill her vision of a school that fostered deep engagement with subject matter. In reflections on the challenges of this kind of teaching, she admits students often find digging deeply into subject matter difficult work. Students have rarely been asked to do so. And that means school leaders and teachers will often have to show them the way:

They'd like to believe. That's what we have going for us. But . . . they can't buy in until they can taste what it is that we're claiming might lie on the other side. They need more than the usual drive--something powerful enough to tempt them to cross over that invisible but very real boundary that separates our worlds. It's a leap of faith into an unknown unless the taste is already in their mouths. It helps if we show them they can cross back and forth. But mostly it takes an immersion experience--like the first time you truly experienced staying afloat, or riding the two-wheeler without anyone holding. It's like learning a foreign language. After the first success, the third and fourth come easier. You have a feel for it. But "it" has to be something you *can* feel. (Meier, 1993, pp. 6-7, quoted in McDonald, 1996, p.60, emphasis in original)

Deborah Meier has a vision for teaching students and for helping teachers learn what it takes to get students to dig deep into subject matter and to think well.

Her observations about what it takes to lure students into deep engagement with subject matter apply as well to getting teachers to teach differently. Just like students, some teachers would "like to believe." So Meier lures them into helping her draw students into deep engagement with subject matter. And many teachers commit to that

vision and do, in fact, join her in her work.

In a chapter he calls "Leading with Belief," McDonald (1996) gives Meier as an example of a charismatic leader who is able to provide what he calls "spiritual leadership" in schools. Her leadership is informed by a set of beliefs about what is both important and possible in schools:

We need a kind of spiritual leadership . . . a leadership steeped in beliefs about what schools and children can be and passionately focused on enacting these beliefs, willing in the process to risk loss. (McDonald, 1996, p. 85)

This is the sort of work that Deborah Meier and other charismatic school leaders do in schools. They develop guiding principles that help set the tone for life in schools, both inside classrooms and out. Schools like CPE and the Coalition of Essential Schools, under the leadership of Ted Sizer, feature strong charismatic leaders who possess lofty visions for teaching and learning. Charismatic figures like Meier and Sizer demand that others take them and their ideas seriously, even if many are unable or unwilling to follow their lead.

Charismatic school leaders like them commonly have large followings. It is not always clear whether interest in their reform efforts is aroused by fascination with the leaders, their principles, or the schools and movements they lead. In most cases, it is probably a combination of all those things. What is clear is that when faculties are doing innovative things in classrooms, a strong leader is usually lurking somewhere--in the background or out front, leading the way. Not surprisingly, charismatic leaders (of movements and schools) often draw new "believers" into their fold by proclaiming their vision and inviting others to make it their own.

In their analysis, Muncey & McQuillan (1993) employ Wallace's (1956) study of "revitalization movements" as a grid through which they view the Essential Schools Movement. In their study, they note that Wallace equivocates on which element "attracts converts" to the movement. Early on, he argues that "converts are made by the prophet," (Wallace, 1956, p. 273) but later he says that a successful code will "attract converts"

(Wallace, 1966, p. 161). Either way, schools that make deep changes in school structures and what happens inside classrooms are living by different "codes" from the modal one. Deborah Meier, Ted Sizer, Ron Edmonds (1979), and many others speak prophetic words about schools and society. In their own way, each decries the state of current schooling and offers remedies to societal ills.

The codes these reformers espouse often include holistic visions for what it means to be a learning community. These reformers are also frequently eager to spread the word about what can be done to advance teaching and learning in schools. They often communicate their good news for schools, for students, teachers, and society at large. Their visions commonly overflow with love of learning, teaching and for the teachers and students who stand to benefit from change. Troubled by current affairs and/or trends in educational attainment, retention, dropouts, college enrollment, and the like, these educational leaders formulate answers and programs for change. Sometimes their solutions are simple and clear-cut. Other times, reformers take a more ambitious tack, asking teachers to radically alter what they are doing in their classrooms. Either way, advocates of reform spread their vision for teaching, learning, and schools, and invite others to join them in living it out.

#### VISIONS (AND VISIONARIES) OF DEEP REFORM

Charismatic leaders and their codes can have powerful influence over what happens in classrooms. However, they do not have influence without teachers who work directly with students. Teachers are central to any successful instructional reform effort. They are the primary proximate (pedagogical) cause of what happens in classrooms. For that reason, shrewd reformers often recruit teachers who are willing to enact their vision for ambitious teaching and learning in classrooms. In fact, most schools where faculties teach in ambitious ways were formed (or transformed) through recruitment (Newman & Wehlege, 1995).

Most schools, it is true, lack charismatic leadership. But even without charismatic leaders, teachers in many schools find some way to improve themselves and get support for attempts at change. For example, teachers affiliate with professional organizations or teacher networks like California Subject Matter Projects (e.g., Bay Area Writing Project and the California Math Project)<sup>68</sup>. Through voluntary associations, teachers who lack institutional supports at their school can become part of broader communities of like-minded teachers. When teachers join these organizations, they often commit themselves to a professional way of life, a set of professional principles, and a set of values for teaching practice.

Even if teachers never take the step of joining ambitious faculties or professional organizations, they can benefit from reflecting on the values they hold for their own teaching. That kind of self-consciousness about teaching practice forms the basis for Roland Barth's (1990) vision of school renewal. He offers a proposal for improving schools "from within" that places high value upon the wit and wisdom of practitioners to shape the contours and timetables for reform. He seeks to elicit what he calls "personal visions" of practitioners, so they can participate in the restructuring of their schools and classrooms (Barth, 1990, p. 147). Barth places great confidence in the power of personal vision and collegiality, and argues that the problem with schools is not one of commitment so much as recommitment:

A good school, for me, is one where each adult has chosen to be. Pupils live under a compulsory attendance law. They must come to school. Yet, we all know that people who are going through the motions . . . do not make very good teachers or administrators.

The crisis in education for school people is less one of commitment than of recommitment. The highly routinized nature of school work, in time, tends to make automatons of us all. A vital question is, Who can do what to provide opportunities for periodic recommitment for those who work in schools so that work will remain a vital profession and not become a tedious job? (Barth, 1990, p. 166)

Barth's notion of "recommitment" emphasizes the need for renewal among teachers, the

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<sup>68</sup> For a good review of the history and work of the California Math Project, see Wilson (2003).

importance of reawakening them to the visions of teaching they espouse, and getting them to live up to their own expectations for themselves. Barth's phrasing has echoes of the Christian notion of "ongoing conversion," whereby believers are called back to their Christian values in belief and practice. He is calling teachers to recommit themselves to their adopted pedagogical creed, to say once again *credo*. Of course, the real challenge for all who adopt creeds (of whatever kind) is to live by them.

Barth's idea has appeal. Surely part of the problem of improvement in classrooms is that teachers fail to live up to their "espoused theories" as teachers (Argyris & Schön, 1974). They do not always do as well as they might (or as they hope) when they teach. So Barth's (1990) idea of getting teachers to reflect on their ideals, especially in conversation with other supportive teachers, may be very beneficial. Obviously, such conversations would broaden their exposure to ideas and practices that lie outside their own internal visions.

Because teachers have rarely observed the sorts of teaching recommended in deep reforms, many teachers would also benefit from observing alternative ways of teaching. Of course, simple exposure to alternatives does not guarantee that teachers will change their practice. But, at the very least, observations of practice, whether virtual or real, create the opportunity for teachers to reflect on different ways of teaching (Cohen & Ball, 1999).

Most, if not all, teachers desire to teach well, and many actively seek to improve their teaching. Some join faculties where ambitious teaching is valued. Some join teacher networks or professional organizations where they can grow professionally and receive support in their efforts to improve their teaching. Others reflect on their "internal visions" for teaching, and strive to live up to them. Teachers who seek to improve their practice in any or all those ways have at least implicitly committed themselves to a vision of teaching and learning. And, by involving themselves in the process of improvement, they are also enacting a particular way of being a teacher--a way that

privileges ongoing learning and improvement.

Schools that support ambitious teaching and deep reform are commonly led by charismatic leaders, guided by a vision of ambitious teaching and learning, and filled with teachers who are committed to that vision. Teachers in these schools are committed to a vision for themselves, their peers, and the students they are charged with teaching. In short, they often strive to live out a vision of responsible intellectual engagement and cultivate similar dispositions--of wonder, curiosity, and engagement--in the minds, hearts, and wills of the students they teach.

Leaders play a prominent role in making deep changes in schools and in the teaching and learning that occurs therein. They lead the best by the visions they cast, the values they espouse, the faculty they recruit, and the ethos they create in their schools and classrooms. Through these means, they transform schools and the people within them. Their efforts for change are very similar to those of charismatic religious leaders who attempt to transform social groups. Like religious leaders, these educational leaders embrace creeds and espouse codes of behavior that support particular ways of being in the world.

### CALLED TO REFORM

Because such schools are often formed by school leaders who invite others to commit to their vision and creed for teaching and learning, one could fairly say that these success stories have an "ecclesial" dimension. Webster defines *ecclesial* as "of or relating to a church" (Mish, 1987), but its root, *ecclesi*, comes from the Greek verb *ekkaleo*, which means to "call forth, summon." Because of how these ambitious schools get formed, *ecclesial* is an apt description of what happens when teachers are called out (*ek* + *kalein*) or summoned to do particular work on behalf of the people.

In many of the most innovative schools, leaders form (or transform) schools by calling teachers to join with them to create distinctive pedagogical communities in which

particular forms of life are fostered and sustained. For that reason, the "church term" *ecclesial* is apt to describe the formation of such schools. The term seems just as fitting with voluntary professional teacher organizations and networks of support. Teachers who join schools and organizations typically respond to invitations to come out and join together with others in communities to accomplish their goal of improving life in schools.

It is little surprise that deep reform, like ambitious teaching, is most successful in schools that have particular characteristics and are filled with persons of a particular sort. These schools do not develop in a vacuum, but are cultivated to support good teaching and learning. They are often formed by leaders who call others to join them in establishing a culture of learning. These schools are filled with faculty and staffs who share a commitment to common values and norms and possess the disposition to continually improve their individual and collective teaching and learning. Commitment and common values are not sufficient to enact ambitious teaching and learning. The members of the school community must also possess the capacity to teach in ambitious ways. In these schools, new (as well as more experienced) teachers are able to develop their capacity to enact ambitious practices in their classrooms.

It is not difficult to see similarities between the sorts of cultures in schools where ambitious teaching and learning occur and the cultures of faith communities in which new and mature believers are continually supported and challenged to live out their faith. Just as reform leaders call teachers to a different, higher way of teaching and learning in schools, religious leaders call believers to a higher life in Christ. Members of faith communities self-consciously seek to support one another and work together to help each other grow continually to become more like Christ. Furthermore, a centerpiece of life in faith communities is ongoing catechesis and modeling by more mature believers. In similar ways, teachers in nurturing schools have a commitment to one another, hold to a common vision for teaching and learning, and work together to improve what happens in their school and classrooms.

These reflections about how the metaphor comports with the characteristics and demands of deep reform highlight the value of the generative metaphor. The metaphor underscores many of the difficult challenges of making major changes in our lives. The challenges of deep change, whether they arise from our faith or our vocation, are profound. And most persons are more apt to undertake major change if they can depend upon others to show them the way and support them on the journey.

The metaphor is especially valuable because evangelism is essentially relational. At all stages, evangelism is premised on relationships and occurs in the context of community. It operates through relationships with the goal of altering the ways persons relate to themselves, with others, and their world. Furthermore, evangelism is ordered to winning personal and collective commitments to a common vision of life, of ways of living together. The metaphor points to the importance of personal and collective commitments to a common life, and employs a relational "technology" that is tailored to personal and collective transformations.

## EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES OF REFORM

In this chapter, we have shown that *instructional reform as evangelism* is a plausible, apt, and appealing generative metaphor. To demonstrate the plausibility and aptness of the metaphor, we reviewed similarities of instructional reform with evangelism. Then we reviewed tensions between the two domains to draw heuristic insights into the process of instructional reform. Based on those insights, we drew some implications that could potentially help reformers and policymakers think differently about the work of instructional reform. Insights from the metaphor cover all stages of reform, from questions about which reforms to adopt to what processes to employ in attempting to get teachers to enact them.

In order to address the practical question of what it might mean to "apply the metaphor," it will be helpful to articulate what we will call "evangelical principles of

reform." The seven principles we offer are a heuristic grid through which past and present reforms can be viewed. They might also be useful when considering future attempts at effecting changes through instructional reform. In short, these heuristic principles provide guideposts for what it might mean to take seriously the generative metaphor *instructional reform as evangelism*.

### Ecclesial Principle

Evangelism is centered in, grows out of, and is focused on community. As a result, evangelism is essentially ecclesial. Believers are "called out" and gathered into special communities/churches for a particular purpose. They are guided by a particular vision (the gospel) for themselves and their common life. Evangelists, in turn, go out from these communities to do the evangelical work of calling others to experience community and invite them to share the life of the community themselves. Evangelists and those they evangelize are called to live the Christian life and also to invite others to share that life with them.

Most especially in our discussion of evangelism and deep reform, we saw the importance of school cultures in supporting ambitious teaching and deep reform. This is not a new insight. Indeed, the culture of the school has long been implicated in the problem of change. The ecclesial principle highlights the positive effects of having teachers called out for a higher purpose in their efforts to form communities where ambitious teaching and learning can occur. This principle can be observed in many reform movements, professional teaching organizations, and teacher networks, as well as efforts to create (or re-create) schools, such as Central Park East under the guidance of Deborah Meier.

Reformers who take seriously the ecclesial principle acknowledge the importance of calling teachers out and getting them to self-consciously commit to a vision of teaching and to a community of teachers and students. There is power in community, and

this power is channeled toward excellence when teachers commit themselves voluntarily to other educators who desire to strive collectively to achieve a common vision for excellent teaching and learning. The potential of this kind of community is rarely maximized without leaders who proclaim their vision for teaching, help win the commitment of members of the community to that vision, and guide the way by both exhortation and example.

Without a sense of solidarity among teachers who strive together to enact a common vision for teaching and learning, many schools remain isolating places. Isolating school cultures simply do not support ambitious teaching like schools that have a common vision that espouses mutual support and deep engagement with subject matter. The principle suggests that reformers seek ways to foster a sense of "specialness" among teachers, of being called out to something better, higher, and more effective for the teachers and the students they teach. The principle emphasizes the importance of the culture of the school for the problem of change, and suggests that reformers strive to find ways to foster cultures of support for ambitious teaching and learning. Without some such change, future attempts at deep reform may continue to founder on the shoals of the isolating culture so prevalent in schools today.

### Principle of Human Dignity and Freedom of Conscience

The second evangelical principle of reform, the principle of human dignity and freedom of conscience, comports well with the ecclesial principle. The first principle focuses on the communal and vocational dimensions of evangelical reform. This second principle emphasizes the importance of respecting the freedom of persons to respond as they choose to proposals for change. Just as evangelists respect the freedom of potential converts to embrace (or not) the gospel message, it says agents of reform should respect the freedom of teachers to respond to calls for reform as they choose.

The principle holds that teachers have dignity as human beings and contends that

they should be allowed (and expected) to make responsible choices about how they will respond to calls for reform. Note that the principle does not suggest a passive stance on the part of reformers toward the reform and teachers. The principle emphasizes the freedom and dignity of teachers in order to guide the way reformers think about winning their commitment to change. The accent of this principle is on the importance of personal commitment especially as it contrasts with the problematic way mandatory calls for reform are often communicated to teachers. The principle recommends that reformers take seriously the freedom teachers have to respond as they will to calls for change, even as it affirms the right of reformers to call for change.

If reformers applied the principle in their work, they would take seriously the freedom teachers possess to respond to reforms as they wish. This would, in turn, influence the way agents of reform engage with teachers in their attempts to gain their commitment to reform ideas and practices. The principle of human dignity and freedom of conscience underscores the importance of winning the commitment of individuals. Because the emphasis is on freedom and personal commitment to reform ideas and practices, the principle underscores the priority of proposing changes over imposing them.<sup>69</sup>

As we saw in our review of instructional reform, teachers have *de facto* freedom to embrace or reject the commitments and values of ecclesial communities or calls for reform. The principle emphasizes the challenge reformers face when they wish to get teachers to change their teaching in fundamental ways. Freedom of conscience does not, of course, mean that reformers should forsake reform and allow teachers to do whatever they deem best in their classrooms. Instead, it helps reformers focus on the heart of

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<sup>69</sup> This principle would not apply to those social problems and instructional policies that target issues of equity. If, for example, curricula for different social groups, whether as written or as taught, was demonstrably inequitable, policymakers would do well to mandate a change to redress the injustice. Nevertheless, the principle of human dignity and freedom of conscience would have implications for how

challenge in change, which is personal commitment. The principle turns this challenge into a value to be honored rather than a fact to be tolerated. In other words, the principle tells reformers to work with teachers as persons who have reasons for their responses, and to seek to win their commitment to reform ideas and practices, *even when the reform calls for mandated changes in response to a demonstrated educational injustice.*

The principle is particularly salient for reforms that demand radical changes in teachers' thinking and practice. In those circumstances, the principle suggests that reformers honor the doubts and questions teachers have about reform ideas and practices. The principle counsels reformers to provide opportunities for teachers to have their concerns addressed, their doubts and fears allayed. For, if teachers cannot see their way clear to make changes in their classrooms, they may feel bound to reject the call for change. This evangelical principle would "allow" teachers this freedom, because it honors their dignity as persons and the freedom they possess to reject calls for change with which they do not agree.<sup>70</sup>

Generally speaking, the principle of human dignity and freedom of conscience offers guidance for the ways reformers should interact with teachers around the ideals and practices of reform. Because teachers have the freedom to respond to calls for change in a diversity of ways, reformers who recognize the importance of this principle would take a different stance toward teachers. They would appeal to teachers with the goal of winning their commitment rather than presuming that teachers will (because they "were told to") enact it. This principle acknowledges the power teachers actually wield in classrooms as they respond to reforms, and it views their freedom as a right they possess as human beings. Moreover, the principle suggests that reformers would do well to seek

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even an important mandated reform could best be promulgated and enacted in schools. The principle centers on how teachers should be treated as "objects of change."

<sup>70</sup> Again, it should be noted that this principle should not be given supreme status, especially when reforms are seeking to redress unjust conditions in schools and society. Still, even when a reform possesses

to win teachers' commitment rather than simply demand their compliance, even in cases when a reform mandates changes to redress educational injustice.

### Creedal Principle

The creedal principle is intimately connected to the two previous principles, and has two major elements. First, it asserts that all reforms have guiding principles, values, and commitments, along with a set of recommended practices, which could be considered the underlying creed of the reform. The creed is the set of beliefs and practices to which teachers would be asked to commit themselves. This aspect of the principle focuses on the content of the reform, the objective side of belief.

The second aspect of the creedal principle emphasizes the value of self-conscious commitment to the ideas, values, and practices of a reform. In other words, it stresses the subjective side of belief, of personal faith in the creed itself. Historically, Christians uttered a pledge proclaiming their commitment to the orthodox beliefs of Christianity when they converted. To this day, within the Catholic tradition, when believers convert, they do so by uttering their own first person assent, their *credo*. The creedal principle emphasizes the benefits of getting persons to explicitly consider their commitments to a set of propositions, values, and practices. The principle may be particularly relevant in cases where reformers seek to get teachers to alter their core commitments, values, and practices.

Whether teachers explicitly attend to them or not, they are influenced by beliefs and values about what it means to teach, learn, and be members of school communities. In other words, all teachers are guided by pedagogical "creeds" of some kind, even if they remain inchoate or tacit. When teachers make their beliefs and values explicit, however, they are able to engage in conversations about them. The creedal principle of reform

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clear ethical warrant, the principle emphasizes the value of winning compliance rather than simply requiring it.

encourages just this kind of conversation. The potential benefits are clear. Because reformers are interested in changing what teachers believe, value, and what they do in their classrooms, encouraging teachers to attend explicitly to their beliefs, values, and practices has merit. More than simply getting teachers to talk about their values and beliefs, though, the creedal principle encourages reformers to get teachers to consider committing themselves to the set of beliefs and practices they are advocating with a particular reform creed.

Personal commitment to a set of values, beliefs, and practices bears potential fruit in helping teachers orient their lives in schools. We observed above the benefits that accrue to schools, classrooms, and teachers when teachers commit themselves to reform movements or ally themselves with others in newly formed or reformed schools. When they do so, they become part of communities of faith, with a particular set of commitments for their lives together. In their schools and classrooms, they strive collectively and individually to live out their creed. This kind of self-conscious embrace of values and beliefs is one central benefit of the creedal principle at work.<sup>71</sup>

### Magisterial Principle

The magisterial principle asserts the importance of having an authoritative body who would be both competent and empowered to teach the contents of faith and to help resolve disputes over interpretation and application when they arise.<sup>72</sup> The term is

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<sup>71</sup> It is important to note that when persons have committed themselves self-consciously to a set of beliefs and practices, when they have said their *credo*, they may be more resistant to future calls for change that deviate in marked ways from their chosen creed. In cases such as that, reformers would be wise to remember the principle of human dignity and freedom of conscience, striving, if it seems prudent and necessary, to get them to consider committing themselves to a different set of beliefs and practices than they ones they have explicitly embraced. Their efforts to effect this kind of change would be marked by persuasion and appeal, with the intent of demonstrating that their proposed set of commitments and practices promise better results for them and/or their students.

<sup>72</sup> This principle helps to balance the principle of human dignity and freedom of conscience. Both of these principles should be honored. In other words, they should help teachers come to personal commitment to a

derived from the Roman Catholic *Magisterium*, which refers to the *teaching office* of the church. The *Magisterium* proclaims the dogma and doctrine that define orthodox Catholicism. Throughout history, ecumenical councils have been called to define points of doctrine, to settle disputes between rival interpretations of the creed, and to proclaim authoritatively what it means to be Catholic.

Other creedal communities also have authoritative teachers (or a teaching office) who are charged with resolving disputes concerning interpretations and applications of creeds. Authoritative teachers perform an important function in helping to resolve questions of practice and competing interpretations of what a creed entails for its code of behavior for daily life. The principle does not call for the pedagogical equivalent of the Office of the Inquisition, but it asserts that there are benefits of clear specifications of the reform, of what beliefs and practices characterize "reformed" teaching.

When schools or reforms lack authoritative interpreters of pedagogical creeds (or reforms), individual teachers are inevitably given the freedom to interpret the creed (or reform) in any way they choose. As things stand, teachers often have wide-latitude and freedom to do what they will in their classrooms. However, if a school (or reform) espouses a set of values and commitments for teaching and learning, it is important for someone with authority to be able to assess whether teachers are, in fact, teaching in accord with the creed (or reform) they have embraced.

The magisterial principle emphasizes the importance of providing clear guidance regarding beliefs and values for teaching and learning. It highlights the importance of having authoritative standards against which attempts to enact reform might be judged. Without some kind of authoritative interpretation of the meaning of reforms and what reformed practice looks like, judgments of successful enactment of reforms would be exceedingly problematic. Having some body that would have authority to interpret

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reform without coercing them. This principle is meant to ensure that teachers truly know what the reform entails and demands of them.

reforms would not eliminate the subjective difficulties of assessing attempts to enact reforms, but it would provide some objective guidelines for those being asked to enact reforms as well as those who are being asked to assess whether reforms have, in fact, been enacted.

The principle is ordered to the legitimate concern policymakers and reformers have to specify the meaning and implications of reforms ideas. The principle argues that authors of reform have a right to give authoritative interpretations. With that authority comes a commensurate responsibility for the authors of reform. The principle asserts that interpretive authority should be exercised for the good of those who labor under that authority. It entails a responsibility on the part of the magisterium to promulgate clear guidance about reform ideas and practices, to help teachers understand the reform, and to support their efforts to enact reform ideas and practices in their classrooms. This responsibility to provide guidance and support is developed more fully as we consider the next evangelical principle of reform, the pastoral principle.

### Pastoral Principle

Every school and every reform movement have leaders. The pastoral principle asserts that leadership is a necessary part of any community. Furthermore, it argues that leaders lead best when they take a pastoral stance toward those they lead. The principle emphasizes the benefits of leadership that is informed by genuine concern for teachers and students in schools. Pastoral leaders are concerned about the manner of their leadership as much as its direction and content. From its biblical roots, we might say that pastoral leaders are "good shepherds" who care for their flock, those in their charge, leading them to safe pastures. In sum, pastoral leaders are ideally motivated to lead those in their schools to a richer, fuller, more satisfying teaching, learning, and working life.

Evangelical reform recommends that schools have leaders who are committed to a vision for schooling, and who have a pastoral concern for those who are part of their

learning community. Their leadership, guidance, and instruction would be informed by a creed that ideally orients all the teaching and learning that goes on in their school. The values and beliefs of the creed would inform their decisions about hiring, training, and the ways they manage the faculty and, in turn, the students who are in their charge.

Leaders would make decisions and take actions with an eye to the dignity of teachers and all others in the learning community. Choices about embracing new ways of teaching would be guided by a desire to help teachers and students grow into maturity in the vision of teaching and learning contained in the creed of their learning community. With input from teachers and other stakeholders in the school, leaders would make decisions about timing of change as well as engaging teachers in the entire range of problem solving and reform adoption for the school. If teachers were reluctant to embrace a new change, a good shepherd would seek ways to support them, to help persuade them to change, if necessary, or to listen to their concerns with an open mind. Ideally, all of their efforts would be tailored to the circumstances and competencies of individual teachers.

Most of the exemplary schools scholars describe have strong leaders who have recruited others to their vision of teaching and learning. They are as concerned about the teachers in their charge as they are the students teachers teach. For that reason, these shepherds of schools are often able to create communities of consensus and cooperation around their vision of teaching and learning. Not infrequently, the vision these charismatic leaders hold out for teaching and learning differs markedly from modal practice. Nonetheless, these leaders are often able to win others to their (often challenging) vision. One central reason they are successful is that they often live out the vision they are recommending. These leaders often become existence proofs of the vision they proclaim. The best shepherds of schools are themselves models of the sort of teaching they espouse.

St. Paul asked others to follow him as he followed Christ (I Corinthians 11:1; II

Thessalonians 3:6-9). This principle suggests that good school leaders who are calling teachers to make radical changes in their teaching should be able to demonstrate and model such practices for teachers. That way, teachers would be able explore their concerns about the practices in the context of the practice itself, with an eye to the challenges and the potential benefits of reformed practice. In situations where leaders (including agents of reform) lack concern for the best interests of teachers and/or are unable to guide teachers along the path to change, it is unsurprising that teachers would be reluctant or resistant to adopt reformed practices. Good pedagogical shepherds live out their vision themselves, win others to that vision, and then help find ways to support them in their efforts to change--for the sake of the teachers and the students they teach.

#### Incarnation Principle

No principle is more important for Christianity than that of the incarnation. In fact, the incarnation stands at the very center of Christian faith and worship. Christians believe God became man in Jesus of Nazareth. In Jesus, the divine Word was made flesh; God became a human being (cf. John 1). For Christians, Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God to humankind. In Jesus, God deigned to become human. Prior to Jesus becoming human, God had spoken to the Jews in various ways. In the incarnation, Jesus became the singular revelation of God to the world (cf. Hebrews 1). To borrow language from instructional reform, we might say that in Jesus Christ, the world saw God's "policies" fully and completely enacted. Jesus was God's love--the good news, the gospel--enlivened, enacted, incarnate.

The call of Jesus to his followers was a call for them to come to him and follow his example. Just as he lived out the message of love for the world, his followers were also to live out that message of love for the world. For this reason, Christians place great emphasis on bearing witness to the Christian message in their lives. Consequently, the burden of leadership is one of modeling and instructing all believers in the ways of God.

The central burden of believers is to work cooperatively with fellow-believers to live the Christian life they have embraced and have entered into by their baptism. In fact, all Christians are called to be, by their entry into the community of faith and their adoption into the family of God, "little Christs." In this way, their lives become icons, or windows, through which the world can see what it means to be a Christian, what kind of life Christians are called to live.

It is true that Christians are often poor witnesses of what it means to live Christian lives. Even in those instances, however, the incarnation principle is still operative. In such cases, it calls persons back to the life of faith. The principle sets out the ideal toward which all Christians are called to strive. Because Christians are not always successful in living as Christ lived, Christian worship and discipleship emphasize the reality of the struggle to incarnate the faith. Christians are continually reminded that they are called to live lives of self-sacrificing love as Christ did. The vision of Christ crucified, died, and raised provides the ground of personal hope for the believer's own ongoing conversion of mind, heart, and life. Moreover, believers are strengthened by faithful preaching, the sacraments, and the life in the community of faith to be witnesses for the gospel and to work for the spiritual transformation of the world.

It suggests that their efforts would be even more powerful if they were living the reform themselves. The principle emphasizes the power of personal testimony and witness to increase the credibility of the message. Consequently, the principle suggests that when reformers (or agents of reform) "live the message," they are better able to win the commitment of teachers to reform ideas and practices. They are also better situated to help teachers envision ways to enact reforms in their own classrooms.

When teachers lack models and witnesses of what reformed teaching looks like, when they have seen no one enacting--incarnating--the reform, it is little surprise that they would find it difficult to understand and believe the message of reform. It is even less surprising that teachers would have a difficult time "incarnating" the message

themselves. More importantly, without witnesses and companions on the journey, those who attempt to walk the often lonely and sometimes sacrificial path of deep reform on their own will often struggle and fail. The incarnation principle of reform assumes there is power in the witness of teachers and leaders who speak loudly with their lives that new ways of teaching are possible and beneficial. Without such witnesses, the voice of deep reform may be but a lonely cry in the wilderness.

### Evangelical Principle

The final evangelical principle of reform is the evangelical principle itself. This principle emphasizes the power of true belief to inspire persons to spread messages of reform. The principle asserts that persons who are convinced that the message they have embraced is truly good news will be more apt to share that message (and life) with others. Committed believers speak with the witness of their lives the truths they have embraced. Evangelistic believers live and speak about their faith. They invite others to experience the benefits of their community of faith and seek to persuade potential converts that the gospel is a good solution to the problems they are facing in their lives.

The evangelical principle operates on multiple levels. Evangelism always begins with the community of believers and extends beyond itself through the witness and testimony of believers to potential converts. The power of the principle is the commitment of believers to the message they have embraced. If they see it as good news, they will be more apt to spread the message to others.

Of course, it often happens that believers are not much interested in sharing the message in evangelical ways. They often live, as scripture says, "lukewarm" Christian lives (Revelation 3:16). For this reason, the principle of evangelism assumes that evangelism always begins at home. So, when members of Christian communities are not living evangelical lives, the Christian response is to evangelize them, to encourage and challenge them to revive their faith, to remind them of the life into which they have been

baptized, as well as the mission to which they have been called. In short, the Christian tradition says the errant believer needs to be shepherded back to the fold, so that they can hear (and experience again) the power of the gospel to transform their lives by re-entering the Christian life of worship and discipleship (cf. Luke 15).

Reformers who seek to spread change widely may benefit from reflecting especially on this last observation. It says that persons who have personally committed themselves to a new way of living their lives as teachers may be excited and zealous enough to be evangelical witnesses to the power of policy ideas in their lives. Convinced (converted) teachers can be witnesses of the possibility and promise of a policy in ways that non-teachers can rarely be. The principle suggests that reforming teachers can sometimes be the best agents of reform, because they are convinced of the merits of the reform, and have lived the reform themselves. The evangelical principle highlights the motivating and persuasive power of transformed lives.

The evangelical principle follows from the incarnation principle. Those who are living the life will be able to spread the message with power, and they will seek to spread the message precisely because it "works" for them. And, other things being equal, teachers who are convinced that a way of being a teacher is liberating for themselves and for their students will be more inclined to recommend that way of teaching to their peers. They will be evangelical about the reform because they believe that the message of reformed teaching is really good news, so good that it is worth sharing with others.

## APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES

Those seven evangelical principles of reform provide a heuristic grid through which instructional reforms can be viewed. They provide a novel perspective on the process of enacting planned changes in schools, and could be employed to evaluate past reform efforts, to look at ways to improve current reform efforts, and/or to plan future reforms.

The principles do not dictate any particular approach to making changes in teaching. Instead, they underscore the relational dynamics at the heart of any planned change. They highlight the communal and cultural dimensions of change as well as the necessity of personal supports in the process of change. They recognize the value of community in change even as they underscore the necessity of personal commitment to change. And they also reveal the power of visions and visionary leaders in winning teachers' commitment and motivation to improve their practice.

In Chapter 6, we investigate three reforms and attempts to enact them in schools. The three reforms we include are for illustrative purposes. We describe the reforms and efforts to enact them in schools for the purpose of "testing" how the evangelical principles might help us see the challenges and successes of reforms in a different and (if the metaphor is truly generative) valuable way.

## Chapter 6

### Heuristic Merits of the Metaphor

In order to investigate ways the principles might illuminate the challenges and successes of attempts at instructional reform, we will now consider three portraits of instructional reform. Each portrait includes a description of the reform and at least one example of attempts to implement the reform in classrooms. These portraits are not necessarily representative of the attempts that have been made to enact these reforms. Other examples could have been selected. These are simply a set of three reforms that reflect three different approaches to enacting reform.

After describing each reform and attempts to implement them in classrooms, we will explore the heuristic merits of the metaphor by viewing the reforms from the perspective of the seven evangelical principles of instructional reform we developed from the *instructional reform as evangelism* metaphor. The metaphor (with its seven principles) focuses our attention on a particular set of questions as we consider these reform efforts. The principles provide criteria for nominating strengths and weaknesses of the reform efforts. And if the metaphor truly has generative potential, the seven principles should highlight areas of concern as well as suggest ways to remedy the weaknesses it reveals. With an eye to the generative potential of the metaphor, then, at the conclusion of each portrait, we explore some potential implications of the metaphor for the reforms we survey in light of the seven evangelical principles of reform articulated in Chapter 5.

### THREE PORTRAITS OF REFORM

These three portraits of reform provide an opportunity to investigate what the metaphor might "say" about three different reform efforts. They are not intended to demonstrate that the metaphor provides a *correct* way to think about instructional reform

efforts. Still less are they intended to demonstrate that instructional reform *is* evangelism. Instead, they provide three sites for exploring the heuristic merits of the seven evangelical principles of reform we have nominated. Some aspects of these reforms are consistent with the seven evangelical principles, and others are not. The principles serve to highlight different aspects and assumptions of three reform efforts.

Based on the distinction we drew above between "deep" and "surface reforms," each of the three reform efforts in these portraits would be considered a deep reform. They have implications for the fundamental organization of schools and/or the ways teachers think about teaching, what it means to know subject matter, and the way teachers should work in their classrooms and/or with one another in schools. Moreover, each of these reforms has implications for the values and norms for teaching and learning, and includes changes to the culture of the school as well as the ways teachers are asked to live in their schools and classrooms.

The first portrait describes an attempt to implement an "open education" reform in the 1960s that drew much of its inspiration from the progressive education movement. The emphasis in this portrait is the work of district and local administrators, the resources that teachers were provided, as well the effects on teachers as they attempted to make changes in their school and classroom.

The second portrait includes a brief review of the origins and Common Principles of the Essential Schools Movement, a survey of a study of the movement's growth, a description of one school's efforts to become an Essential School. The emphasis in this portrait is the way that this entrepreneurial effort began and spread, the dynamics of the movement's general reform approach, challenges of growth, and the diverse ways that schools have responded to the Common Principles along with the challenges that schools have faced in the process of change.

The third portrait focuses on standards-based reforms in mathematics, including a survey of the fundamentals of the call for change, and the rhetoric of advocates of standards-based reform. After considering the ways mathematics reformers have

employed rhetoric for advancing deep mathematics reform, we will back up to consider early implementation efforts at implementing standards-based mathematics reforms in California. This portrait is based on work conducted by the Educational Policy and Practice Study (EPPS) in California elementary schools in the late 1980s and early 1990s in response to the implementation efforts of the California State Department of Education of the 1985 math *Framework* and associated text and testing changes. The emphasis of this portrait is how ideas for ambitious change in mathematics teaching and learning guided the plans for reform in California, as well as how changes in thinking about what it means to know mathematics and how to teach it were communicated to teachers, how those reforms were received by them, as well as the ways reform ideas and practices actually affected life in teachers' classrooms.

Each of these three portraits reflects ambitious attempts by reformers to remake teaching and learning in schools. The Cambire reforms were an attempt at a local level to remake the way teachers worked with one another and their students in order to ensure that no child was left behind, to use a contemporary slogan. The Essential Schools Movement reflects a different approach to reform, in that it is an approach that schools and sometimes districts consider as a way to improve teaching and learning for students in schools. However, it is "entrepreneurial," because it is not driven by any particular government body. In some respects, it shares characteristics with Cambire, in that it is, for the most part, a movement that is embraced volitionally by those schools that become members of the Coalition.

The third reform movement differs from the other two in several ways. First of all, it is a subject matter reform, driven in large measure by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, a professional teachers organization. Second, the principles set down by the NCTM have been adopted by state departments of education in some cases (as in California) to remake mathematics teaching and learning in public schools.

From the description, it should be clear that these three portraits are not parallel cases. Instead, they present different approaches to reform and highlight different aspects

of the process of reform. They provide diverse perspectives of the work of reform. As such, they also provide diverse ways to test the heuristic merits of the evangelism metaphor. The purpose of the portraits is neither to compare these reform efforts nor to see which of them is least or most evangelical. Instead, they are simply three opportunities to consider the heuristic merits of the metaphor.

For that reason, each portrait will conclude with an investigation of how these reforms "look" when viewed from the perspective of each of the seven evangelical principles of reform. We will consider evidence of how these reform efforts have or have not honored the values contained in the seven principles. In addition, we will conclude each survey with some provisional conclusions about what the honoring (or not honoring) the evangelical principles would have (or had) for the reform efforts described in the portraits.

### Progressive Reforms in the United States

The disappointing history of "progressive reforms" has been well documented (Cremin, 1961; Cohen, 1988; Cuban, 1984; Elmore, 1996; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Many studies have focused on the development of the progressive movement, while others have focused on individual schools, and their attempts to implement major innovations.

Cremin (1961), for example, offers a list of reasons why the progressive movement largely failed in its attempt to "transform" the school. Cohen (1988) describes the challenges in slightly different terms, focusing on the difficulties of enacting the sorts of radical changes in philosophy and practice that progressive reforms entailed. Cuban and Tyack (1995) make a similar argument to Cohen's when they assert that that reforms of the "student-centered" variety often fail because they don't square with community and practitioner assumptions about what constitutes schooling. To use Tyack & Cuban's (1995) phrase, they violate the "grammar of schooling."

## *Open Education at Cambire*

Partly because the progressive movement has been well-studied, it provides an interesting site to investigate the heuristic merits of the evangelism metaphor and its seven principles. In an attempt to understand ways in which such reforms are sometimes "implemented," we will consider a case of "open education" reform. At Cambire Elementary School, reformers attempted to implement "student-centered" instructional reforms at the school level. In their 1971 study, Gross, et al. describe the process of reform and document challenges that teachers and reformers encountered in their efforts to support change.<sup>73</sup>

Reform at Cambire Elementary School was not the result of state or federal policies mandating changes in classrooms. Instead, the change was promulgated by an outside change agent who drew inspiration from arguments for progressive education and the open school that were circulating for the better part of a century. The district was concerned about the failure of inner-city students, and moved toward "open education" models of instruction in an attempt to address community and educator concerns about inner-city youth. Open education was considered a remedy to the problems of student motivation, and was intended to help teachers better meet the academic and social needs of all children.

Cambire's district had been experiencing increasing racial tensions since the early 60s. As part of the broader civil rights movement, the superintendent and school board in 1965 stated their willingness to seek ways to better educate lower class children, and to improve the learning of all students. The board and superintendent issued a joint statement about the challenges they faced, and ways the district's Title I and Title III

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<sup>73</sup> One of the authors' primary interests in investigating this change was to test whether the then regnant view of educational innovation failure--namely, that teachers resisted change--was correct. To do so, the researchers found a school in which change was esteemed a central expectation for teachers, a common topic of conversation, and, by report, readily embraced.

funds from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act would be used:

The basic problem and the basic challenge of education is the continued revitalization of the entire educational process--not only new school buildings and new sources of funds but a whole new look at what goes on in our schools and a full-scale attempt to produce new and better ways for teachers to teach and children to learn . . . . We intend that the primary emphasis of our innovative efforts will again be on the education of disadvantaged children, for it is here that the problems are most pressing and our knowledge the least secure . . . (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 67)

The district's vision was ambitious and systemic. To support their efforts to improve schools and schooling, they allocated grant money from the Federal Government to establish two new agencies, one that had responsibility for compensatory education, and the other that was labeled the "Bureau of Educational Change" (BEC) (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 68). The bureau established several "laboratory schools" to explore ways to improve education of (especially "disadvantaged") children throughout the district.

The BEC was headed by Mark Williams, an "outsider" with a reputation for innovation, who reported to the superintendent. Williams had persuaded the superintendent that the laboratory schools and the BEC were important pieces in the district's attempts to effect major changes in schools. He also convinced the superintendent to allocate roughly 20 per cent of the district's Title I funds to research and development and to support the bureau and laboratory schools in the district (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 70).

As director of the BEC, Williams had responsibility for lab schools, like Cambire, and made several changes to help foster change in Cambire Elementary: he reorganized the school administration, and had Rudy Gault, a veteran teacher and assistant principal in the district, function as instructional director and site administrator; he brought in three subject specialists to Cambire Elementary on a full-time basis (one in language arts, another in math and science, and a third in social studies), whose responsibilities "included identifying existing promising educational innovations that could be introduced into Cambire, proposing new educational strategies, working with teachers in establishing new programs, and facilitating their use of new materials and procedures" (Gross, et al.,

1971, pp. 75-76).

Williams had acquired new materials and programs for teachers to use during the school year 1965-1966; he kept the school open afternoons for tutoring programs; he invited Cambire parents to form their own parent-community group; he offered a one-month summer session beginning in late June 1966, designed to "develop innovative curricula and programs that would be instituted at Cambire in the fall" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 76). For this session, Williams brought in university personnel to work with teachers to develop alternative ways to teach. As it happened, this school-university relationship created some tensions. The teachers thought the university faculty had taken over the agenda of the summer session and were less interested in teachers' commitments and concerns than their own research interests.

The BEC director also recruited additional teachers so that the teacher-pupil ratio was low: there were eleven full-time teachers and 175 elementary students at Cambire in the fall. Because only three of the teachers returned from the year before, Williams recruited eight new teachers, who ". . . had been selected because they had expressed strong interest in educational change" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 80). Finally, teachers were given an additional 15% pay for their involvement in the laboratory school. This material support and additional grant allocations meant that the overall per-pupil funding at Cambire was nearly double that of other schools in the district (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 80).

From this list of changes, Williams seems to have provided many supports for change that researchers have singled out as important to successful enactment of reform (See above, Chapter 3). Teachers were given material, intellectual, and administrative support for their attempts to make deep changes in their teaching. Furthermore, the Cambire reform resulted in part from parental demands for change. It was also well received by administrators and teachers. Teachers expressed a "strong desire to try innovative ways of teaching children because of their dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of their previous efforts" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 81)

Furthermore, all teachers seem convinced that "new approaches were required if

teachers were to motivate ghetto children" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 81). One teacher, reflecting on the expectations of teachers at Cambire, said that "You have to do new things even if they don't amount to anything good, just so long as they are not what you are used to" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 80). Williams echoed these sentiments, claiming that Cambire was a place where "change is the rule rather than the exception . . . Cambire is a kind of a model of this in that the pressure there is for change rather than standing still, and you're criticized if you don't change rather than if you do" (Gross, et al., 1971, pp. 80-81).

And there was some evidence that Williams was right, at least in terms of their willingness to try new curricula. Visits to teachers' classrooms revealed the use of innovative curricular materials. However, though teachers were utilizing new materials in their classrooms, they ". . . [were] performing in accord with the traditional role model in November 1966" (p. 89).<sup>74</sup>

After making the changes listed above, Williams began his push to implement the "catalytic model" at Cambire in November 1966. He drafted a ten-page document describing the innovation and distributed it to staff. This memo was the first exposure the teachers had to the "catalytic model." The "November document," as they called it,

. . . contained a very general statement of its purposes and a brief discussion of the physical layout of the classroom and what the children would be doing in it. The document discussed in vague and in the most general of terms what was expected of teachers; it did not specify precise types of role performance teachers should engage in to obtain the 'desired behavior' from their pupils. (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 151)

The catalytic model constituted a "radical redefinition" of the teacher's role and a "fundamental change in her primary functions" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 14):

This new definition of the teacher's role viewed the teacher as assisting children to learn according to *their* interests throughout the day in self-contained classrooms. She was expected to emphasize the *process*, not the content, of learning. She was

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<sup>74</sup> Gross, et al., (1971) lay out these characteristics of the "traditional role model": "Traditionally, an elementary school has been a place where children are offered a specific body of information and a number of skills. Children are seen as bottles to be filled depending on capacity and, given this basic conception, the primary task of the teacher is to fill these bottles . . ." (p. 14).

expected to allow pupils maximum freedom in choosing their own activities. (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 12, emphasis in original)

When the innovation was introduced in November, three of the teachers expressed initial "positive" responses to it. Another three faculty members were ambivalent about the catalytic model, and four of the teachers expressed "somewhat negative" initial responses to the innovation. Those with negative responses were doubtful that the innovation was practicable at Cambire and/or would have benefits for their students. Though some expressed doubts about the innovation, and several were ambivalent, all expressed a willingness to try to implement the innovation (Gross, et al., 1971).

Between November and January 1967, teachers had occasional conversations with each other about the innovation, and thought often about what it might demand of them. The discussions about the innovation were often informal, and one teacher complained that "talking was done in bull sessions; we never came up with a guide for future action" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 152). Many of the teachers desired to have more information about the materials they should use, and sought input from teachers at other sites who had tried this kind of teaching before them. At the start, teachers had expressed willingness to try the innovation, but they grew increasingly concerned because of their uncertainty about how they should enact it. They had agreed with the general objectives that Williams laid out, but were unsure how to meet them.

In January, Williams decided to ask teachers to implement the reform. Based on the warm reception teachers had given the November document, Williams believed the teachers were eager to implement it. He handed out to teachers the "January document," which was an elaboration of the November document. After he handed out the expanded version, teachers received an "announcement" that the school was "now planning to direct [its] energies toward implementing the philosophy of innovation" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 283).

The January document laid out the rationale and assumptions of the innovation, and included a set of working hypotheses. The views of students, schools, and learning

captured by the hypotheses were progressive in orientation. Among other things, they affirmed that intelligence is not "genetically fixed" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 271); "Children will learn better if teachers, while being responsible for structuring the environment, act within that structure more as guides and assistants to the learners rather than instructors in the traditional sense" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 275); "Children will respond more positively toward school and the instructional process and will 'learn' better if school is not rigidly organized by grade, if teachers are guides rather than purveyors of knowledge and punitive judges, if each child is not fed into a blind machine but a process tailored to his specific talents and liabilities" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 277); "No child is genetically inferior simply because he is born to poor parents or is born both poor and Negro" (Gross, et al., 1971, pp. 278); "The creation of . . . a radically more effective educational process for disadvantaged children may require special materials and special approaches" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 281); and "Integration--not just racial but social integration as well--may be one of the most powerful ways of improving education for both advantaged and disadvantaged children" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 282).

The document revealed ambitious goals for Cambire Elementary. It offered a virtual redefinition of the school and the way teachers and students would work with one another. Social-justice themes are present throughout the document, drawing on longstanding democratic assumptions about equality, justice, and educational opportunity. Equity concerns were supplemented by a vision of educational excellence that called the teachers to ambitious teaching. In addition to the educational concerns, the document included a set of moral commitments to all students, bolstered by lofty rhetoric that espoused treating all children with the conviction that they can learn.

Williams seemed to recognize the magnitude of the task he was setting before his teachers and the work involved in developing the sort of workplace culture and workers that such schools would demand. His words included an acknowledgement of the challenge, an exhortation to the task, and words of warning if they failed to make adequate changes:

. . . it is clear to us that school systems must begin to pay close attention to all of these problems. And if it wishes to "pay attention," a school system must develop within itself the capability for doing it. This means a staff of people equipped by experience and desire to think creatively and with freshness, a group equipped with freedom, funds, and facilities to do honest and continuous research and development and provided with ways of moving developed ideas into the school system at large. Unless such a capability exists as a permanent part of the system, the schools will always be in danger of falling behind, of not being able to take advantage of or making a contribution to the creation of new and better ways of educating children. (Gross, et al., 1971, pp. 282-283)

But as compelling as the document may have been as a rationale for instructional reform, it lacked concrete suggestions for how teachers should make the changes it contained.

The document was full of vision, but lacked much guidance for enacting the new pedagogical and socio-economic world it proposed. That is not to say that the documents teachers received were completely devoid of concrete recommendations. Just mostly.

The initial plan was for one of the teachers to try out the new model in January 1967. Other teachers could then benefit from her experience. However, instead of waiting for reports from the trial run, at the end of January teachers were "urged" to make efforts to adopt the innovation in their classrooms (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 150). The memo calling for implementing the innovation entailed the abandonment of departmentalization or specialization, and asserted that "Every teacher will become familiar with all aspects of the activities and experiences planned for the whole classroom" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 283).

Another major change was teaming two teachers to a room. Double staffing was perceived as one way to help speed implementation of the innovation, because it would lower the student-teacher ratio even further. However, this change led to interpersonal conflicts, and uncertainty about the role of student teachers in rooms where they functioned as the second teacher. These issues were "never brought out into the open as problems that required solutions, and, therefore, were never resolved during the period of attempted implementation" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 180).

The guidance teachers were provided was very general. Teaming two teachers to a room, eliminating departmentalization, etc., were major changes, and were particular

changes, but they entailed many changes that were neither modeled nor described in detail. As an example, here is what teachers were told in a memo announcing the implementation of the innovation:

Planning should permit:

- 1) Where possible--a variety of activities from which children may elect
- 2) A free but safe and industrious attitude manifested by high activity
- 3) Self-learning
- 4) An emphasis on self-discovery and the process goals (tool skills are not to be neglected)
- 5) Teachers will guide children by suggestions
- 6) Purposeful behavior--our aim--self discipline
- 7) Creative modes of individual learning through. (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 283)<sup>75</sup>

Attached to the memo was a suggested daily program schedule, which laid out blocks of time for activities, with a few general recommendations about ways to combine subject matter areas (e.g., an activity period for emphasis on science and social studies). At the bottom of the revised schedule, there were several notes to teachers. One said that each "teacher need attempt only those directions leading toward the innovation as he or she desires and can handle with confidence," and the other told teachers to "Watch control. Plan for purposeful behavior. If at anytime activities are not purposeful learning experiences revert to traditional class situation so that you can rethink your plan and discuss your organization with the subject specialist or at a staff meeting" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 284).

Such was the guidance that teachers received about the innovation in January of 1967. The problem with such an approach, however, was that the general admonitions to function as guide or catalyst rather than purveyor of knowledge left much to the imagination. How could or should such an approach be executed? How would one know

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<sup>75</sup> The original document included this incomplete sentence.

if the activities that students were engaged in were "purposeful learning experiences"? Practical advice for things to try was as rare as criteria for self-assessment.

This omission was not lost on teachers. In fact, they lamented the vagueness of the innovation. Few felt they had sufficient clarity about the reform to discern what it might imply for their practice. The clarity teachers gained over time was about the philosophical underpinnings of the innovation, but "not about the role expectations for their performance" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 129).

Though teachers were concerned about the lack of information about the reform, they went ahead and attempted to make changes in their classrooms as they understood the documents Williams had given them. Williams saw their implementation efforts as voluntary and enthusiastic, but some of the teachers interpreted his memo about "implementing the philosophy of the innovation" as a mandate rather than an invitation. And many had misgivings about making the change in January, though they were reluctant to express them to administration:

. . . the administration did not make efforts to ascertain the opinions and feelings of teachers about the new role model before making the decision in January to ask them to conform to it, and . . . the teachers did not feel free to express their honest reactions to their administrators about the innovation. (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 177)

As they began to implement the changes, difficulties arose and teacher enthusiasm waned. For example, the conflicts that arose from double staffing added to the challenges teachers faced in light of their uncertainty about the practice, the lack of adequate materials for use in the catalytic model, and increased demands for paperwork from superiors. Gross, et al. called it "role overload," and found during February and early March "that many teachers were becoming exhausted and short tempered and that these characteristics were not in evidence when they reverted to their traditional patterns of practice" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 180). And reverting to traditional practices is what most teachers did.

As teachers continued to struggle with implementing the change, their resistance to the innovation grew. Teachers seemed frustrated by the lack of information about the

innovation they received from Williams and Gault. The subject matters specialists were somewhat more helpful, but they too were uncertain about what Williams had in mind for the catalytic model in practice. When asked, teachers attributed this lack of information to the administrators' lack of knowledge. One reported:

Everybody kept saying that they don't understand how to do it. Mark *never* gave us definite plans; there was a lot of resentment that they were asking us to do something that they didn't understand themselves. (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 173, emphasis in original)

Requests for clarification often issued in exhortations to "try it out!" One teacher lamented: "Everything was so indefinite!" Part of this had to do with Williams' and Gault's assumptions that imaginative teachers would "figure it out." But the teachers at this "innovative school" were frustrated by the uncertainty.

They were also frustrated by the lack of resources made available for their use with the catalytic model. Consider this comment from "a staff member who was initially highly motivated to attempt to conform to the new role model" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 173):

He [Williams] made it so flowery; I'd like to see him with these kids; he wrote it up in such a way that he gave me the impression that it was an easy thing to do. It isn't! I didn't have any equipment ; I had to make up my own new games; they didn't give me what I needed. (Gross, et al., 1971, pp. 173-174)

One of Gross' claims is that teacher resistance can grow over time, especially if efforts to implement an innovation are not well supported. In this school, initial resistance was minimal, but it grew over time because--as they claim--administrators were insufficiently attentive to teacher concerns and the need for major investments of teaching about the reform and practical suggestions of what it might take.

The authors argue that the evidence revealed that the administration didn't recognize and/or address teachers' ambiguity concerning the reform. When teachers were presented with the document, they were given little elaboration or guidance beyond the text itself. One teacher suspected that Williams wasn't able to elaborate much, because he had never taught kids in schools: "Williams knew where he wanted to go; he had a diagram of the room, but he didn't know how to get there; outside of this, no more"

(Gross, et al., 1971, p. 151).

As it turned out, there was good reason for the lack of specificity. Williams was unsure precisely what he hoped to see in classrooms. Part of this was his conviction that different teachers would implement things in diverse ways, and that seemed fine to him. The lack of clarity about what teacher behaviors were implied by the catalytic model fit with Williams' general view of the educational change process, which

. . . stressed making additional funds available to schools so that new ideas could be tried out and providing teachers with maximum freedom so that they could carry out an innovation as "professionals," that is, independent of the bureaucracy of the school system. (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 191)

He wanted to create a context within which teachers could grow ideas about teaching kids, and grow the minds of those kids. The low teacher-pupil ratio, revised schedule, team-teaching, subject specialists, new materials, extra pay for involvement in the lab school, and the like were intended to create rich intellectual soil within which to grow ideas and new practices. For a variety of reasons, the growth was not as expected.

Noting the positive climate for reform, Gross and associates seek to make sense of why the change failed to "take" at Cambire Elementary. Based on their study, they place the lion's share of the responsibility on the shoulders of the administration--especially the strategy for change employed by Williams:

The evidence gathered during the case study led us to conclude that the most plausible explanation for the conditions that blocked the implementation of the innovation could be located in two fundamental deficiencies in the strategy used by the director: (1) it failed to identify and bring into the open the various types of difficulties teachers were likely to encounter in their implementation attempts, and (2) it failed to establish and use feedback mechanisms to uncover the barriers that arose during the period of attempted implementation. (Gross, et al., 1971, pp. 193-194)

Elaborating on the reasons why the reform was never fully implemented, they highlighted five barriers to implementation:

- 1) the teachers' lack of clarity about the innovation;
- 2) their lack of the kinds of skills and knowledge needed to conform to the new role model;
- 3) the unavailability of required instructional materials

- 4) the incompatibility of organizational arrangements with the innovation; and
- 5) lack of staff motivation. (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 122)

The first four of these limitations were present when the innovation was introduced, but the fifth--lack of staff motivation--grew over time in response to teacher frustrations with the implementation efforts. Gross, et al. (1971) argue that the decrease in staff motivation was a product of "increasing disenchantment with the innovation and its sponsorship" (p. 189).

In large measure Gross, et al. place much of the blame for the innovation's failure on the shoulders of the administration, but Williams and Gault had a different take. They believed that the general outlines of the reform they provided were sufficient to encourage radical change, given a staff with requisite quality, imagination, and drive. The administrators seemed to assume that the innovation required teachers of particular sorts, a sort that was lacking at Cambire. Williams stated that " . . . I want . . . top teachers, not regular teachers who have to be dragged along . . . . What we have wanted is a bunch of really creative, innovative teachers and administrators who could eventually take this idea and make something out of it" (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 157). And, when asked, Gault doubted whether Cambire had the type of teachers this kind of innovation required:

. . . there was a kind of professional orientation which I didn't see in some of those people. I think you had to be bright, . . . dynamic, . . . well-read and interested, . . . imaginative! And it wasn't enough to say, what do you want me to do? This kind of a person doesn't belong in the innovative school. The kind of person needed is the one who makes things happen. (Gross, et al., 1971, p. 157)

Whether the teachers at Cambire during 1966-1967 had the "right stuff," Gross and associates claim this group had a lot to learn before they could implement the catalytic model.

Before most teachers at Cambire could conform to the new role model they needed to develop the skills and acquire the knowledge required to serve as a catalyst or guide to their pupils. They needed help from persons qualified to demonstrate what constituted effective performance in the new role and from individuals who could help them acquire the techniques and behavioral skills needed to conform to its specifications. Because the innovation was based on a set of assumptions about the nature of the child and the learning process different

from those held by most of the teachers, they not only needed to obtain new skills but also a set of new educational attitudes and values and new way of viewing the phenomenon of schooling. Nothing short of a complete program of teacher retraining was required. (Gross, et al., 1971, pp. 166-167)

Williams and Gault evidently didn't recognize the importance or necessity of this re-education. They did not provide it in any case.

### *Cambire and the Evangelical Principles*

In some respects, the reform at Cambire Elementary reflects some of the evangelical principles, but in others, the principles highlight weaknesses in the way the reform was supported and implemented. Because of the support of resources and the recruitment of new faculty to come together to form a new sort of schools, we see evidence of the ecclesial principle at work. Most of the teachers at the school were recruited to help Williams and Gault implement a new kind of school to meet the social and academic needs of their community. The teachers signed-on and committed themselves to the vision, even if the vision was limited in the details of what it would require of the teachers. On the whole, however, this reform seems to bear many of the marks of the ecclesial principle at work.

Because of the way that this school was formed, teachers were recruited. In that respect, we see that at the early stages of the formation of the school, the principle of human dignity and freedom of conscience was operative. Teachers were not coerced into remaking their school and their teaching, but they signed up willingly. In this respect, the reform honored their agency and their freedom to respond voluntarily to a call to change the way Cambire operated.

As time passed, however, teachers had concerns about the practical effects of moving toward the catalytic model of instruction, and the pace of the change was faster than many teachers would have preferred. In this respect, the teachers felt the effects of Williams' authority, when he stated that they would proceed with the implementation of the catalytic model before all the teachers were convinced and committed to the

particulars of the broad vision they had embraced. In these respects, this reform honored the freedom and dignity of the teachers in the abstract and at the start, but failed to sustain that commitment throughout the period of implementation.

On the whole, this implementation effort could have been improved had it taken seriously the concerns and reservations of teachers at the start and, even more, concerning the pace and process of implementation of the catalytic model as it unfolded. Had teachers been respected more concerning their doubts and uncertainties, their commitment to the reform may have increased over time rather than decreased. As it was, teachers felt that they were forced into making changes that no one, not even the visionary himself, understood. In that context, it would be hard for them to convince themselves that Williams or Gault respected them, their concerns, and their attempts at effecting the vision for teaching and learning Williams had offered for their embrace.

We can see elements of the creedal principle in this case. The teachers who were recruited to help work at this school were, at least in part, interested in the ideas that Mark Williams offered as a vision to help solve the problems of inner-city youth. The vision was ambitious, even if the particulars of how the teachers would enact that vision were left undefined. Teachers in the school seemed genuinely interested in remaking this school in a different mold, and had signed on to Williams' Cambire creed in the hopes of making a difference for their students and the broader society.

One of the central problems in the case of Cambire Elementary was the failure of the administrators to provide clear guidance to teachers about the meaning of the catalytic model and what it required of them in their classrooms. The reform changed structures and schedules and recommended that teachers work differently with their students based on a set of values that deviated from modal values in schools. However, the administrators failed to provide the sort of teaching and guidance that the teachers desired and needed to effect the changes well in their classrooms. Part of the problem seems to have been the lack of deep understanding of the reform on the part of the administrators themselves. In that respect, there was not simply a failure to teach, there was a failure on

the part of the teachers to know what it was they were hoping teachers would learn to do in their classrooms. That means that the knowledge-base and teaching office were both lacking in this case.

Not only was there a failure of guidance concerning the demands of the catalytic model, but the case reveals the manner of Williams' leadership. Basically, he recruited teachers to commit to a general vision of improvement, gave some broad outlines of the reform in November, then mandated that teachers effect the changes two months later. Teachers interpreted his latter memo as a mandate, and he seemed oblivious to the challenges and uncertainty that the teachers felt in the face of his vision for change. After resistance grew, Williams and his assistant argued that the problem was not their failure to lead and model the reform for the teachers but their inability, their failure of imagination, their unwillingness to experiment and carve out their own path toward the pedagogical Kingdom.

In light of the pastoral principle, it seems clear that Williams and Gault were not first of all concerned about those "sheep" they were leading. They were focused rather on the success of the catalytic model and for the positive effects they hoped would result for the inner-city kids they sought to serve. However, their failure to lead their teachers well, to model for them, to bring them along and give them instruction, guidance and support, was a conspicuous weakness in their reform efforts.

The two preceding paragraphs make it manifestly clear that the reform efforts at Cambire were woefully inadequate in light of the incarnation principle. No one, not even the author of the reform, seemed to have a clear idea of what the reform would actually look like in practice. A fortiori, there was no one who could model the practice for others to emulate. Teachers at Cambire struggled tremendously because of the lack of specification of the reform and no good models of what the reform should look like in practice.

Not surprisingly, the teachers who were involved at Cambire were less than enthusiastic about the reform they had been hired to enact. They would make poor

evangelists, if they would be willing to spread the "catalytic" word at all. For obvious reasons, this reform reveals little of the evangelical principle. It is true that Mark Williams was an evangelist for his vision, but those who signed on to effect that vision were frustrated in their attempts and not successful. As a result, it is no surprise that they would be reluctant to recommend the reform to other teachers.

### Coalition of Essential Schools

The second portrait of reform focuses on the Coalition of Essential Schools. That reform movement is the brain-child of one man, Ted Sizer, who is former dean of the Harvard School of Education, prep-school headmaster, and university professor. In those various capacities, he observed failed attempts to improve schooling and the compromises good teachers were often forced to make in schools. And he proposed a set of principles to help teachers, like his fictitious Horace, cope with the challenges of schools, and to provide a broad framework for designing schools that would more effectively cultivate intellectual life among both students and staff.

Sizer's movement focuses on the process and organization of schooling. It invites members of school communities to formulate plans for changing the way teaching and learning occur in their school in accordance with some basic principles. Ted Sizer offers what he calls nine Common Principles of Essential Schools. They contain a set of values intended to orient the activities in schools as well as the persons who spend time there:

1. *Focus.* The school should focus on helping adolescents learn to use their minds well . . .
2. *Simple goals.* The school's goals should be simple: that each student master a limited number of centrally important skills and areas of knowledge. While these skills and areas will, to varying degrees, reflect the traditional academic disciplines, the program's design should be shaped by the intellectual and imaginative powers and competencies that students need, rather than by "subjects" as conventionally defined . . . Curricular decisions should be guided by the aim of student mastery and achievement rather than by an effort to "cover content."
3. *Universal goals.* The school's goals should be universal, while the means to these goals will vary as the students themselves vary. School practice should be tailor-made to meet the needs of every group or class of adolescents.

4. *Personalization.* Teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent. Efforts should be directed toward a goal that no teacher have direct responsibility for more than eighty students . . .
5. *Student-as-worker.* The governing practical metaphor of the schools should be student-as-worker, rather than the more familiar teacher-as-deliverer-of instructional-services. Accordingly, a prominent pedagogy will be coaching, to provoke students to learn how to learn, and thus to teach themselves.
6. *Diploma by exhibition.* Students entering secondary school studies are those who are committed to the school's purposes and who can show competence in language, elementary mathematics, and basic civics. Students of traditional high school age who are not yet at appropriate levels of competence . . . will be provided intensive remedial work . . . . As the diploma is awarded when earned, the school's program proceeds with no strict age-grading and with no system of "credits earned" by "time spent" in class.
7. *Attitude.* The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation ("I won't threaten you but I expect much of you"), of trust (until abused), and of decency (the values of fairness, generosity, and tolerance). Incentives appropriate to the school's particular students and teachers should be emphasized, and parents should be treated as essential collaborators.
8. *Staff.* The principal and teachers should perceive themselves as generalists first (teachers and scholars in general education) and specialists second (experts in only one particular discipline). Staff should expect multiple obligations (teacher-counselor-manager) and feel a sense of commitment to the entire school.
9. *Budget.* Ultimate administrative and budget targets should include, in addition to total student loads per teacher of eighty or fewer pupils, substantial time for collective planning by teachers, competitive salaries for staff, and an ultimate per pupil cost not to exceed that at traditional schools by more than 10 percent . . . (Sizer, 1992, pp. 225-227)

Sizer did not claim novelty for the list of nine principles he articulated, noting that it's "incredibly old-fashioned" and "very familiar, " but that "doesn't mean it's easy" (Quoted in Muncey & McQuillan, 1993, p. 400). Sizer's vision for schools called for all of the Nine Principles to be implemented because he argued they interact and have mutually reinforcing elements. To apply a few of the principles here or there wouldn't make for the substantial change he sought to effect. Though more difficult, all of the principles needed to be enacted, Sizer claimed, because "[p]iecemeal reform is no reform" (Sizer, 1992, p. 227).

Muncey & McQuillan (1993) use Anthony Wallace's (1956) study of "revitalization movements" as a theoretical frame to make sense of the development of

the Essential Schools movement.<sup>76</sup> In their study, they show how the "code" or belief system was developed, disseminated, contested, and changed over time. The Coalition's Nine Common Principles represent its "code," which was promulgated bySizer and others who embraced the code for themselves through a diversity of means:

. . . summer workshops, regional symposia, newsletters, education articles, correspondence with school personnel, video teleconferences, and school visits, to note the more popular forums. (Muncey & McQuillan, 1993, pp. 402-403)

In Wallace's terms, Sizer, who was the principal author and spokesman for the reform ideas of the Coalition, fills the role of the "charismatic leader" who advocates a vision for an alternative future for society.

Muncey & McQuillan (1993) find Sizer's rhetoric of reform consistent with the rhetoric of revitalization movements. Revitalization rhetoric offers "spiritual salvation for the individual and . . . cultural salvation for the society" (Quoted in Muncey & McQuillan, 1993, p. 403). Sizer offers a vision of educational success for all students and resultant benefits for all of society. Wallace says that the "[r]efusal to accept the code . . . is usually defined as placing the listener in immediate . . . peril with respect to his existing values" (Quoted in Muncey & McQuillan, p. 403). And Sizer offers those kinds of warnings in speeches like this one:

We have too many young people in this country who cannot use their minds well . . . They lack the kind of thoughtful judgment that is essential in a democracy, that is essential in any kind of economic enterprise, which is essential in any kind of healthy community . . . Give us a society of thinking citizens and we will have an effective, free, and decent society . . . A democracy cannot function without

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<sup>76</sup> Wallace defines a revitalization movement as "a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture" (Wallace, 1956, p. 265). The "revitalization movement" is a part of a "processual structure" of society. He divides the structure of revitalization into "five somewhat overlapping stages: 1. Steady State; 2. Period of Individual Stress; 3. Period of Cultural Distortion; 4. Period of Revitalization; and finally, 5. New Steady State" (Wallace, 1956, p. 268). He breaks down the period of revitalization into six major stages or tasks: 1. Mazeway reformulation (he defines "mazeway" as a mental image of society); 2. Communication, which includes the process of "preaching" and "evangelism"; 3. Organization is the stage where converts are made, and the personnel are divided into three classes: prophet, disciples, and followers; 4. Adaptation, which sees modification of the code to respond to critics; 5. Cultural Transformation, when the prophet's view of the culture receives widespread embrace; and 6. Routinization, at which time, the organization "contracts and maintains responsibility only for the preservation of doctrine and the performance of ritual (i.e., it becomes a church) . . ." (Wallace, 1956, pp. 270-275).

kids who use their minds well. (Quoted in Muncey & McQuillan, p. 403)

Sizer sounded the alarm about the consequences of the failure of students to think well enough to sustain our democracy, and he placed much of the blame on schools:

Take the schedule of a typical school: six-period day, seven-period day, even eight-period day . . . . The subject is changed every hour . . . . What this does . . . is breed intellectual confusion and, because of the short snippets of time, superficiality . . . (quoted in Muncey & McQuillan, p. 404)

After listing various other problems, like the lack of interconnections between subject matter areas and the flawed assumption that all students learn at the same pace, Sizer offers his solution, which is articulated in the Nine Common Principles.

Beyond the formulation of principles, Sizer and the Coalition were strategic in advancing their agenda. Sizer employed staff who took charge of public relations, talked with reporters who visited Brown University, "encouraging them to realize that what they saw in coalition schools was the initial planning for or experimentation with change, not the final product" (p. 406). They strove to protect the members of the nascent reform movement from "premature evaluation that might discourage further experimentation . . . " (p. 406). The central staff members helped disseminate the ideas and protect the movement from criticism during the initial stages.

Wallace argues that prophets of revitalization movements are often forced to respond to criticisms of their code. At first, the "charismatic leader" puts forth a code as "unquestioned doctrine," but in light of criticism, the code is "modified by the prophet, who responds to various criticisms and affirmations by adding to, emphasizing, playing down, and eliminating selected elements of the original visions" (Wallace, cited in Muncey & McQuillan, p. 408).

This occurred in the Coalition case, and we find Sizer's response to the criticism in the Afterword of the second edition of his (1992) *Horace's Compromise*. Sizer included the criticism and responses he hoped would mitigate concerns and help persuade skeptics that the Nine Principles held promise for real reform in schools. Among the criticisms were the vagueness of the Nine Principles, the lack of clear standards,

uncertainty about curricular offerings implied by coalition principles, and the feasibility of the 80-to-1 total students-teacher ratio. The *Afterword* is written in the form of a fictitious dialogue that concludes with his interlocutor lamenting: "But no one cares" (Sizer, 1992, p. 236). Sizer admits that many don't care, but some do. And more can be convinced to care:

Perhaps the country is as docile as many of its children . . . . And perhaps Americans don't want question-askers, people who want answers. Perhaps, in sum, the unchallenging mindlessness of so much of the status quo is truly acceptable: it doesn't make waves.

But perhaps we--all of us--are better than that. That is the belief of those of us in the Coalition. Our new project, guided by that belief, tries to make an essential intellectual education joyful and accessible to all. (Sizer, 1992, p. 237)

That's the way Sizer concludes his book--answering skepticism and apathy with hope for a different, better future. He asks Americans to believe in themselves, their kids, and their schools again. And he offers the Coalition's Principles as a guide to changes that promise improvements for schools, the kids who learn there, and society as a whole.

Wallace (1956) argues that the goal of revitalization movements is "cultural transformation," which implies a widespread embrace of a new ideology. Muncey & McQuillan (1993) see no basis for concluding that a cultural transformation has occurred as a result of the Coalition, but they do offer several examples of teachers who have experienced revitalizations. For example, one math-science teacher who had been teaching for 25 years described his experience this way:

You get into that rut and you can't get out of it . . . . I went to the Milton workshop sort of indifferent . . . . About half way through that workshop, I changed almost overnight. I said, "Hey, I got the idea now. I know what is going on here." One word turned me on and that was "engagement." I don't know why particularly . . . . I saw an entirely different approach to what I traditionally was using, a lecture approach. And I saw my kids . . . . They were good students . . . . But they didn't learn . . . in a lecture format . . . . And that developed a frustration with me where I saw these kids had to be engaged to learn it . . . . And that was my significant change . . . (Muncey & McQuillan, 1993, pp. 411-412)

Some teachers like this one experienced what they describe as radical changes in their teaching, and these teachers seem ready to attribute their changes to involvement with Essential Schools reforms. However, in terms of Wallace's framework, and the goal of "cultural transformation," it is unclear how the Essential School Movement fits. Sizer

seems to fit Wallace's description of the charismatic leader, casting a vision for change. But the coalition does not explicitly advocate a solitary vision of change. Instead, it explicitly encourages teacher empowerment and contextual interpretation of the coalition philosophy.

### *Constructivist Tensions in Reform*

Though it may be difficult (or impossible) to divine "the Coalition vision," because of the Coalition's commitment to local interpretation, the leaders of the coalition are not unconcerned about local interpretations and the ways the Coalition philosophy and principles are being applied. Coalition leaders advocate a set of values and beliefs that they believe can make a difference for teachers and their students in schools. It is true that some of those beliefs involve empowering teachers to engage in making change in schools, and contributing to local sense-making about what might serve students best. But while Coalition leaders encourage teachers to help determine how the Common Principles should be applied in their schools, they also hold a commitment to philosophical fidelity to coalition ideas. As a result, the Essential Schools Reform exhibits a fundamental tension between fidelity to the Coalition vision for reform and the priority those principles place on teacher voice and local adaptation of Coalition principles.

For example, take discussions about professional development opportunities sponsored by the Coalition around the country during the 1987-1988 school year. The Coalition staff was reluctant to defer to local planning teams' ideas about the agenda and their suggestions for symposia presenters. The reason? The Coalition staff "felt their concern with philosophical consistency took precedence over the interests of local organizers . . ." (Muncey & McQuillan, 1993, pp. 414-415). The concern for philosophical fidelity was strongest concerning Coalition-sponsored events, like these symposia. In other contexts, such as decisions at site-levels, there was less press for philosophical consistency and standardization.

That is not to say that leaders were unconcerned with how school site teams interpreted the philosophy and applied the coalition principles. They were. For example, in 1988 the director of research for the coalition described the tension between local interpretations and commitment to the Coalition vision as a dilemma:

It's a real dilemma because . . . the project is about local control and local interpretation of the nine Common Principles. But, the question inevitably arises . . . [T]o what extent does the Coalition exert a quality control on its members? . . . And the answer is a little complicated. In theory, and for the most part in practice, we don't judge . . . . But it would be wrong if I said we didn't worry about it . . . . (Muncey & McQuillan, 1993, p. 419)

These examples do not merely reveal tensions between the commitments that the coalition holds. They display challenges local schools face because they are part of a larger organization. Wallace describes this as part of the "organization" stage. He argues that the organizational stage occurs when followers are divided into three tiers: prophet, disciples, and followers. These disciples, as pointed out above, work to support the growth of the movement and spread the word more widely, and they do so by standardization of procedures and by defending the doctrine.

One way that this standardization occurs is through what Wallace (1966), after Weber (1946), calls "routinization," which is the period when the organization shifts "from the role of innovation to the role of maintenance" (quoted in Muncey & McQuillan, 1993, p. 412).

Charismatic rule is not managed according to general norms, either traditional or rational, but, in principle, according to concrete revelations and inspirations, and in this sense, charismatic authority is "irrational." It is "revolutionary" in the sense of not being bound to the existing order: "It is written--but I say unto you . . . !" (Weber, 1946, p. 296)

Following Weber, Wallace describes what he calls the "routinization of charisma." The establishment of bureaucratic structures provides means for the movement to continue even after the charismatic leader dies. And this is what we might expect. The charismatic leader is, by definition, extraordinary. Weber muses about the effects of the charismatic leader:

. . .the magnetism of their perfections tells powerfully upon their contemporaries. An enthusiasm is kindled, a group of adherents is formed, and many are

emancipated from the moral condition of their age. . . (Weber, 1946, p. 53)

The charismatic leader is able to motivate and gain adherents to his social vision or "code." In this way, charisma is personal, local, and intensive. It works because of characteristics of persons, both leader and followers. We see it in the case of Ted Sizer and the Coalition.

This shift from charismatic authority to more bureaucratic authority may, in fact, be inevitable. As Weber (1946) notes, charismatic authority is unstable: "It is the fate of charisma, whenever it comes into the permanent institutions of a community, to give way to powers of tradition or of rational socialization" (p. 253). However, if movements are to grow and be sustained over time, they must become disciplined, must establish bureaucratic structures to spread power and authority. This discipline and its ally bureaucracy are impersonal but have extensive effects. To expand power and influence over greater areas, discipline and the dispersed power of a hierarchical organization is essential. This is the case, Weber (1946) argues, even for charismatic leaders. This analysis fits the Coalition case.

But if the shift is "inevitable," it isn't necessarily easy or desirable. Muncey & McQuillan (1993a) observed how the coalition became increasingly hierarchical and retreated from vesting all power in Sizer. They note that this distribution of power to the organization was an uneasy one. Many still believed that Sizer should be making most of the decisions, as the "prophet." Their uneasiness illustrated why a shift from charismatic to bureaucratic authority has costs as well as benefits. ". . . for many early member schools coalition reform had a face and a personality. And this personal contact with coalition staff--epitomized by Sizer's relationships and style--fostered energy, inspiration, and commitment among coalition teachers . . ." (Muncey & McQuillan, 1993a, p. 417).

Structures were put into place to expand the movement and establish standards of accountability, and the personal gave way to the impersonal. The shift from charismatic to bureaucratic authority was a response to the Coalition's burden to spread the word widely, to get more schools involved, and to maintain some quality control, but in the

process the "constructivist" feel of the reform was weakened in the process.

### *Becoming an Essential Junior High*

As one example of how the Coalition reform was adopted in a school, we will review Prestine's (1993) case of Broadmoor Junior High. She presents Broadmoor Junior High as a success story for the coalition. She reports that Broadmoor was constructed as an "open school" in the mid-70s. At that time, the faculty was recruited to the school to "do something different" educationally. Roughly a third of the original staff members were still there twenty years later. She reports that the school never realized the vision of "open schools," nor capitalized on the building's construction, and describes a "slow drift into a traditional departmentalized junior high format . . ." (Prestine, 1993, p. 35), with makeshift walls dividing classes.

During the 1988-1989 school year, the school was recruited to become a part of a set of 10 charter Essential Schools by the Illinois Alliance of Essential Schools, a state-level initiative connected to the Re:Learning Project (affiliated with Brown University and Sizer). Over a five month period, following the guidelines set by the Alliance, the vast majority of faculty committed themselves to change:

. . . all constituencies within the school demonstrated an informed interest in, understanding of, and commitment to essential schools restructuring, including a school staff vote of greater than 75% approval, local school board and teacher union recognition and approval, and district budgetary commitment of local resources. (Prestine, 1993, pp. 35-36)

Toward the end of that school year, the school received additional funds from the Alliance to put into place a "new governance structure to oversee the planned 5-year restructuring process" (Prestine, 1993, p. 36). The "Alliance Planning Committee" (APC), as this group was called, was charged with charting the course of change over a five year period. All of these organizational changes were made in accordance with the change policies of the Alliance. The APC included teacher, administration, and school board representatives, parents and an Alliance-sponsored external change facilitator, or "coach." Three teachers who served on this committee had leadership responsibilities on

the APC.

1989-90 was to be a planning year for all Alliance schools, and in July, four teachers, the principal, and superintendent attended a summer institute sponsored by the Coalition ". . . to learn more about both Essential Schools and the process of bringing about change" (Prestine, 1993, p. 37). The planning year was designed to establish a pilot program for the following year. In the process of planning, however, the staff recognized that they needed to understand how they got to where they were before they could chart a course for their future:

First, there was a perceived need to develop a common understanding of the underlying beliefs that had shaped the school into its current form . . . . Second, [they] began to work on a restatement of the Common Principles, as interpreted in the Broadmoor context, to develop a shared understanding of these fundamental beliefs. (Prestine, 1993, pp. 37-38)

They laid out a plan in which the school would be divided into three "houses," with one of the houses "committed to implementing essential schools principles more fully than the other two" (p. 38). They also had a school-wide focus, which was to implement three of the common principles: student-as-worker, simple goals, and intellectual focus. The other six principles would be added over the next two years.

To prepare for changes in the fall, they attended planning sessions and workshops during the summer of 1990. Another group of teachers and administrators were sent out to Brown for the summer institute. And, to gear up for the new year, a final planning session for the year was set for August 6. During the summer, however, the principal, assistant principal, and APC coordinator, "for a variety of reasons, resigned and left the school" (Prestine, 1993, p. 38). Because the new principal was the Alliance "coach," the reform efforts at the school were not entirely derailed.

That first year, Broadmoor Junior High encountered several major problems. Chief among them was the lack of common planning times and problems of arranging three different houses. Moreover, they had to fight perceptions of inequity and favoritism between the three houses. Teachers, students, and parents were concerned about the inequities of teacher and student assignments. As a result it was " . . . a year of endless

infighting, bickering, and bad feelings" (Prestine, 1993, p. 40). An additional difficulty stemmed from the decision to focus school-wide change on just three of the common principles. That didn't work, because the three principles they chose to focus on were dependent upon other organizational changes.

Instead of abandoning the reform effort because of the challenges they encountered, Broadmoor persisted in the process of change. The difficulties they faced spurred them to reconsider their ideas and their commitment to restructuring.

This forced self-appraisal in light of the near-catastrophic experiences encountered during the year and provided invaluable lessons that pointed in new directions for Broadmoor's understanding of essential schools restructuring . . . . This year was Broadmoor's trial by fire, its crucible--as its commitment to and belief in the essential schools restructuring efforts were buffeted and battered by continual waves of problems and difficulties. (Prestine, 1993, pp. 40-41)

Leaders at the school had viewed the dissatisfaction and frustration of teachers over the year as productive of further and fuller understandings of the change process. The voices of concern and complaint were funneled into improved plans for restructuring. In fact, the principal saw the resistance as very valuable to the process of reform:

The day-to-day resistance of the teachers was absolutely necessary. It was very fortunate that it happened and tension was maintained. Otherwise people would say that this isn't so bad and be less willing to change things. (Prestine, 1993, p. 41)

This resistance led to changes in their five year plan. The planning group also identified three areas requiring renewed attention in their move toward becoming an Essential School: "organization and governance," "curriculum," and "assessment and pedagogy." This last category included "those factors that reflect the science, craft, and art of teaching in ways that help students learn to use their minds well" (Prestine, 1993, p. 42). The planning group outlined a five year plan in which each of the categories would ". . . progress through six active stages: investigate, develop, plan, implement, revise, and perfect" (Prestine, 1993, p. 42). Though they laid out when each of these stages should occur, they acknowledged that the process was evolutionary and not apt to follow their agenda.

Based on their experiences from the previous year, one clear need was a change in

the schedule for teachers and students. Early on in the troubled year, the APC had the entire faculty engage in discussions about the revised schedule.<sup>77</sup> A subgroup of teachers even went to the Coalition's Fall Forum in early November 1990 to get advice from "scheduling experts" (Prestine, 1993, p. 44). The team came up with a schedule, offered it to the staff for feedback, and eventually put the revised schedule in place.

The APC, committed to the Coalition belief that "less is more," had each team work to "coordinate language arts with the other subject areas. In this way as in others, teachers in each team [found], in their own way and at their own pace, means of working as generalists as they share[d] in a variety of cross-disciplinary projects" (Prestine, 1993, p. 47). The revised schedule and the inclusion of all teachers in the governance of the school spilled over to other aspects of life at Broadmoor, and, as in this example, involved all teachers in the development of revised interdisciplinary curricula.

Teachers responded positively to these changes. They liked the control they had over their schedules. One reported that "we own the schedule . . . . [It] gives teachers value. We're treated with respect," and another saying "I have never been more excited about my profession than I am now" (Prestine, 1993, p. 47). Prestine interprets the different attitudes of teachers as signs of ownership of the changes that occurred the second year of the Essential Schools restructuring at Broadmoor. Teachers were making decisions, and the decisions they made were for major changes in organization and instruction.

Parents liked the new schedule as well, and noted changes in the teachers' heightened enthusiasm. Not surprisingly, the administrators were also happy, because they saw a higher level of dedication developing in their teachers. Prestine even claims that students liked the changes, a finding she based on improved suspension rates for

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<sup>77</sup> Prestine provides a set of reasons for the failure of Broadmoor's revised schedule from the prior year. The teachers were functioning largely without administrative oversight because of the departure of key players in the summer of 1990. They also never tested out their plan for practicality until it was too late.

students. In short, all the constituencies at the school seemed satisfied with the changes that were being made at Broadmoor.

Echoing Fullan's (1991) discussion of the subjective meaning of educational change, Prestine says the most salient factors for change at Broadmoor centered on understanding. For that reason, she argues that simply exporting Broadmoor's experience won't quite work, because the "products" of this reform include the subjective understandings of the practitioners who experienced the reform. The "product," if there is one, is personal change. Even so, Prestine believes lessons learned at Broadmoor can inform reform at other schools. But, ultimately, each school has its own history, and will have to forge its own path toward change:

Unlike the experience of Saul on the road to Damascus, however, miraculous conversions into insightful understanding should not be expected. Schools' past histories, understandings, and beliefs will not be effortlessly eradicated, nor will recalcitrant teachers be magically transformed into malleable material, nor will obdurate administrators suddenly be enlightened into wisdom. The process of essential schools restructuring must be understood as one that will be long, difficult, and painful and one in which each school must, to a large extent, find its own way. (Prestine, 1993, p. 60)

As Prestine notes, the experience of reform at each school that embraces the Coalition principles will differ according to the contextual factors, personalities, and needs of individual schools. Reports of other Coalition Schools reveals that some schools are not able to "find their own way." For example, Cohen (1994) describes the painful process of one school seeking to adapt Coalition principles to a high school through the introduction of a new interdisciplinary curriculum. This was a school in which the teachers had embraced the curriculum, the administrators were supportive, and where college faculty collaborated with teachers in their attempts.

At the start of this enterprise, none of us could have predicted that personality issues would so dominate and inhibit our work. Power struggles--among group members, between high school and college faculty, and between members and other teachers in the school--were a habitual preoccupation . . . . Ultimately we came to accept that for every hour of constructive work, we would need an hour of "therapy"--or what we came to call "debriefing." (Cohen, 1994, p. 160)

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This case seems important in part because teachers were willing to stick with the restructuring reform and invest in revising the schedule the next year.

Muncey (1994) claims that this particular school didn't take full advantage of resources before they started. There was more to read, and she imagines that "this school probably needed a lot more conversation before it began to implement a program, pilot or otherwise. Most of what Cohen provides is documentation of a well-intentioned group of people who are heading for disaster" (Muncey, 1994, p. 168). The sober lesson in this case is that desire, good ideas, and collaboration are insufficient to ensure successful reform.

Without good planning and ongoing conversations about the challenges and lessons of reform along the way, reform efforts can alienate those they seek to help and those who are necessary for the success of the reform. In some schools, teachers were effectively inoculated from interest in major change. "The unfortunate end result is that more than half of the core group of teachers who had been interested in trying something different are no longer interested in participating in the change work" (Muncey, 1994, p. 172).

One factor in the widely divergent experiences with the Coalition documented by Muncey & McQuillan (1993b) is the process-orientation of the reform itself. "The Common Principles that undergird this reform are general by design; each member school is to interpret the principles within its own cultural and institutional context" (Muncey & McQuillan, 1993b, p. 487). Coalition provides general guiding principles but does not tightly specify for schools what those principles could or should look like in their particular school context. This allows broader participation on the part of faculty and administration of what will be reformed and how reform will be carried out, but the freedom it allows is matched by a parallel decrease in specification and guidance toward their chosen ends. The changes they choose to make may entail as many challenges and create as many hurdles, pedagogically and inter-personally, as they eliminate.

Among the early findings from their study of eight charter Coalition members, Muncey & McQuillan (1993b) noted that "In most schools there was not a consensus that

fundamental changes in school structure or teaching practices needed to occur" (p. 487) In addition, they found that "At most schools, a core of faculty members became active in their school's reform, but their efforts often ended up dividing the faculty" (Muncey & McQuillan, 1993b, p. 488). Participants were given special release time as well as opportunities to attend professional development sessions. Administrators hoped that their example would "demonstrate the effectiveness of Coalition philosophy for other faculty members and so promote beneficial changes throughout the school" (Muncey & McQuillan, 1993b, p. 488). Instead of "converting other teachers to the cause, the support and public recognition given to the reformers often caused resentment" (Muncey & McQuillan, 1993b, p. 488).

Teachers who were not a part of Coalition efforts in some schools grew increasingly opposed to the privileges afforded to participating faculty and on some occasions worked to scuttle the Coalition efforts at their schools. Because of the press of time, reforming teachers were often most concerned about effecting change in their own classrooms, and "did not make it a priority to convince their skeptical colleagues of their program's merits" (Muncey & McQuillan, 1993b, p. 488). Reform efforts were occasionally compromised because feelings among non-participants that "Coalition practice and rhetoric were implicitly critical of conventional teaching exacerbated intra-faculty divisions and, in time, increased resistance to reform and solidified commitment to current practices" (Muncey & McQuillan, 1993b, p. 488).

In his review of Muncey & McQuillan's (1996) book, Cusick (1997) highlights many of the challenges teachers in Coalition schools faced: teaching in constructivist ways is tough because teachers and students expect more traditional instruction; students had difficulty envisioning multi-disciplinary instruction (and evaluation--would they get multiple grades or just one?). Reformers also faced the hurdles of how to deal with established norms of how schools work, and how to reconcile restructuring and different assignments with the regnant status-hierarchies of teachers in schools and districts. Non-Coalition teachers in schools that adopted the "school-within-a-school" model

complained that Coalition teachers were favored with the best students, most resources, and extra planning time. This was especially troubling when new recruits to schools were granted the "best classes." They hadn't "waited their turn" in the system, and were rewarded with plum placements. Political problems such as these derailed efforts in several of the schools Muncey & McQuillan (1996) studied.

Cusick (1997) notes that the success stories for the Coalition reveal the importance of the principal, and of the climate for reform in each site. Each of the schools where the Coalition reforms "worked" had strong principals who cast a vision for change. One started a school in line with Coalition Principles, and protected the school "from the larger bureaucracy, where the faculty--like the principal and the parents-- [were] committed to the program and the students [were] brought into the discourse about their own learning" (Cusick, 1997, p. 219). The principal saw a need for a secondary school that continued to challenge students in ways that they had been challenged in earlier grades at a Coalition school. The school was designed with Coalition principles in mind, so the resistance of current practitioners was mitigated if not eliminated and local norms were yet to be established. Another successful effort was brought about by a principal who "combined Coalition ideas with his sound political instincts and a school unsuccessful enough to offer fertile ground for reform" (Cusick, 1997, p. 219). The struggles this school faced--of high drop-out rates, failing teachers, and dissatisfied staff--created a ready audience for new ideas and forms of schooling.

Coalition efforts did not fail in classrooms or in relationships between teachers and students; they failed when they were overwhelmed by faculty insecurity, which was in turn brought about by an elective curriculum and subsequent competition for students and resources. So, not only doSizer's ideas work, but when they fail, they do so for all the reasons Horace compromised his teaching. Schools are too big, too bureaucratic; no one is in charge, and matters of importance (like students' learning) are allowed to go unaddressed while the faculty argues about its specialties, its prerogatives. Politics overwhelms reform. (Cusick, 1997, p. 220)

In the sites where Coalition reforms were more successful, communities of teachers, parents, and students cooperated in the effort to change teaching and learning to focus on academic achievement first and foremost. In two of the schools, there was a felt

need for change. Remedy was sought to what seemed crises to the two principals. For one, lack of a satisfactory secondary school; for the other, it was a recognition by the principal of institutional decay. They each needed an answer, a way to proceed. The Coalition provided some guidance, some good news, and support in the process.

### *The Coalition and the Evangelical Principles*

Ted Sizer's vision for change was school-based. He established a coalition of *schools*, rather than an association of teachers who were interested in improving their teaching. The reform is centered around what faculties and administration can do to remake teaching and learning in schools, and, as such, this reform reflects the ecclesial principle of reform. Cusick (1997) says of Sizer that he was "an astute and committed reformer [with] a serious set of ideas; a combination the education world does not see every day" (p. 213). And he found "a ready market consisting of teachers and administrators who were discouraged by what they saw around them and/or had their own ideas and needed help in articulating them" (Cusick, 1997, pp. 213-214).

All Coalition schools voluntarily pursue affiliation with the Coalition of Essential Schools. In that way, the reform is consistent with the ecclesial principle. Teachers are called (or call themselves) to participate in forming (or reforming) a new community of teaching and learning. In practice, however, not every teacher in Coalition schools is a willing participant in Coalition reforms. In fact, faculty members in Coalition schools are often unconvinced that fundamental changes in organization and/or teaching practice are necessary (Muncey & McQuillan, 1996). Even though some teachers are reluctant or resistant to Coalition efforts, the overall stance of Essential Schools is to get schools to participate on a voluntary basis in reforming teaching and learning in their schools. In that respect, the Essential Schools movement is (at least in spirit) consistent with the ecclesial principle.

It is well to note that the Coalition schools that were most successful in effecting change were schools that were formed with an explicit commitment to Coalition

principles and/or were agreed that there were weaknesses and problems in their schools to which Coalition principles were a good solution. The success of the schools that were formed from faculty members who were personally and explicitly committed to the vision of the school leader and the Coalition principles underscores the importance of the ecclesial principle for successful reform.

The Coalition invites schools to ally themselves with other schools in a process of remaking teaching and learning in schools that accord with the nine Common Principles. In this respect, the Coalition seems to honor the principle of human dignity and their freedom of conscience. The approach of the Coalition from the start has been based on appeals to the pedagogical and moral consciences and consciousness of teachers, administrators, parents, and students. Their approach of appeal and of proposing change, rather than imposing it, show that leaders of the Coalition respect the dignity of all persons in the school, and the freedom of individuals to respond as they will to calls for change. Sizer's appeals to teachers, administrators, parents, and citizens stem from a desire to awaken in them a commitment to quality teaching and learning. His rhetoric is aimed at winning a commitment to a vision of ambitious teaching and learning for the sake of the students and the future of the American democratic state.

Among studies of Coalition reform efforts, observers have noted the political problems that arose between faculty members in schools. These problems were pronounced in schools that adopted "school-within-a-school" approaches to implementation. We have noted the equity concerns that were raised by non-participants--concerns that Coalition teachers got the best students, the best assignments, more release time, more resources and professional development, and the like.

These problems show that the principle of human dignity was not fully honored, even if schools respected the freedom of teachers' conscience to not participate in the Coalition experiment. Teachers were not coerced into participating in Coalition reforms in many of these schools, even though there were "sanctions" or at least consequences of their non-participation. They did not have the same access to professional development

of their choice, the same amount of release time, or protection from traditional seniority and transfer policies.

Even those teachers who signed on after the initial planning of the Coalition programs at particular schools were rarely given the same amount of release time for planning how to change their curriculum and instruction as those who were participating teachers from the start. In these two respects, the way Coalition reforms have been applied in many schools, the principle of human dignity (read: justice) has been, at best, only partially honored. The lack of respect that non-participating teachers felt from reforming teachers sometimes even led to a rebellion against the Coalition program as a whole.

Of all the evangelical principles, the one that the Coalition seems most clearly to honor is that of the creedal principle. The nine Common Principles promote a set of values and commitments that are "creedal" in form and invite a response of faith on the part of teachers, administrators, parents, and citizens alike. They communicate a foundational set of principles upon which teachers and administrators are invited to build a program for teaching and learning in their schools.

We have already noted the potential problems associated with the way schools align themselves with the Coalition and its Common Principles. Some teachers may be eager and willing to embrace them, but others may be less willing to eagerly embrace the nine Principles as their own, to assert their "credo" in response. Moreover, as is the case with many creeds, the nine Principles articulate fundamental beliefs, but the implications and applications of those guiding beliefs are not always obvious. So, a major challenge for the Coalition has been figuring out how to respect personal (and school-level) interpretations of the Principles while also ensuring that "coalition schools" have what might be called "orthodox" understandings of the Common Principles.

Intimately connected with the creedal principle is that of the magisterial principle. In fact, the challenges of competing interpretations and judgments about what interpretations of the principles fall outside the range of "orthodox" views of the

principles points out the importance of the magisterial principle for the Essential Schools movement. Questions about how the Principles should be applied in particular contexts are "magisterial" questions. In other words, questions of how to apply the principles create a need for someone, perhaps "keepers of the Common Principles" (whomever they may be) to pronounce on issues of interpretation, to provide guidance about what actions and practices are consistent with the Common Principles and which are not.

Because the Coalition's principles are rather general, there may be a greater need for a magisterial role than there would have been had the guidance of the Essential Schools movement been more tightly specified. The generality of the principles invites broad participation and provides wide-latitude for interpretation of what changes are consistent with Coalition principles. As was evident in the case Cohen (1994) describes, some faculties and staffs have struggles that could be helped by guidance from some authoritative body of interpreters. This "magisterial" office could serve for purposes of consultation and perhaps even evaluation of their plans for changes in response to Coalition principles.

Muncey & McQuillan (1993a) offer insight into the way that the Coalition has worked to honor the principle of social-construction of the mission and vision for each individual school while at the same time attempting to assure continuity among Essential Schools. One strong aspect of the Coalition philosophy is active participation of faculty, staff, and other vested interests in discussions and plans about ways to improve teaching and learning in schools. To a certain degree, the Coalition has exercised its magisterial role by articulating ways that the nine Common Principles should be interpreted as well as granting adaptation to the need of particular cultural needs. In this way, the "common faith" of the Coalition become "inculturated" in the particular contexts of individual schools. The Coalition seems committed to its principles and to the "proper" interpretation of those principles, but without mandating a very narrow interpretation for all member schools.

The Coalition and Ted Sizer can hardly be separated, for he is the Coalition's

"charismatic leader," its prophet, its shepherd. In 1984, he offered what proved to be a very timely vision for improving the teaching and learning in schools (Cusick, 1997). And he committed himself to working with teachers, administrators and other educational policymakers. He is not simply a prophet crying in the wilderness, calling persons to repent and change the way schools are structured and children are taught. His message is one of change, but his exhortations are designed to win the conversion of the hearts, minds, and lives of his hearers, so that they will work to effect changes in schools that will square with their own (and his) visions of what it means to successfully help all children learn.

In that respect,Sizer serves as both encourager and exhorter to his hearers. In his texts and speeches, he purposes to support teachers and administrators to help them grow and support them in their attempts to change their beliefs and practices in their schools and classrooms. Sizer and his organization make the resources of the Coalition available to those who are interested in making changes, and he often speaks encouraging words in publications and in his remarks at Coalition conferences. Those efforts provide evidence of a pastoral commitment on Sizer's part.

Of course, the Coalition is not limited to the leadership and support of Ted Sizer. At various levels, down to the local school, leaders have been important to the Coalition reform efforts. Some local school leaders have successfully served their faculty, staff, and students in pastoral ways, but others have been less effective in sensing and meeting the needs of the adults and students in their schools.

Some administrators get ahead of faculty members, pushing them to change in ways that seem coercive. A stance of coercion violates the principle of human dignity as well as the pastoral principle, because a good pastor will always take into account the needs and dispositions of his "flock." In circumstances where the principle or administrator is "too far out front," the faculty and staff may feel either abandoned or alienated from the process of change and the teaching and learning that the leader is attempting to cultivate at the school. In several schools, when these reforming principals

left the school, the Coalition reforms were curtailed or abandoned.

However, in the most successful cases of Coalition reform, leaders were instrumental to the effectiveness of the process of reform. For example, at Broadmoor, the leaders helped navigate the difficult waters of implementation and to help those naysayers and critics tolerate and even support the reform efforts of the planning team. Leaders in some Coalition schools were attentive to the concerns and questions of resistant faculty members, and they sought to find ways to convince them of the value of Coalition principles and of changing the organization of schooling and the way teaching and learning would occur in classrooms.

Effective Essential School principals kept their vision before their faculty and were also attentive to where their faculty members were and where they were prepared to go. The successful Coalition schools feature leaders of vision and sensitivity, the sorts of characteristics one would expect to find where the pastoral principle was firmly in place. The Coalition honors the pastoral principle in theory, and those schools where the principle is honored in practice were the places that saw successful attempts at reform.

Clearly, the Coalition of Essential Schools is committed to helping schools effect change. To that end, the Coalition is committed to providing more than merely narrative descriptions of what the Common Principles look like in practice. There are many Essential Schools where the faculty and staff of prospective Essential Schools could go to see this "other kind of school structure" at work. Furthermore, many resources are available for prospective Essential Schools to evaluate as they contemplate becoming an Essential School. Moreover, in the process of planning and throughout the beginning stages of becoming an Essential School, conferences, newsletters, magazines, and consultants are available as witnesses of what it means to be an Essential School and what it takes to teach in such a school. In these ways, the Coalition is consistent with the incarnation principle.

Much of what the Coalition is doing to advance educational reform in schools is consistent with the evangelical principle. From Ted Sizer on down, advocates of the

Coalition and of the Essential Schools reform are committed to getting out the word.Sizer is clearly a charismatic leader. He calls teachers, students, parents, and citizens alike to take seriously the work of educating our students for the future. As such, he could be considered the chief evangelist of the Coalition. Plus, he appointed others to spread his message of change, not just change for schools but change for the sake of our students and the future of American Democracy. Sizer is a true believer in reform, and he has been zealous and steadfast in his proclamation of his message of change. Similarly, many of the members of Essential Schools also have spread the message. They are convinced that the changes that they have been able to make in their schools have been for the betterment of teaching, learning, and the intellectual life in schools.

There is overall an "evangelical" feel to the reform. However, in places where teachers were skeptical and/or critical of the way reform got worked out in practice and/or were critical of the reform ideas and practices, reforming teachers were more concerned about making changes in their classrooms than they were about convincing their skeptical or resistant colleagues that the Coalition principles were worth embracing and applying in their classrooms. For that reason, some of the major problems encountered in Coalition schools were the political battles that raged around reform in some schools. Based on descriptions of successfully reforming schools, it seems that part of the responsibility for these problems could be placed at the feet of the principals who were less than fully effective as shepherds of reform.

Non-reforming teachers were sometimes seen as opposed to reform, and that was sometimes correct. However, the evangelical principle would recommend that if reforming teachers were really convinced that the changes they were making in their classrooms were "good news," they would make it a priority to communicate that message of good news to others. They would, in other words, seek to convince the skeptical teachers through the witness of their practice, the testimony of their learning, and the fruits of changes for themselves and for the students in their charge.

Overall, the Coalition of Essential Schools is a reform that seems largely

consistent with the evangelical principles we have articulated. Because schools sometimes opt to become Essential Schools with less than unanimous agreement among faculty and staff, this movement only partly conforms with the ecclesial, human dignity, and creedal principles. However, "evangelical weaknesses" in the design can be mitigated (as the case of Broadmoor attests) when leaders adopt a pastoral attitude in their work for reform in particular schools. Commitment to the dignity of teachers and staff-member in schools is often manifest in the way leaders (among administrators and faculty) respond to criticisms of reform and/or the process of making change. When leaders and reforming teachers take a stance of appeal toward their non-reforming colleagues, if they evangelize rather than pressure them, if they seek ways to persuade their peers, resistance to reform may be transformed into commitment to reforms where reluctant teachers experience conversion and embrace the reform for themselves.

### NCTM Standards

Our third portrait centers on the standards-based reforms of mathematics education. In the late 1980s and 1990s, some standards-based mathematics reforms were adopted that drew inspiration from the work of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and scholars who developed arguments for a fundamental reform of the teaching and learning of mathematics in schools.

Like all reforms, the rhetoric that surrounds the NCTM *Standards* and related reforms provides an interesting window through which to review reform. Partly because standards-based reform of mathematics has been highly controversial, the rhetoric of reform (both for and against it) is worth sampling. The vision for teaching and learning in schools contained in the various *Standards* documents differs markedly from modal practice, so advocates for the reform argue forcefully for the benefits of change and the problems associated with the status quo.

From its first pages, the NCTM (1991) *Professional Standards for Teaching Mathematics* provides an outline of changes they envision for schools. The contrast

between the new and old pedagogies is set forth starkly:

Woven into the fabric of the *Professional Standards for Teaching Mathematics* are five major shifts in the environment of mathematics classrooms that are needed to move from current practice to mathematics teaching for the empowerment of students. We need to shift--

- toward classrooms as mathematical communities--away from classrooms as simply a collection of individuals;
- toward logic and mathematical evidence as verification--away from the teacher as the sole authority for right answers;
- toward mathematical reasoning--away from merely memorizing procedures;
- toward conjecturing, inventing, and problem solving--away from an emphasis on mechanistic answer-finding;
- toward connecting mathematics, its ideas, and its applications--away from treating mathematics as a body of isolated concepts and procedures. (NCTM, 1991, p. 3)

The intent of the *Standards* was to help teachers move their practice in the direction of the reforms, without going so far as specifying particular practices.

### *Rhetoric of Reform*

What follows is a sample of quotes from NCTM leaders concerning the broad vision the NCTM espoused for reformed mathematics teaching and learning:

As a vision, informed by multiple perspectives--including research knowledge, moral commitments, political motives, and philosophical orientations--the standards are intended to direct, but not determine practice; to guide, but not prescribe teaching. (Ball, 1992, p. 2)

As the contrasts between new and old pedagogy suggest, the practices it recommended (even in broad outline) mark a radical departure from the status quo. Reformers and analysts called the vision "unprecedented," "vital," "a paradigm shift," while others said it promised a "revitalization" of mathematics. Thomas Romberg, chairperson of the commission that wrote the NCTM Standards, argued as follows:

The single most compelling issue in improving school mathematics is to change the epistemology of mathematics in schools, the sense on the part of teachers and students of what the mathematical enterprise is all about. (Romberg, 1992, p.433)

Shirley Frye, former president of NCTM talked about the magnitude of change, and the

fact that the change would be accomplished by "the people involved."

Mathematics itself is changing, and with it, the entire school mathematics curriculum is entering a period of unprecedented change . . . . Vital change cannot be brought about by administrative fiat or minor adjustments to the curriculum. Change can be effected only by the people involved . . . . (Crosswhite, et al., 1989, p. 59)

In addition to drafting the *Standards*, reformers made it clear that teachers and teacher educators would be major players in the reform effort to enact their vision for mathematics teaching:

Teachers and teacher educators will be the key agents of change and should be recognized and supported as such. They will need opportunities to learn new things--to develop their own understandings of mathematics in ways that enable them to listen to and extend students' ideas, as well as to develop new sensitivities to each of their students and their ways of knowing and interacting. (Ball, 1992, pp. 16-17)

Battista (1994), a mathematics educator, argued forcefully for the importance of a radical change in beliefs and practice. Current practice, he argued, echoing the National Research Council (1989) is often "mindless mimicry mathematics." And he saw it as "seriously damaging" to kids.

Teachers are key to the success of the current reform movement in U.S. mathematics education. However, many teachers have beliefs about mathematics that are incompatible with those underlying the reform effort. Because these beliefs play a critical role not only in what teachers teach but in how they teach it, this incompatibility blocks reform and prolongs the use of a mathematics curriculum that is seriously damaging the mathematical health of our children. (Battista, 1994, p. 462)

He went on to say that teachers teach in such ways, "because of their own mistaken beliefs about the nature of mathematics. . . ." (Battista, 1994, pp. 466-467). He continues, arguing that teacher beliefs influence the ways they teach and interpret the reform ideas:

. . . these teachers' beliefs not only caused them to implement an inappropriate curriculum but also blocked their understanding and acceptance of the philosophy of the reform movement . . . . These teachers possessed a view of mathematics that is totally incongruous with that of the current reform movement. (Battista, 1994, p. 467)

Pressing further, he argues:

Unfortunately, today's teachers have been caught in the midst of a paradigm shift. Accepted views about what and how mathematics should be taught have changed drastically since most teachers were in school. In fact, one of the most serious obstacles to reform is that the current mathematics curriculum is self-

perpetuating. Teachers who are asked to teach the reformed mathematics curricula are products of an old curriculum that developed in them beliefs so incompatible with those of the new curricula that they can understand many of the innovations only with great effort. We are caught in a pernicious cycle of mathematical mislearning. (Battista, 1994, p. 468)

There is no mistaking the passion and commitment of these advocates to seek ways to help teachers radically remake their practice. In their comments, these leaders were effectively issuing a pedagogical call to arms for teachers, reformers, and policymakers.

Presidents of the NCTM and other commentators on the *Standards* recognized the difficulty of the changes they were recommending. The vision for teaching and learning would require a major investment of resources. It would also require sustained commitment and dedication in the face of difficulty and the inertia of the status quo:

Our goals to revitalize mathematics education are lofty and ambitious, but achievable. Therefore, we must devote ourselves to a long-term effort . . . (Crosswhite, et al., 1989, p. 59)

Others chimed in with enthusiastic calls for a long-term, missionary commitment to spreading the message of change and sustained commitment to helping effect those changes in schools. For example, in one monthly feature in *Mathematics Teacher*, entitled "Implementing the Professional Standards for Teaching Mathematics," Leinwand (1992) writes that the reform "depends on will. . . . requires a personal commitment . . ." (p. 466). Jack Price, past president of NCTM, hit the same theme in his 1995 presidential address, in which he called members to renewed effort, both institutionally and personally:

We must recognize the importance of perseverance. Most people who effect change do persevere, even when constantly beset by upholders of the status quo . . . We have appointed a subcommittee of the NCTM to spearhead a proactive outreach program to all our constituencies. But this effort is not enough; it is only the beginning if we wish to sustain the efforts necessary to realize our vision. We must all persist in sharing this vision and in making certain that it stays alive. (p. 487-488)

Price lamented the host of critics who misunderstood or were hostile to the reform:

Many people, both inside and outside the mathematics community, have made some strong, but uninformed, accusations about the standards: the standards ignore basic skills, they say; giving the right answer is not emphasized; no advanced mathematics is offered for the mathematically promising; these ideas

are all untried. You have heard them all. At best, these statements are misinformed; at worst, they are mean-spirited or self-serving. No one said that the standards are perfect, but they are statements of what we believe is important in mathematics. They present a guide, not a blueprint. (Price, 1995, pp. 488-489)

He reassured the members that there were answers to these critics' concerns, and leaders and members alike needed to reach out to multiple constituencies to help the reform succeed, to help realize the vision.

Honest straightforward answers are available for all the issues that have been raised, but it is apparent that we have not done a good enough job in recognizing and then explaining those issues. We have obviously not reached all the stakeholders . . . . We need to let everyone know that successes can be found in every part of the country. These successes are neither isolated nor rare . . . . We are building a better mathematics education and we are building it for all students. This time we will not be denied. Field of dreams? Sure. Will they come? It will take a while, but if we persevere, they will come. For the sake of all our children, we cannot stop now. (Price, 1995, p. 490)

The rhetoric these advocates employed reveals a zealous commitment to the reform and an apologetic response to the reform's critics. These remarks seemed intended to encourage the fainthearted as well as rally the troops to continue the fight for the mathematics revolution. The motivation behind such heroic effort was, they said, nothing less than the welfare of our children.

Advocates of the reforms like Price sought to reassure as well as stir the passions of those who were most familiar with the reform, its goals, and its possibilities. In his remarks, Price was speaking to "believers" in the NCTM *Standards*, asking them to abandon neither their faith nor their hope in the reform effort. In their defense of the reform, Price and others were one part prophet, one part apologist, proclaiming the faith and defending it against critics who challenged the value of this "new new math."

And there were, in fact, plenty of critics. Many were skeptical of the possibilities of this kind of reform, and were unconvinced by Price's claims that these reforms were urgently necessary. Sometimes the critiques aimed at the base of the reform, questioning the warrant of the proposals themselves:

Seldom has so profound a change in conventional wisdom and standard practice had such homage paid to it, so little resistance shown to its onrush, so few doubts raised about its underpinnings. . . . We'd better hope the NCTM has got it right. If not, American education's lemming-like rush to follow its lead could find us

hurtling off a precipice . . . (Finn, 1993, p. 5)

Finn and others counseled for caution and sober analysis of the challenges and promises of the reform envisioned by the *Standards*. The "new math" reforms were touted with similar fanfare and, despite the wide-acclaim that reform enjoyed, the effects on classroom life were anything but radical.

Other critics took on the crisis-rhetoric of the *Standards*. In a review of *Everybody Counts* and the *Standards*, Bishop (1990), for example, praised the ideals of mathematical understanding contained in the documents, but questioned the link between mathematics instruction and economic growth. He also criticized the documents for their minimal attention to the socio-political contexts of mathematics instruction and reform. Apple (1992) took a more aggressive stance, arguing that the *Standards* were part of a more conservative agenda, which left social inequalities and the critical role of math in US society largely unaddressed.

Much of the rhetoric that has surrounded mathematics reforms has painted a stark contrast between the bad-old pedagogy and the promising good-new way of teaching and learning mathematics. The rhetoric was a prophetic call for change that was both a warning of potential doom and a word of encouragement to believers in the reform, intended to energize them to continue their efforts to reform teaching and learning mathematics. Presidents of NCTM and other advocates spoke with a confidence and zeal about the reforms in part to encourage grass-roots reformers who were called on to advance the cause of reforms at the state, districts, and school level, and to advance reform ideas at colleges and schools of education.

The rhetoric was clear and unambiguous. The consequences of failing to reform teaching and learning would have dire consequences for our kids and our nation, and justice requires continue to fight for reform, come what may. Not everyone who was involved in the drafting of the *Standards* was as unambiguous about the possibilities and prognosis of reform. Some, such as Ball (1992), were reluctant to make grandiose promises because of their recognition that the *Standards* opened up uncertainties of

practice as much as they charted a path toward the pedagogical kingdom. The reforms entailed serious demands for teachers as well as the teachers of teachers. For all those reasons, the new pedagogical world promised by the many proponents of the *Standards* (and standards-based reforms) was not as imminent as some proponents seemed to think.

### *One Standards-based Reform: California Math Reform*

The hopes for change in mathematics teaching and learning that inspired the reform rhetoric of past-presidents and other reformers also contributed to the development of state-level standards-based reforms in mathematics. California State Department of Education's (CSDE) ambitious reforms, described in their *Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools* (1985), provide a site for investigating what happens when states attempt to radically remake mathematics teaching and learning in schools.<sup>78</sup>

One early study of the implementation of the *Framework* was conducted by members of the Educational Policy and Practice Study (EPPS). In 1990, EPPS published a series of case studies describing ways in which teachers in California schools encountered and responded to the state's mathematics reforms, most specifically in response to the 1985 *Framework*.

Like the *Standards*, the mathematics reform movement and the *Framework* argued for "major changes in goals, in content, and in pedagogy" (Cohen & Ball, 1990b, p. 235). The *Framework* focused on the ability to reason mathematically, to apply math to everyday situations, and the conceptual basis of mathematical operations, rather than mere acquaintance with algorithms and knowing when to apply them. This agenda for change implied changes in the subject matter as well as the way solutions were treated. "Teachers should encourage students to offer alternative solutions to problems and invite

them to collaborate in figuring out what makes sense and why" (Cohen & Ball 1990b, p. 235).

In their "commentary," Cohen and Ball (1990b) provide a brief narrative of mathematics reform in California. One central aspect of that reform was the publication of the *Framework* in 1985. Policymakers demanded that publishers of math texts for use in California classrooms revise them to conform with the content and pedagogical recommendations contained in the *Framework*. Reformers in the state were also committed to revising statewide assessments to better measure mathematical understanding along the lines contained in the *Framework*. "Policymakers in California believe that these revised tests will be a potent instrument of policy: The redesigned tests are expected to 'drive' fundamental changes in teaching and learning mathematics" (Cohen & Ball, 1990b, p. 236). Overall, the reform strategy of the California math reforms was based on the principle of alignment. They promoted an ambitious vision for math teaching and learning, which would then be communicated through texts and "driven" by new tests designed to assess how well students were learning to think mathematically.

The case studies published during the early stages of the EPPS research describe the ways teachers responded to the changes contained in the new math framework. Unsurprisingly, the researchers found that teachers responded to the reform in diverse ways. Generally speaking, teachers interpreted the framework in light of their current practice. Consequently, most classrooms remained quite traditional. Researchers observed some changes in most classrooms, but even in classrooms with teachers who responded enthusiastically to the reforms, the changes they observed fell far short of the vision cast by the authors of the *Framework*.

The EPPS research is particularly valuable for the descriptions it provides of

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<sup>78</sup> Suzanne Wilson's (2003) study of California's experiences reforming mathematics education provides a comprehensive, multi-faceted look at the story, of which the 1990 case studies were just the beginning.

teachers' practice and the ways teachers work to understand and respond to ambitious calls for reform in their classrooms. One powerful result of the early EPPS research into California's early implementation efforts was that it demonstrated the dynamic and interactive relationship between policy and practice. Though the *Framework* was able to influence teachers to change their practice to some degree, the more powerful factor in explaining what changes occurred was teachers' current practice. In other words, though policy affected practice, it was teachers' current practice, experience, and knowledge that most heavily influenced what happened in their classrooms.

California teachers' mathematical and pedagogical pasts shaped the mathematical future that this new policy invited them to help create. Policies that seek to change instructional practice depend upon--and are changed by--the practice and the practitioners they seek to change. (Cohen & Ball, 1990b, p. 238)

Teachers' current beliefs and practices constrained the ways they understood the policy, and that often meant that the *Framework's* message was muted and/or muddled by the teachers it was intended to reform.

### *Three Snapshots of Reform*

To get a sense of what EPPS researchers found when they peered into California classrooms, we offer three brief snapshots of teaching in California elementary classrooms. First we consider Deborah Ball's (1990) case of Carol Turner, which explores the limitations of using a new textbook as the primary means of communicating reform messages and effecting change in classrooms. In the second portrait, we take Suzanne Wilson's (1990a) case of Mark Black. Black's response to the *Framework* was less enthusiastic and more critical than other teachers in the study. The case is valuable because it highlights the way teachers' responses to reform are influenced and constrained by their prior knowledge, experience, and the array of pressures they feel as they teach. The third snapshot draws on David Cohen's (1990) "A Revolution in One Classroom," a study of a teacher who reports revolutionary changes in her teaching. Cohen, who is less

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Her study provides a rich description of the complicated story of math reform.

sanguine about the extent of her revolution, uses the case to explore what her "revolution" can teach us about the difficulties of ambitious reforms like the California *Framework*.

*Case of Carol Turner.*

Carol Turner, Deborah Ball (1990) tells us, is open to the ideas contained in the *Framework*. However, even though she has made some changes in her teaching based on recommendations in her new textbook, her teaching remains largely uninformed by the values and ideals that lie at the heart of the new *Framework*.

[Carol Turner] uses manipulatives, emphasizes meaning, and wants students to be able to apply mathematics to real-world situations. Consequently, her classroom appears to reflect key dimensions of the *Framework's* vision of practice. Still, her conception of mathematics and her beliefs about knowing and learning mathematics are rooted in the traditional epistemology of school mathematics . . . . Because this traditional orientation to knowledge lies under the veneer of Carol's use of manipulatives and focus on the "whys," the nature of her children's encounters with mathematics may differ from the sort implied by a deeper reading of the *Framework's* vision. (Ball, 1990, p. 257)

Turner made changes, but the reform's deeper implications for pedagogy and views of what it means to know mathematics did not figure much in Turner's talk or in the changes Ball observed in her teaching.

In search of an explanation, Ball explores the effects of using textbooks as the primary vehicle for communicating reform messages and guiding teachers in the process of change. Teachers, she notes, do not blindly "follow" texts. Rather, they typically adapt what texts recommend to fit the exigencies of their classrooms in light of their dispositions and beliefs about teaching and learning mathematics. This is true even when teachers follow texts with care. They interpret them in light of their past experiences and beliefs about practice. Moreover, because most revised texts retain much of the old even when they include fundamental philosophical and pedagogical revisions, "[t]he message is thereby easily garbled" (Ball, 1990, pp. 257-258).

Ball lists some practical limitations of using texts as the primary medium for communicating messages of deep reform. Textbooks naturally focus on the substantive, on the "what" of teaching--"the topics and procedures of the subject" (Ball, 1990, p. 258).

For that reason she questions whether texts (especially "marketable" texts) could ever succeed in getting teachers to embrace a "different orientation to knowing or encourage a different role for the teacher" (Ball, 1990, p. 258).

Carol's case highlights the conceptual difficulty of communicating an alternative vision of teaching to those who would enact it. For teachers, as the implementors of policy, the message must be sufficiently clear . . . . Still, for change to occur, the message must seem to be outlining a direction and a practice that seems different from the status quo . . . . Here textbooks may fall short, for creating texts that can represent a significantly different sort of classroom practice is difficult. Carol's interpretation of the policy's thrust was that it was asking for what she already did. Carol's case helps to illustrate a central problem of change: how to communicate and provide guidance for change in a way that is comprehensible and yet challenges current practice. (Ball, 1990, pp. 258-259)

The case of Carol Turner reveals what can happen when teachers of goodwill are left to their own resources and experience to discern the meaning and implications of reforms, particularly deep reforms that challenge fundamental presuppositions of practice. Turner interpreted her reformed text conservatively, missing its implications for more fundamental changes in teaching practice. The observation is not a condemnation of how Turner made sense of the reform. On the contrary, because of the way humans construct meaning, Turner naturally looked for points of contact between her new text's demands and her current practice. She was not given much (if any) help in interpreting and applying the reform as she understood it from her revised text, so it was her (naturally) conservative reading of the reform's demands that guided her in making changes in her classroom.

#### *Case of Mark Black.*

Suzanne Wilson's (1990a) case of Mark Black provides a glimpse of a teacher who responded to the math reforms more critically than other teachers in the early EPPS work. Mark Black considers himself a successful teacher, and on important measures like standardized tests and his reputation among parents, his self-appraisal seems right. Black has been teaching fifth grade for ten years, and came to California a few years prior to Wilson's visit. As she observed him teach, Wilson saw evidence of a teacher

who knew what he was doing and worked hard to help students learn:

Mark's teaching is familiar. His class looks like countless other mathematics classes: children learn how to manipulate numbers, solve problems, practice in class, do homework sets. Talk is teacher-centered; student participation consists of curt responses to simple, informational questions. He is a prototype of the "effective" teacher. Using an old script, Mark is acting out a part that has been well articulated and clearly defined by process-product researchers of teaching. (Wilson, 1990a, pp. 297-298)

Unsurprisingly, Black's success with his "old script" has made it more difficult for him to embrace the values and strategies promoted by his new text and the math *Framework*. Note that his reluctance to change is not primarily a result of his failure to understand the implications of the *Framework* and his new text for his practice. He knows that his new text recommends different approaches to teaching than the one he has been using successfully for years. His understanding of the rationale for the change may be limited. And he may be unsure exactly how to effect the changes in his classroom. But the larger challenge is his uncertainty about the merits of the *Framework's* emphasis on developing deep conceptual understanding instead of computational competency. He is unconvinced that all students are capable of mastering the more conceptual understandings privileged in the *Framework* and the new text. Black disagrees with the *Framework's* emphasis on conceptual understanding. "Mark seems to believe [focusing on conceptual understanding] . . . is something a teacher should do only if there is enough time" (Wilson, 1990a, p. 301).

Mark Black's response to the reform has been shaped by his knowledge, his prior experiences in the classroom, and the political and professional pressures he faces in his classroom. For example, Black avoids pages in the text that aim at developing deeper understandings of mathematics. Admittedly, part of his avoidance is his uncertainty about how to teach in ways the text recommends. But he is also concerned that spending more time on conceptual understanding will prevent him from covering the curriculum with his students. Furthermore, he knows that the CAP test has not been changed to align with the new *Framework*. At this point, if he were to change his teaching in ways that the textbook and *Framework* suggest, he is afraid (whether correctly or not) that his

students would do worse rather than better on the statewide assessments.

Like all teachers, Black faces multiple pressures in his teaching and works to find a way to balance them in his classroom. The *Framework* has added new pressures to the mix. After observing Mark attempt to balance the various pressures and commitments, Wilson notes that "Mark needs help" (Wilson, 1990a, p. 307). And he would not disagree. He knows there are things he needs to learn. But Wilson notes that there are things he needs to learn of which he is unaware. For example, he needs help thinking differently about what it means to teach mathematics for understanding and what it takes to learn mathematics in deeper and different ways.

The reform asks him to make fundamental changes in his teaching, but he is unsure about the merits of those changes. He seems to be a master of the "effective teaching" model of instruction, yet the *Framework* encourages a different model of teaching:

. . . one that focuses on the student as well as on the teacher, on conceptual understanding as well as technical mastery. If Mark is to understand the nature of those changes, he needs a chance to examine the central differences between effective teaching and the teaching envisioned by the *Framework* authors. He cannot be led to believe that implementing the *Framework* involves adopting a few new activities and instructional strategies for at its heart the *Framework* assumes fundamentally different things about the nature of learning and knowing. (Wilson, 1990a, p. 308)

In order to effect major changes in his teaching, Mark will need some help. He will need someone to convince him that his doubts about the value of conceptual understanding for all students are unwarranted. Furthermore, he will need help thinking about the kinds of pedagogical strategies that would support conceptual understanding. He "needs practice and experience implementing strategies he has never used . . ." (Wilson, 1990a, p.308). And he "needs to work in a context that is sensitive to the complexity of teaching and the factors that influence classroom work" (Wilson, 1990a, p. 308).

Wilson smartly observes that the things Mark needs are the very things reformers tell teachers they must provide their students in their classrooms. But early in the process of implementing the *Framework*, teachers like Mark Black did not receive much support

in their attempts to understand and enact the new mathematics reforms. Black needs help figuring out how "to do it." But perhaps more importantly, because of his skepticism about the merits of the changes themselves, he needs to be convinced that the changes entailed in the reform are actually in his and his students' best interests. If he remains unconvinced that the changes are worthwhile, increased knowledge of reformed practices may make little practical difference for him or his students.

*Case of Mrs. Oublier.*

Our third snapshot into California classrooms is taken from David Cohen's (1990) "A Revolution in One Classroom," which begins this way:

As Mrs. Oublier sees it, her classroom is a new world. She reported that when she began work 4 years ago, her mathematics teaching was thoroughly traditional. She followed the text. Her second graders spent most of their time on worksheets. Learning math meant memorizing facts and procedures. Then Mrs. O found a new way to teach math. (Cohen, 1990, p. 311)

This "revolution" takes place, Cohen notes, in a less-than-innovative school. He observes that her revolution is striking in light of the disappointing history of curricular reform over the past half century. Earlier explanations for why many reforms failed to make much difference in classrooms have included "teachers' resistance," "entrenched classroom habits," and accusations that reforms have been "poorly adapted to classrooms" (Cohen, 1990, p. 312). "Mrs. O's revolution," Cohen argues, "looks particularly appealing against this background. She eagerly embraced change, rather than resisting it . . . Mrs. O sees her class as a success for the new mathematics framework . . . [and] reports that her math teaching has wound up where the framework intends it to be" (Cohen, 1990, p. 312).

After providing us her self-appraisal, Cohen invites us in for another look.

Through his eyes, we sense that there is work to be done to complete her revolution.

Her teaching does reflect the new framework in many ways . . . But Mrs. O seemed to treat new mathematical topics as though they were a part of traditional mathematics. She used the new materials, but used them as though mathematics contained only right and wrong answers. She has revised the curriculum to help students understand math, but she conducts the class in ways that discourage

exploration of students' understanding. (Cohen, 1990, p. 312)

Cohen points out that Mrs. O's lessons "contain some important elements that the framework embraced, but they contain others that it branded as inadequate" (Cohen, 1990, p. 312). For that reason, Cohen draws a different conclusion about her revolution. Though some observers would agree with Mrs. O about her teaching, "others would see only traditional instruction" (Cohen, 1990, p. 312). Such markedly different judgments give rise to an important question: which perspective is best? Cohen understands why she reports that "her revolution was over . . . . She had arrived at the other shore" (Cohen, 1990, p. 325). Nevertheless, he views things differently:

From an observer's perspective, especially one who had the new framework in mind, Mrs. O looks as though she may be near the beginning of growth toward a new practice of math teaching. She sees the matter quite differently: She has made the transition, and mastered a new practice. (Cohen, 1990, p. 325)

Cohen repeats the methodological question: "Which angle is most appropriate, Mrs. O's or the observer's?", and he admits that it "is a terrific puzzle" (Cohen, 1990, p. 325).

Cohen's quandary stems from his desire to honor the teacher--for her efforts at making change--and a reform policy "that supports greater intelligence and humanity in mathematics instruction" (Cohen, 1990, p. 325). Because of the limited resources she was provided, the limited changes Mrs. O has made as well as her optimistic reading of her revolution make good sense. However, since the goal of the California math reform was to change math teaching in fundamental ways, Cohen concludes Mrs. O's revolution is far from over.

Ultimately, this is more than a mere methodological question. If Cohen is right that Mrs. O is nearer the beginning than the end of her revolution, progress toward the vision of the *Framework* in Mrs. O's classroom may be stalled until she can come to see her practice more critically and understand the *Framework's* vision for teaching and learning mathematics more completely.

Cohen says that part of the problem was that there were few incentives for Mrs. O to pursue fundamental change and few sanctions for failing to do so. More importantly,

Mrs. O was given few resources to help her advance her revolution. Like the other teachers in the study, Mrs. O was given little help in either understanding the demands of the reform or developing new practices in her classroom. As a result, her interpretation of the reform and her appraisal of her progress were allowed to stand unchallenged. In that sense, Mrs. O's experience parallels that of Turner and Black. Because they were not given much help in interpreting the reform, they were "free" to interpret it in the ways they did. That does not mean that they intentionally (mis)interpreted the reform conservatively. Rather, because they were left to themselves to interpret the reform, they interpreted it through the grid of their prior knowledge and experience.

Some might argue that the latitude these teachers were given to interpret and apply the *Framework* according to their own lights respected their dignity as professionals. They were free, in other words, to do what they deemed best. After all, their interpretations and applications of the reform were not subject to evaluation or correction by any official agents of reform. Though this argument could find support in the way the reform was actually communicated to these teachers, it hardly seems the intended goal of the reformers. The goals of the reform seemed more ambitious than the sorts of changes the EPPS researchers found when they visited California classrooms.

### *Summary*

In their commentary and conclusion, EPPS researchers argued that the limited enactment of the reform was largely a result of the reformers' failure to provide teachers resources that would have helped them interpret and apply the reform in ways reformers envisioned when they drafted the *Framework*. In their summary of the cases, Cohen & Ball (1990a) say there were serious weaknesses in the way teachers encountered the ideas of the reform. The reform ideas were communicated to teachers primarily through revised textbooks. Moreover, teachers did not have access to models of reformed practices that could have helped them gain a sense of what the reforms would look like in practice. Because teachers were allowed (actually, forced) to interpret and apply reform

ideas for themselves, it is little surprise that they interpreted and applied them conservatively.

In his survey of the EPPS case studies, Gary Sykes (1990) observes that the teaching they describe fails to measure up to the ambitious vision of reform intended by the reformers. Comparing the observed changes with the lofty descriptions of reformed teaching in the framework, Sykes concludes that the policy has been unsuccessful. But hidden in the cases, he does discern a "success story" for policy:

The policy, of course, is not the new math framework, but the direct instruction model--also known as clinical teaching, ITIP, or the Madeline Hunter model--which is omnipresent in the teaching described here. (Sykes, 1990, p. 350)

He then offers one explanation for the differences in the success of the two reforms he observed. The California reform demands fundamental--what we have earlier labeled "deep"--reform that goes to the core of what it means to teach and know mathematics. Teachers have not experienced that sort of teaching nor have they received much help in figuring out what it takes to teach in such ways. In marked contrast, the direct instruction model of ITIP and Madeline Hunter is familiar, so it is little surprise that it received an willing embrace from teachers. Sykes notes two advantages of direct instruction from an implementation perspective:

First, this model constitutes no departure from the conventional instruction so familiar to students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Second, the model represents a theory of instruction that supplies direct practical guidance in the form of a common technical language, principles, and procedures. (Sykes, 1990, p. 350)

In contrast to this surer path, the *Framework* demands teachers to go into uncharted pedagogical and epistemological territory.

Sykes (1990) notes that there are presently few incentives to "propel teachers on such a journey . . . into unfamiliar territory beyond the bounds of their present knowledge and competence" (p. 350). Instead, most of the pressures teachers experience both inside and outside their classrooms militate against the sort of ambitious changes called for in the California reform:

Students, parents, and the community are not demanding the instruction called for

by the policy, so client pressure exerts no influence on teachers. Neither voice (political pressure) nor exit (the withdrawal of students to other schools) signals dissatisfaction with traditional practice. Rather, it appears that teachers are nervous about introducing the new practices in the face of parent and community opposition. (Sykes, 1990, p. 351)

In addition to their nervousness about parental and community opposition to the reform, many teachers have doubts and concerns of their own. For example, recall Mark Black's doubts that conceptual understanding was an appropriate goal for all his students. Other teachers, too, have doubts and uncertainties about reformed practices that can create practical and personal barriers to reform. In some reflections on the demands of the *NCTM Standards* and related reforms, Ball (1996), a math reformer herself, states that there are "powerful *disincentives* to engage with this agenda, and some of these are deeply personal and at the heart of the identity one tries to create as a good teacher" (Ball, 1996, p. 505, emphasis in original).

The *NCTM Standards* and reforms like the *California Math Framework* offer a radically different vision for teaching and learning mathematics. The *Standards* are holistic in their outlook, and they include recommendations for ways to support teachers and school leaders in reforming teaching practice in the direction of the *Standards*. The authors of the *Standards* and apologists for the reform acknowledge that successful reform will require a long-term commitment to reforming the cultures and the teaching in schools.

Yet, in the case of the California math reforms, EPPS researchers found that teachers were not much helped to understand or adopt the practices recommended by the reforms. The reform itself was not well-defined and the ways the reform was communicated to teachers meant that they were largely left on their own to interpret and apply the reform. Consequently, teachers "enacted" the reform in ways that fell far short of the vision of the authors of the reform. Teachers were given few opportunities to talk with knowledgeable others about what the reform demanded of them in their classrooms, and they had few if any opportunities to observe the reforms enacted in classrooms like theirs. As a result, any efforts they made to effect change in their classrooms were

constrained by their imagination, their competence, and their willingness to take significant risks in their classrooms.

### *Math Reform and the Evangelical Principles*

Our brief review of the *NCTM Standards* and three portraits of three California mathematics classrooms reveals that standards-based reforms of mathematics are calls to deep, fundamental change in both the assumptions and the practice of teaching and learning mathematics. Even if we were not exploring the merits of evangelism as a metaphor for instruction reform, our survey of the rhetoric of these reforms would reveal a fervor that has many of the trappings of evangelism. The proponents of the reform were zealous in their attempts to win broad commitment to their vision of change and to address critics who threatened to undermine their efforts.

The rhetoric of reform certainly bears the stamp of "call." The presidents of NCTM and other advocates of fundamental math reform called math educators and educators of math teachers to embrace a different vision for what it means to teach and learn mathematics. They implored their colleagues to stand together in the face of the struggle and criticism of those who were reluctant to embrace their radical call for reform, and, in that sense, the leaders of the mathematics reform movement seem to have embraced the ecclesial principle of reform.

Their messages of reform and their calls to commit to the math reform movement were often communicated at conferences to math educators and in mathematics journals. In those contexts, persons were being asked to step out to advance the cause of math reform. Persons were being asked to come together in a special work, to strive together for the cause of mathematics reform. In these respects, the call to come out and come together to advance the cause of reform was clear.

However, if we shift our glance from the math reform establishment to the classroom level with the California math reform, the sense of "community" that is bound up with the ecclesial principle is less conspicuous. In fact, the teachers in the three cases

did not speak much about a sense of communal striving toward a new way to teach and learn mathematics. Instead, they strove individually to interpret and apply the reform (communicated through a text) in their classrooms. The "call" they heard, if they heard one at all, was to "do" what the reformed texts asked of them. They were called, but not "called out." The teachers did not report a sense of collegiality with their peers in their attempts to enact the reforms. In these respects, the actual instance of reform we have described does not conform with the principle characteristics of the ecclesial principle, which is to be called out into a special community for a particular purpose. Admittedly, the teachers were not coerced, and in that respect, the call for reform was a "call" not a command. But the central benefits of communal support were lacking for these teachers. The California math reform as it reached these teachers lacked the core and substance of the ecclesial principle.

As we have said, the teachers in the California classrooms were given wide latitude in how they could interpret and apply the new textbooks that served as messengers of reform for them. They were told to use the new textbooks, but they were not given much guidance in how to do so, nor were their changes monitored, evaluated, or critiqued by any official agents of reform. This inattention to the way teachers applied the reform in their classrooms seems more a lapse on the part of the reformers than a strategic attempt to honor the dignity of the teachers to interpret and enact the reform as they saw fit. At least one of the teachers (i.e., Black) was doubtful about the merits of the change, but he "used" the textbook anyway. Unsurprisingly, the way he used it meant that he deflected the call for fundamental change in his teaching.

These teachers were not invited to explore individually or collectively the merits of the reform. Had the teachers been engaged in discussions about the problems that this reform was intended to remedy and about the merits of the reform practices themselves, then the process of reform would have more completely conformed to the evangelical principle of human dignity and freedom of conscience. As it was, reformers seemed to assume that teachers would simply enact the changes because they were given a new

textbook.

The *NCTM Standards* and the outline of changes contained in the *Framework* set forth principles for change and the values that the reform movement hopes would inform mathematics teaching and learning in schools. In that sense, the math reforms offer some statements of belief and ideals for teaching practice to which they hope teachers, parents, and students will commit themselves. These principles and descriptions of "new" teaching provided a basis for a de facto "creed" that reformers hoped would orient reform efforts and to which persons would commit themselves. In that respect, at the highest levels of reform, we see evidence of the creedal principle at work.

At the level of the leaders of the reform movement, there was an explicit attempt to get persons to commit themselves to the vision of math reform of the NCTM. But we do not find the same kind of effort to get teachers at the street level to commit themselves to the ideals and practices contained in the *Framework*. Instead, the teachers were given textbooks and told to use them in their classrooms. They could have read the *Framework* if they chose, but they were not informed in unambiguous ways about what the math reform "creed" was nor given a chance to say their personal "credo" in affirmation of their commitment to the creed.

Had teachers been invited to explore the vision of the *Framework* before being asked to make changes in their classrooms, they might have had a better sense of what the reform demanded of them and they might have been persuaded to commit themselves to further investigation of the possibilities and limitations of the new math they were being asked to teach. As it was, they were neither taught the core of the creed nor were they asked to personally commit themselves to living out the creed in their classrooms.

Intimately connected with the creedal principle is the magisterial principle. As we have said, teachers in California schools were not given much support in understanding the demands of the *Framework*. They were unfamiliar with the practices recommended by the reform, and were, for the most part, left to themselves to interpret and apply the recommendations contained in the revised textbooks. In the three portraits

we reviewed, the teachers were not well-equipped to reform their teaching in ways envisioned by reformers. The changes they made in their teaching rarely approached the deep reform described in the pages of the *Framework*. A major explanation for this is that teachers were not given occasions to observe models of this kind of teaching or even to talk with knowledgeable teachers about what the reformed practices were intended to accomplish and how they could go about making the changes in their classrooms.

The pedagogy of the reform was a text that teachers were asked to read, interpret, and apply. They were not given anything like an authoritative interpretation of what the reform was asking of them as teachers in classrooms. Because they were not given guidance about what the *Framework* and their texts expected of them, the teachers were free to conclude that the minimal changes they made in their teaching represented successful enactment of the *Framework's* vision for reformed mathematics. Both Turner and Mrs. O believed that their teaching was what the *Framework* wanted from them. Turner thought that the *Framework* was telling her to do what she had always done, and Mrs. O thought that the modest changes she made in her classroom resulted in a pedagogical revolution in her practice. They were wrong, but no one let them know. Perhaps more seriously, no one ever helped them see the *Framework* for what it was so that they would not have mistaken their largely traditional teaching for reformed practice.

Based on the experience of teachers in the EPPS study, the reform lacks an operative magisterial authority that could have helped teachers understand it and know how to enact it in their classrooms. Such an interpretive authority could have also helped these teachers realize that the changes they had made in their classrooms did not (yet) satisfy the broad outline of what reformers had envisioned for reform in California mathematics classrooms. The EPPS analysis of the California math reform emphasizes the limited support and guidance teachers received in their attempts at change. The reform was not well-defined, but the teachers were not given much help in understanding even the general directions of the reform. For all of these reasons, the California math

reform effort is particularly weak in its application of the magisterial principle.<sup>79</sup>

Similarly lacking in the California math reform context is the pastoral principle. Teachers were left to wander, as it were, in the pasture of their own pasts to make sense of a deep call for change in their teaching. Part of pastoring or shepherding a flock is making sure those under your charge are nurtured in their growth. The cases of reform reveal a hands-off reform approach that places the bulk of the responsibility for change on the lowest levels. Such an approach could be successful if those who are being asked to make changes are comfortable and competent to make the changes. As it was, the teachers lacked the resources to know what to change and how to do so. They made changes, but the changes did not well match the expectations of the reformers. And no one noticed or helped them think differently about the changes they had made or the expectations of the math *Framework*.

Had the math reform in California taken seriously the importance of pastoral leadership, the teachers would have had opportunities to learn from someone who had successfully enacted the reform and would have been helped along the path to change by an instructional leader who understood them, the various pressures they faced, their uncertainties and doubts, and their reluctance to take risks in their classrooms for what may seem to them only dubious gains. All of those features would have been part of a healthy pastoral approach to reform. As it was, the pastoral principle was largely absent from the California math reform effort.

Also absent was a sense of the incarnation principle. Teachers were not given the example of other teachers who could testify to the benefits and possibilities of the reformed practices they were reading about in their texts and in the *Framework*. The teachers were not given another teacher with whom they could have talked, argued,

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<sup>79</sup> Of course, no pedagogical equivalent of the Catholic Magisterium is possible, where questions of interpretation and application could be settled, unequivocally. Still, there is some sense of the "spirit of the reform" even if the "letter of the reform" cannot be specified unequivocally. Clearly, some ideas and

commiserated, and/or consulted as they contemplated or began to make changes in their classrooms. They lacked witnesses of the possibility of radically reformed mathematics teaching. For that reason, they could (quite reasonably) doubt (as Mark Black did) that conceptual understanding was a worthwhile goal for all students. They could imagine that using manipulatives was sufficient proof that they had accomplished a revolution in their teaching.

Had teachers been exposed to other teachers who both understood the difficulties they faced moment-by-moment in their classrooms and also enacted major changes in their teaching, they might have gained a sense of hope that change was possible for them. They could have learned from another, like them, who was "living" the message of reform they had only read about. The teacher would serve as both an encouragement and a source of support and guidance for them if and when they would seek to make changes in their own classrooms. She would be, for them, a witness of the good news of the reform, and they would follow her lead.

Looking at the case of California math reform, we can see some evidence of the evangelical principle at work. One might argue that Mrs. Oublier is preaching a message of reform when she offers herself as an example of the revolutionary teaching contained in the *Framework*. But it is doubtful that she has been radically changed by her revolution to the point where she is eager to spread the good news of change to teachers around her. Having that internal desire and burden to share the message is the central to the evangelical principle, and it seems doubtful that she is in that sense evangelical about her revolution. When persons are so convinced that the way of life they have embraced is a good one, they want to share that good news with others. The teachers in this case are ambivalent. Carol Turner believes she was already teaching in *Framework* ways, so she will not be apt to spread the good news of change. Mark Black is skeptical about the merits of the change, and has had little opportunity to change his view.

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practices comport with reform documents better than others. The need is for someone(s) to have authority

When teachers become convinced that reforms are genuine improvements, their concern for helping their students and their professionalism might help them pursue reform even in the face of difficulties, including the doubts of skeptical parents. Teachers might even attempt to convince doubtful parents of the merits of the reform. This would occur, when, in the language of the metaphor, a teacher underwent a conversion regarding the reform ideas. Perhaps especially if they were "converts" who had become true believers, they might be more zealous and convincing to their skeptical colleagues and/or unbelieving parents. Without that sort of conversion, some teachers might never realize the extent of the changes entailed in a reform. Furthermore, they may not have the courage to attempt to make such changes in their practice.

Had reformers made significant attempts to allow teachers to witness reformed teaching and learning, and then spread the gospel message teacher-by-teacher, the reform would have been less one of mandated change than passional commitment to a different way of teaching and learning. Teachers who willingly embraced a teaching practice that they had witnessed, and practiced under the mentoring eye of a more experienced teacher might even become a voice of reform themselves, eager to share the good news about a practice that has not simply been recommended from authorities who ought to know, but is recommended by teachers who do, in fact, know.

## SUMMARY

These three portraits of reform allowed us to test the heuristic merits of the generative metaphor *instructional reform as evangelism*. After describing the reforms and attempts to enact them, we viewed each of them through the grid of what we have called "evangelical principles of reform." Schön (1993) says "generative metaphors" afford students of social policy new perspectives on the difficulties of social processes like instructional reform. Though the three portraits do not *prove* that the metaphor is

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to appraise what ideas and practices are, in fact, reform-minded, and which are not.

generative, they do provide evidence that the metaphor and evangelical principles are helpful in bringing particular challenges and aspects of the reforms into higher relief. Of course, many of the evangelical principles of reform comport with findings from the literature about implementation of planned change. But as metaphors often do, *instructional reform as evangelism* (with the seven evangelical principles of reform) helps us see these reform efforts in a new light. The upshot is that the implication-complex of evangelism does indeed allow us to make connections and draw conclusions about instructional reform that might remain hidden otherwise.

## Chapter 7

### Virtues of the Metaphor

Briefly stated, the goal of this study was to test the plausibility and measure the merits of a metaphor. The question was whether the *instructional reform as evangelism* metaphor could help students (as well as authors, agents, and objects) of reform think differently and productively about the challenges of reforming teaching and learning in schools. Necessarily, the work involved some consideration of metaphor, including a survey of prominent views of metaphor. In that regard, Donald Schön's (1993) ideas about generative metaphors were particularly helpful.

We began by establishing the "empirical basis" for the metaphor. To do so, we reviewed studies of instructional reform and evangelism, and surveyed the sets of relationships and associations that exist within each domain. Based on what we found, we argued for the plausibility of the *instructional reform as evangelism* metaphor then offered reasons why the metaphor is appealing, not just plausible. In light of our findings, we then enumerated seven evangelical principles of reform that together form a heuristic for thinking about past, present, and future reform efforts. Finally, we tested the merits of the metaphor by viewing three instructional reforms from the perspective of those seven principles.

Viewing the reforms from the perspective of the evangelical principles brought aspects of each reform into higher relief. Particular strengths and weaknesses of the reform efforts became clearer, and the principles provided a basis for making constructive suggestions about ways to make things better. In each case we studied, the principles pointed to ways the reform process might have been changed to more successfully get teachers to commit themselves to reform, to help them better understand the reform's demands, and to support them more effectively in their struggle to enact reforms in their classrooms.

If that description of this study is close to accurate, some might wonder what else needs to be said. Indeed, if the metaphor actually provides helpful perspectives and suggestions about ways to improve reforms, it seems fair to conclude that the metaphor has real heuristic merit. Based on our study, we could say that *instructional reform as evangelism* is a generative metaphor that offers a helpful perspective for thinking about the process of instructional reform.

However, concluding that the metaphor has a generative character does not mean that the intellectual work of understanding the metaphor is complete. Even though we have demonstrated the plausibility of the evangelism metaphor, shown why it is appealing, and even "tested" it against three instructional reforms, it is prudent for us to pause. Otherwise, we might get the impression that the answer to instructional reform is viewing (and treating) reform as if it *were* evangelism. The danger here is that enthusiasts might be inclined to race ahead with the metaphor. In this case, that might mean taking up a crusade-like mission to get reformers to convert to the gospel of evangelical reform.

One reason to pause before "baptizing" the metaphor for use with reform comes from none other than Donald Schön (1993), whose work on generative metaphor helped inform this study. Though Schön advocates employing generative metaphors to see social problems (and processes) in new ways, he warns against using them indiscriminately. It is precisely because of their imaginative potential that generative metaphors can be so seductive. When social problems seem intractable (such as the difficulty of enacting deep reforms in schools), the temptations of generative metaphors can be strong. When persons begin to see and think from the perspective of generative metaphors, solutions to social problems can take on the appearance of the obvious. When that happens, Schön (1993) warns, the "consequences may be negative as well as positive" (p. 148). Generative metaphors can, in effect, become masters rather than servants of those who seek to solve social problems. The practical risk is that enthusiasts

may adopt metaphor-generated solutions without due consideration of the other metaphors that help provide a balanced picture of complex social problems.

Partly to protect against such uncritical enthusiasm about this metaphor, we will conclude our work by considering some limitations of the study, some areas for further work, and some final observations about the limits and virtues of the metaphor for thinking about instructional reform.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Any study is bound to have limitations, and this one is no exception. Indeed, though the scope of the study is rather wide, there were things we left underdeveloped or unaddressed. Part of that is simply a result of the nature of intellectual work. There will always be more to understand, other perspectives to consider, other insights to be gained. In the hopes of gaining insights into the challenges of (especially deep) reform, our goal was to provide a helpful perspective of instructional reform, not to provide the definitive perspective. Though we have made an argument for the merits of the metaphor, we acknowledge the limitations of the study as well as challenges that face anyone who would attempt to apply the insights developed here.

### Explication of the Metaphor

One observation about the work is obvious to anyone who has read the study to this point, and that is the relentlessness of the argument. In an attempt to provide grounds for the metaphor, we went into great detail in our treatment of each domain. There are obvious costs and benefits of such a choice. The benefits became clear when we noted the many points of contact between the two domains. Those similarities formed the basis for the argument about the plausibility of the metaphor. That groundwork was essential to mount a successful argument in favor of the metaphor. On the other hand, the relentlessness with which the argument was made could "explain too much" of the

metaphor. In other words, the argument may seem to leave nothing to the imagination.

The question is more than merely aesthetic; it goes to the essence of the study because it bears on the value of this generative metaphor. At issue is whether *instructional reform as evangelism* requires the in-depth elaboration contained in this study. If the metaphor actually required the sort of explanation given here, the effort to understand it might easily outstrip the metaphor's generative potential.

Thankfully, the metaphor does not demand the full explication contained here before it can help us think critically about instructional reform. If nowhere else, this was demonstrated in Chapter 6. The heuristic merits of the metaphor were manifest when we applied the seven evangelical principles of reform to three cases of reform. The principles were developed based on the argument in the previous five chapters, but the principles are not dependent upon those chapters for their potential to help us see strengths and weaknesses of those reforms.

#### Focusing on the "Ideal"

In addition to the choice to explicate the two domains in great detail, we made other choices that constrained the study in significant ways. One example is our choice to focus on the "ideal" vision of evangelism rather than the messy and mixed forms of evangelism present in the world today. We made that choice to allow for a maximization of insights from the metaphor, by drawing contrasts between the "ideal" vision of evangelism and "typical" instructional reform efforts. There are clear consequences of that choice, but the work of establishing principles may in fact require thinking about ideal perspectives. Moreover, that choice did help us note fundamental differences in the ways reformers and evangelists think about their work, the message of change, and those they hope will heed it.

Nevertheless, the fact that many evangelists do not live up to the ideal form of evangelism portrayed in our review is not irrelevant. One observation is that the

evangelical principles we established may be as helpful (or more helpful) to evangelists as they are to those concerned about reform. The real world of evangelism, like the real world of instructional reform, is imperfect, messy, and often rather unsuccessful.

### Examples of Evangelical Zeal in Reform

It is also worth noting that we largely bracketed two other valuable perspectives from the study. First, we did not pay much attention to the subjective experience of teachers who report undergoing "religious conversions" or having epiphanies in professional workshops, conferences, or reform movements. In our study we saw evidence of this phenomenon, especially in the portrait of the Coalition of Essential Schools. And the language of personal transformation is evident in comments Deborah Meier makes about her work at Central Park East.

The phenomenon deserves closer study, and might benefit from insights we developed here. The subjective experiences of teachers who have undergone, as it were, pedagogical conversions bear witness to the prevalence of religious language (and religious feeling) in American culture and the current educational context. Moreover, teachers' experiences of conversion add credibility to our claim that the metaphor can "work" without the exhaustive elaboration we provided in this study. The metaphor has utility in part because some teachers "naturally" draw on common cultural understandings of religion, evangelism, and religious conversion to describe the personal changes they experienced.

A second area that we only briefly addressed in the study concerns the way some reformers promote reforms and reform movements with evangelical zeal. Throughout the study, we saw evidence of zealous and prophetic language concerning instructional reform, but did not give sustained attention to the phenomenon. We noted, for example, the strongly evangelical rhetoric of NCTM presidents, the enthusiastic claims of TedSizer and the Coalition, and the impassioned pleas of Deborah Meier to get teachers to

commit themselves to help students develop powerful habits of mind. All of those brief references point to a more general (if not common) phenomenon that has strong connections with the evangelism metaphor.

Furthermore, it may also be instructive to investigate what might be the unsavory side of evangelical pitches for reform. Clearly enough, not all leaders of schools or reform movements share the good reputation of Ted Sizer or Deborah Meier. Some champion reforms that are driven by problematic ideological agendas for schools. Others push reforms in ways that bear striking resemblance to the hit-and-run itinerant preachers of old. Further study about ways charismatic leaders advocate for their reforms would surely reveal a broad spectrum of motives and means of spreading the word.

In such a study, the relevant questions would focus on those who are the leaders of movements as well as those who respond to their calls for conversion. What are the leaders of these movements like? What are their rhetorical moves? What are their motives? And, looking to the other side of the relationship, what is the fruit of their work? It would be unsurprising if we found among them hucksters who, like Elmer Gantry, peddle their pedagogical gospel for personal gain. In any case, surveying the current "evangelical" scene in educational reform promises another useful perspective into the implications of this metaphor.

### Historical Associations Between Religion and Reform

A further area worth additional study is the history of the early common school movement in America. Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, for example, saw their vocation as participation in the work of Christian faith. Early common school leaders were motivated by deep religious convictions. And their work inaugurated what has been a longstanding association between religion and public education in America. The imagery in that era was powerfully religious, and the language they employed continues to resonate with many teachers today.

For all of those reasons, a study that investigated the history of the influence of religious leaders (and educational leaders who were religious) on education, with this metaphor in mind, could help provide a richer historical and cultural understanding of how the metaphor was (and/or could be) lived out in practice. An investigation into that history might well temper an overly-enthusiastic embrace of the metaphor, even as it enriched our understanding of the ways religious fervor shapes aspirations for reform, and helped reformers consider the costs and benefits for society when true believers (of whatever stripe) seek to transform the nation through reform of public education.

### Competing Creeds

A more fundamental limitation of the study is the assumption it makes that teachers are exposed to one message of reform at a time. We did acknowledge in Chapter 2 that teachers encounter reforms in a particular social, cultural, and historical context. We also noted that the context of reform always includes the history of prior reforms and often also includes other (sometimes contradictory) simultaneous reforms. But as we developed the metaphor, we bracketed out rival messages that teachers in schools might face as they attempted to respond to new calls for reform. Because in practice, rival reforms complicate efforts to enact reforms in school, it is worth asking whether the metaphor can help reformers help teachers manage change when they face multiple simultaneous reforms.

Based on what we learned, the multitude of reforms teachers face in schools presents them with at least two challenges. First, when teachers are faced with multiple competing reforms, they will have to make some sort of decisions about them. Sometimes teachers will explicitly choose between reforms. Sometimes teachers will attempt to enact them all, even when they contradict one another. As often happens, however, teachers may simply reject or deflect many or all of the calls for change in their teaching. In this situation, the question for authors and agents of reform is how they

might best help teachers conclude that a particular reform is worth their commitment. For that reason, the evangelical principles may be as helpful in cases where teachers are faced with multiple competing reforms as it is when they are faced with just one reform. In fact, because of the rival reforms, the agents of reform might need to be more intentional about winning teachers' commitment to their reform.

A different challenge occurs when reformers seek to convert teachers who have already self-consciously embraced a particular pedagogical creed (or reform movement, etc.). In that situation, reformers attempt to convert teachers who are believers in a particular creed. In Chapter 3, we noted that teachers who have self-consciously embraced ways of being teachers in schools will often be reluctant to embrace another reform, especially when the reform entails major changes in their beliefs and practices. In a sense, we might say these teachers have a "spiritual resistance" to new evangelical calls for conversion. Again, because this situation is likely to occur, it is worth asking what the evangelical principles might suggest to those reformers who hope to get teachers to embrace a different (i.e., their) reform creed.

At the start, it is important to note that chances of converting someone who is already a committed believer are slim. With that said, the question becomes how reformers could best increase the likelihood that "true believers" might seriously consider the claims of a rival creed. Drawing on the broader implication-complex of evangelism, we can see that the situation is similar to that of ecumenical or inter-religious dialogue. In those dialogues, interlocutors seek to gain a genuine understanding of rival views, seek to find points of agreement, and develop ways to manage their disagreements about beliefs and practices. The goal in those dialogues is rarely, if ever, conversion, but genuine "ecumenical" or "inter-religious" dialogue may be the best approach to managing conflicts between competing pedagogical creeds.

## LIMITS OF THE METAPHOR

In addition to highlighting areas that merit further study, it will be helpful to note some limits of the metaphor. The *instructional reform as evangelism* metaphor allows us to see particular values and relationships in the process of reform. And other metaphors cast different light on reform. They expose values and relationships that are difficult to see from the perspective of the evangelism metaphor. For that reason, it will always be important to pay close attention to the limits of generative metaphors like this one, and to supplement these insights with those drawn from other metaphors. For now, though, it will be helpful to consider a few things the metaphor can hide from view.

### Privileging Personal Commitment

One important lesson from the metaphor is the emphasis it places on getting teachers to personally commit themselves to reform. However, the metaphor's focus on winning teachers' personal commitment to reform might seem to imply that teachers are ultimately the most important persons in the process of reform. But such a conclusion would surely seem odd to reformers. They would typically view teachers as the means for improving student learning in schools. The point of reform, they might say, is to help the students. And, of course, they would be right.

If one were to over-emphasizing teachers' personal commitment to reforms, there could be at least two sets of consequences. The first centers on the effects of reform on non-teachers when teachers embrace reform. In other words, when teachers attempt to enact deep reforms, their actions have consequences for others, most particularly their students. Not surprisingly, for many of the same reasons teachers are often reluctant to embrace deep reform, students in schools may also resist reform. The consequence is that teachers who commit themselves to deep change may need to act as "evangelists" of reform with their students, to attempt to win their willingness to cooperate with reformed teaching practices.

Perhaps more importantly, teachers who are committed to reform might need to evangelize students' parents to their vision of teaching and learning. Parents can be very reluctant (to say the least) to accept "newfangled" methods of teaching for their children (Dow, 1991). As proof of the phenomenon, one need only consider the parental response to the "new math" and the "new new math."

### Justified Mandates for Change

Another problem comes into focus if we consider ways the principle of human dignity and freedom of conscience could be applied to reforms. To reiterate, that principle holds that teachers should be given the freedom to respond to reforms as they deem best. The reason, we argued, is that teachers are invested personally in their teaching, and calls for change, especially when reforms demand deep change, can be profoundly unsettling and difficult for teachers.

To be sure, this principle promotes an important value. However, emphasizing the freedom and dignity of teachers could at times lead to improperly privileging teachers' needs over those of their students and/or the common good. For example, when a social problem is as serious as it was with segregated schools, policymakers may be ethically bound to mandate change. In that case, the nation's values trumped local custom and outweighed the value contained in the principle of human dignity and the freedom of conscience teachers possess. In *Brown*, the courts and policymakers ruled that changes were needed, and they mandated changes in the structures of schools.

Even though mandated changes are sometimes justified, reformers would be wise to keep the evangelical principles in mind. And the reason is not simply the complicated and personal difficulty of deep change. There are practical problems because of loosely-coupled nature of American school governance. There is no effective system of "inspection" in American schools that could ensure that changes would be made in schools.

Therefore, even in situations where justice demands educational change, policymakers might be more effective if they supplement their mandates with a parallel evangelical effort to "win" the commitment of teachers to reform. The principles counsel reformers to take seriously the way teachers typically respond to mandates. It is the rare teacher who will say "Oh, this is for the common good, so I'll bracket my doubts and defer to the will of the people on this matter." The metaphor suggests that engaging the teachers about their doubts and concerns may be more effective than simply mandating change.

### Applying the Evangelical Principles

Those who look to the metaphor for suggestions for ways to improve instructional will face predictable challenges. These principles are not self-executing. They will demand judgments and wisdom to know how and when to apply them. In other words, the metaphor cannot simply be "adopted" by reformers. They are not a program for change, nor are they a checklist for reform success. Instead, the evangelical principles, drawn from the metaphor, highlight values that guide the work of evangelists. The metaphor suggests that reformers might do well to consider the values contained in the principles when they formulate plans to help teachers make changes in their classrooms.

This point may be illustrated by considering one of the seven principles. Among the seven principles, the most difficult one to apply may be the Magisterial Principle. After all, what would a "teaching office" look like for particular reforms? How could (or should) a group of persons be selected who would be given the authority to determine what a particular reform creed means and entails for classrooms?

Even though the practical difficulties of figuring out what a magisterium might look like in practice are very real, though, the value the magisterial principle highlights cannot be denied. The magisterial principle underscores the importance of interpretation to reform. There is a need for specification and explication of reforms not only for those

who want to help teachers enact reforms but also for those who are charged with evaluating whether teachers have done so.

Each of the seven evangelical principles arises from and points to values that reformers might do well to consider in their work of reform. They can help reformers think about the entire process of reform, from the point when social problems are identified through the long-term support given teachers as they attempt to enact reforms. Deep reform is so very difficult, and reformers who desire to be more successful in helping teachers improve their teaching will need to grapple with all the complexities and personal challenges teachers face when they attempt change. The metaphor underscores the messiness of teaching and the hardships teachers endure as they attempt to remake teaching and learning in their classrooms. And it suggests ways for reformers to think differently about reform to help mitigate the difficulties.

This metaphor, as we have shown, has limits, just as all metaphors have limits. No single metaphor, this one included, is up to the task of solving the difficult challenges of deep reform. But we are convinced that this metaphor offers helpful insights to reformers as they think about ways to improve the very complicated work of reform.

## VIRTUES OF REFORM

As we noted in the introduction, the two "implication-complexes" that together form any metaphor can lead to interesting connections between the two domains. Some connections have been evident thus far in our study, but it may be useful to emphasize a few more as we draw our study to a close. One major observation from the metaphor centers on what we will call the "virtues of reform." The theological virtues of faith, hope, and love are primary to the Christian life and are prevalent in the work of evangelism and factor heavily in religious conversions. Even without the reference to the metaphor, these three virtues from the domain of evangelism apply well to the demands of deep reform.

In their work, evangelists seek to win religious conversions and ongoing conversions of all who believe, so they are better able to live out the Christian faith. To that end, evangelists seek to express the love of Christ for potential converts, even as they offer hope to potential converts for a changed life of greater happiness and meaning in Christ. And in order to enter into the Christian community of love and to live a life of hope, the convert must express faith in the gospel message and in Christ who is the incarnate gospel. For Christians, evangelism and the fruit of evangelism, conversion, are intimately bound up with the virtues of faith, hope, and love.

### Faith

From our review of the process of instructional reform, it is clear that reforms often demand that teachers make changes in the ways they view (and treat) themselves, their vocation, and their lives. For example, instructional reforms (and especially deep reforms) ask teachers to abandon old practices in favor of new (sometimes radically different) ones. For this reason reforms of all kinds require faith on the part of those teachers who attempt to enact them. Faith is most clearly demanded with deep reforms, because, by definition, deep reforms require teachers to embrace changes that go against the current grammar of teaching and learning in schools.

The faith of teachers who seek to make radical changes in their teaching may be informed by their own investigation of the reform or the recommendations and experiences of others. However teachers who undertake deep reforms commit themselves to ideas and practices that extend beyond their current knowledge, experience, and competence. The faith they exercise could be faith in the message of the reform (its creed, as it were) or it could be faith in the messengers of reform.

Either way, because teachers cannot walk entirely by sight down the path of deep reform, they must, in a sense, live by faith. Teachers who embrace reform attempt to enact reform in the hopes that their practice will reap the pedagogical and personal benefits they seek. To the extent that deep reforms lack witnesses of the reformed

practices, the degree of faith teachers will have to exercise in order to attempt to enact the reform will be very great. In fact, for many teachers, the faith required may seem prohibitive.

In many cases, reformers adopt reforms and expect teachers to enact the reform based on authority, which is another way of saying they should do so by "blind faith." Those who respond to administrative fiat will make the attempt, but others who are less deferential may require more witnesses of the merits of the reform before they will be able to commit to the reform and step out in faith, supported by others who have believed before (and alongside) them.

The personal costs of trying new innovations are often high, however, and seldom is there any indication that innovations are worth the investment. Innovations are acts of faith. They require that one believe that they will ultimately bear fruit and be worth the personal investment, often without hope of an immediate return. Costs are also high. The amount of energy and time required to learn the new skills or roles associated with the new innovation is a useful index to the magnitude of the resistance. The necessity of relearning acts as a deterrent. New skills make old skills obsolete, and there comes a time when it is no longer worth the effort of learning new skills to master the innovation. Large-scale change usually requires replacing older teachers with younger ones who see the expenditure of effort as being worth the cost or using some other form of incentive to stimulate relearning and change. (House, 1974, pp. 73-74)

Embrace of an untested, unproven pedagogy demands a greater faith than many teachers have. In fact, many may have a faltering faith in their current practices. Without evidence of efficacy and practicability of reformed practices, all but the most gullible or "true believers" may spurn the approach of apostles of new practices. Such faith may be more than many teachers can embrace or maintain.

### Hope

Hebrews 11:1 states that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Though the faith of teachers may not reach the level of "assurance of things hoped for," it implies hope in the life called for by faith. In other words, faith assumes a measure of hope in (and for) an improved future. Before converts can express faith, they must have some hope that the message to which they are considering

committing themselves has a good chance of truly helping them and those they love. Without this kind of hope, it will be very hard for potential converts to make the passionate decision necessary to commit themselves to a new way of thinking and being in the world. In short, converts who embrace messages that call them to change do so based on hope for the future. In other words, converts commit themselves to a way of life they hope can--and believe, in faith, will--yield a better, more fulfilling, happiness-producing life.

From the perspective of the metaphor, part of the challenge for reformers will be to offer teachers reasons to hope that the message they are recommending is not groundless. If they are to succeed, the metaphor suggests, the ground for teachers' hope will need to include the witness of reformed lives. The witness of other teachers whose lives have changed supports their hope. In turn, that hope can help bring potential converts to the point where they feel sufficiently free to exercise their faith and make a passionate commitment to the message of change. Moreover, when potential converts witness and experience the help and support of a community of faith, their doubts about their abilities to live a reformed life can be mitigated. If they have had a foretaste of the loving support of the community of faith, their hope for themselves and for the message of change can be bolstered.

### Love

Because reform is so profoundly relational, the third theological virtue, love or "charity," is of central importance in change. In fact, for Christians, like the Israelites before them, the greatest commands involve love--to love God and love one's neighbor as oneself. In this regard, the golden rule, to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" might well serve as a useful guide for the work of reformers in their efforts to get teachers to reform their teaching. In this light, one way to think about reform is to ask how well reformers treat teachers as objects of change.

The ideas and commitments of evangelists point to ways to treat others with

respect. For that reason, the stance of the evangelist may not only be appropriate for policymakers in their interaction with teachers, but it can also be a guide for the interaction of teachers with their students. Indeed, the best teachers are those who can seek ways to cultivate new relationships between students and the subject matter they teach. They seek to win students to a love of the subject matter. They are, in a sense, matchmakers who look to students and to subject matter to find ways of connecting the two and fostering a growing relationship between them. Evangelists are fundamentally committed to the message of the gospel. They love the message because it guides their entire lives and offers them hope for the future and a way to live that gives them joy and satisfaction. For all those reasons, they also seek to share that gospel message with others, who will then be able to benefit from the graces of the gospel themselves.

To the extent that reformers love the ideas they are promulgating, they will seek ways to engage teachers with the substance of the reform and the practical consequences of the reformed practices in their classrooms. They will seek ways to win the commitment of teachers to reform ideas. The metaphor "forces" reformers to take seriously the concerns, doubts, and challenges that teachers experience in the face of reforms.

For example, teachers may have more fundamental needs that must be addressed before teachers will feel free to seriously consider additional reform ideas and practices. And, until those prior practical needs are met, reform proposals may fall on deaf ears. Similarly, without adequate resources to engage reform ideas deeply, teachers will be forced, if they enact reforms at all, to do so in light of their perhaps impoverished vision and understanding of the reform. To the extent that teachers lack support from others, they will be forced to fend for themselves and, as they always do, craft a practice for themselves. The question for reformers is how best to help them craft their practice in ways that are informed (and perhaps inspired) by the ideas and ideals of the reform.

To conclude this brief foray into the virtues of reform, consider these observations of Michael Fullan (1997):

... the situation of change is profoundly problematic and ... we are down to our last virtue: hope. We stand less of a chance by pursuing the techniques of innovation than we do by working on a deeper understanding of the complex interrelationships of emotion, hope, empathy, and moral purpose. (p. 221)

All reforms, and especially those that require deep change, have implications for the persons who inhabit schools. Naturally, reforms that entail deep change have deeper implications for the cultures of schools and for the relationships teachers have with one another and with their students around the subject matter they teach. For that reason, it is little surprise that the uncertainties and risks of deep change would require more affective supports than other, more superficial changes.

All reforms demand the virtues of faith, hope, and love, but none demand them more than the deep reforms that strike at the heart of teaching practice. Deep reforms go to the core of teachers, as well as their practice, and deep reforms have implications for the ways teachers understand themselves, their students, and their work. All such changes require, if this metaphor is right, the sorts of emotional support commonly found in communities of faith, communities that draw on common ideas and ideals, that give persons genuine hope for change. All of these elements of change are best sustained and nurtured in the context that reflects love for the work, the subject matter, and the students teachers feel called to serve.

### GOOD NEWS OF REFORM

The metaphor suggests that when teachers are captivated by and committed to a vision for teaching and learning, they will be more apt to teach in keeping with that vision, because they will have self-consciously embraced it. They will also be more apt, in the end, to share that message of hope with other teachers, to spread the good news of better (more fulfilling) teaching. In one sense, the metaphor invites teachers and reformers to live by the "golden rule," to do unto others as they would have them do unto them.

Evangelists are most effective when they are living out the message they

proclaim, when they can point to themselves as an example of the life they recommend. At very least, they invite others to come and see, to witness and experience the benefits of a reformed life in a community of faith. The message is for everyone, so the invitation goes out widely. Of course, an offer of good news is rarely interpreted as good news if it comes with coercive power. When changes have the force of imposition instead of proposition, the response is naturally quite different. Instead of a stance of welcome for the message (and the messenger), those who receive the imposition will find it easy to respond with skepticism, caution, uncertainty, and perhaps even fear.

If reformers thought about radical reform as evangelists think about spreading the good news of the gospel, and did so in the context of ecclesial communities, through relationships of trust and mutual support/challenge, the likelihood of reforms taking hold would be improved, even if the likelihood of making radical change remains low. The way people become part of movements of change is through personal investment in them, and the availability of channels for them to pursue their lofty vision that is (or may be) captured by the ideas of some larger mission to change/improve instruction for kids.

In conclusion, one of the most important questions in this investigation of the metaphor *instructional reform as evangelism* arises from the Greek word that is the root of *evangelism*. *Evangel* means "good news." The history of instructional reform reveals many instances when teachers have seen reforms as anything but good news. Sometimes, the ideas themselves have been unrealistic or under-specified. At others, the problem has been that reforms have asked teachers to make changes that they were ill-prepared to make. Teachers are often not given sufficient opportunity to learn about reform ideas, and they are less often shown models of reformed practice.

Typically, the sort of sustained effort required to win teachers' commitment demands strong, charismatic leadership to "rally the troops" and help advance a vision for change. Moreover, reformers would do well to ensure 1) that teachers are given examples of the practice that can provide hope that they too can make changes in the

direction of the reform, 2) that teachers are given support from others that help them commit themselves in faith to the message of reform, and 3) that teachers are sustained and supported by communities of fellow teachers who are collectively committed to improving their teaching and their students' learning.

Based on the seven evangelical principles of reform, reformers and agents of reform would do well to ensure that the policies they adopt are (and are perceived as) responsive to real needs teachers are facing in their classrooms. If the reforms are not perceived as responsive to teachers' present needs, reformers may need to strive harder (and probably take longer) to win the commitment of teachers to make changes, especially in cases where reforms are calling on teachers to make fundamental changes in their practice. (We make these observations with the obvious caveat that policies that redress inequities can change the moral equation in this regard.)

At their core, the evangelical principles of reform tell reformers to treat teachers with dignity. To that end, they encourage reformers to take the present problems, current challenges, and deep commitments of teachers seriously. They suggest that reformers be witnesses to and witnesses of the benefits of reformed pedagogy. They ask reformers to invite teachers to follow their example. But reformers are sometimes unsure what they want teachers to do with their reforms, or how to help them get there.<sup>80</sup> The evangelical principles implore reformers to support teachers in their work. And they invite them to win teachers' commitment rather than requiring their compliance. Finally, they ask reformers to show others the way. In such an "evangelical world," who knows? Teachers might actually view reform as good news. If they do, they might then spread the word. Even to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The message of the metaphor is hopeful, but not terribly sanguine, despite this emphasis on faith, hope, and love. For if anything is clear from this study, it is that the

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<sup>80</sup> On that point, the Latin phrase *nemo dat quod non habet* seems particularly apt. ("One cannot give what one does not have.")

challenges of deep instructional reform are profound. They could never be eliminated by the elaboration of this or any metaphor. Nevertheless, the metaphor *instructional reform as evangelism* has heuristic promise for greater understanding of the challenges of making change in schools.

The metaphor and the seven evangelical principles of reform provide intellectual tools that scholars of planned innovation and those who are concerned about instructional reform can use to explore the challenges and prospects of past, present, and future instructional reform efforts. Of course, the power of this metaphor, like others, centers on the ideas that follow from their use. They help us orient ourselves toward the world and help guide us as we think about ways to live our futures (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The metaphor and the evangelical principles cast a new light on change, one we hope reformers and students of reform will find useful.

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