

The Goal of Education is Action

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Introduction

The women students at the Ivory Graduate Seminary in Fianarantsoa, Madagascar, had a problem. These women lived and served in a society that accepted violence against women as a norm and denied women and girls both reproductive rights and the right to refuse sex. They served as well within a Christian community that erected significant obstacles toward the recognition of the vocation of women for ministry. The women students, who had somehow found their way to the highest level of theological education available on the island despite real challenges, were in need of support and safe space for discussion. They often questioned how to maintain the integrity of their calls in the midst of a hostile and often toxic society and church community. Because most of them were wives and mothers as well as students, all of the childcare, housework, and cooking fell to them, so most of them were working the equivalent of two full-time jobs. Exhaustion and attendant vulnerability to disease were constant issues. Yet these women were committed to the ministries to which God had called them, and they had a crucial need for support.

The women faculty of the seminary, who knew firsthand the challenges under which women students worked, decided to offer an elective class. Because any meetings or classes offered only for women were apt to create suspicion and controversy, the class was opened to both women and men; but the text for the class, Renita Weems's *Battered Love*,¹ encouraged potential participants to self-select according to interest. The resulting class included all women students, and no men opted to participate. Early session discussions centered on scripture and Weems's book. Gradually, however, the women brought their life experiences into dialogue with scripture and the work of a biblical scholar to whom they had not previously been exposed, whose approach to scripture was new to them. The class offered permission to discuss painful truths and to find strength in community for the journey of faith that had brought the women to seminary and into ministry. Insights explored in the class empowered the women for their often-difficult work of standing up for justice—for themselves and for others.

"Educational activity . . . is political activity," says Thomas Groome. He then defines education as ". . . any deliberate and structured intervention in people's lives which attempts to influence how they live their lives in society."²

Education is supposed to do something in the lives of people. It is supposed to change the way we do things, how we see things, what actions we take in our lives. It forms, informs, and re-forms us; as Maria Harris says, it *refashions* us, ". . . lifting up and lifting out those forms through which we might refashion

ourselves into a pastoral people.”³ Through educational ministry, we in the church hope to empower people to name the depth and pain of brokenness within us, the church, the society, and the world, while in the same moment announcing and proclaiming the new life that is the Christian enterprise.⁴ This is most certainly the political activity of which Groome speaks.

Baptism is the starting point for the church’s “deliberate and structured intervention” in people’s lives. In baptism, we take vows to stand with the baptized in their faith journeys. In the Reformed Church in America, these vows include promises to “teach the gospel of God’s love,” to “be examples of Christian faith and character,” and to “give [the] strong support of God’s family in fellowship, prayer and service.”⁵ These promises echo congregational vows from other Christian denominations, including my own; at baptism, Presbyterians promise “to live the Christian faith, so to teach it to [those baptized]” and “to love, encourage, and support [the baptized], sharing the good news of Christ’s gospel,” so “to help [them] know and follow Christ.”⁶ As Norman Kansfield reminds us, if the church takes baptism seriously, “to each baptized individual, the church owes rigorous education [and] continuous nurture” to assist people in the development and absorption of “a basic framework for the content of faith—a utilitarian, experiential theology,” out of which a faithful life can be lived.⁷

In the church, however, the grand and awesome promises made at baptism do not compose the, or perhaps even *one of the*, primary foci for us in the planning of educational ministries. Too often, the vast power of education for the growing and nurture of disciples is reduced by common misunderstandings of the task. When the term “Christian education” is spoken, thoughts turn to “Sunday school,” and that for children alone (understood in many congregations as that which children do during worship so adults can have peace). “Education” is not equivalent to “schooling,” nor is it limited to activity in which only children take part. The ministry which I am advocating is an active part of the whole of life, a journey that does not end with the reception of a diploma, degree, or certificate.

Another common misunderstanding about the work of education is that once one is an adult, those who continue theological and biblical education are by definition church professionals—the clergy and other church staff. In contrast, this article argues for vital and dynamic education, taking many forms, touching on a world of issues, concerns, and subject areas, which equips all who follow Christ to live their faith in the world. The world in which we live does not understand nor appreciate the gospel that offers life to the world. Thus, followers of Jesus require the strength and encouragement offered by education throughout their journeys of faith, so to become ever more faithful in their promotion of Jesus’ gospel. The process of growing into discipleship takes the

whole of this life and takes us into the next. As Nelle Morton puts it, discovering who we are and the particular ministries to which we are called in Christ is the journey that is, throughout life, our home.⁸ Educational ministry is crucial to the faithful lifelong development of that journey.

This article lifts up three opportunities for the education of the church, in the church and in the world. While not an exhaustive list, these three encompass some of the most common and natural places and spaces where the church can offer perspective and reflection that can lead to education's goal of action. Education is a constructive response when *a felt need* is expressed; *in times of crisis*, personal, community, societal, or global; and *when the identity and role of the church needs clarification*. We look at these three in turn.

Education that Grows out of Felt Need

This opportunity for education moving toward action covers many kinds of teaching and learning that are commonly offered in congregations and institutions of higher theological education. In some ways, education developed in response to felt need can be the easiest way to accomplish our educational goals – and in particular, the goal of education leading to action. Because the prospective learners have initiated conversations leading to the development of educational opportunities, they are, almost by definition, ready – even eager – to learn what is taught. Effective teaching can equip learners to translate their new learnings into action as well. These are the “teachable moments” in which educators delight.

As in any ministry planning process, care needs to be taken that what we offer in educational ministry is reflective of wider goals – particularly, that initiatives move people from learning to action. Congregations and institutions can fall into a pattern of continuing to program courses that have been on past schedules, through failure of imaginative vision or lack of the work of discernment needed to hear God's current call. A congregation may feel that traditional programming for youth group, stay-at-home mothers, or older adults, for example, should continue. A seminary faculty can operate in the same way, offering many of the same courses from year to year. In itself, this does not present much of a problem; the basic program may remain significantly the same each year. Concern arises only when the need to continue “traditional” programming builds barriers to new initiatives arising from expressed needs. At that point, curriculum planners need to review the whole program and discern to what action God is calling the institution *now* – and what educational initiatives are needed to engender that action. The resulting curricular revision may lead faithful leaders to remove some “traditional” programs that no longer serve the needs and goals of the institution or those whom it serves. When new courses and programs are offered in response to felt needs, we become open to the

Spirit's leading in educational initiatives, and thus we are much more likely to offer education that results in action.

Significant educational initiatives have arisen in response to felt need. One example of this in the U.S. was the publishing of research findings by the Search Institute on the development of youth ministry and vocation in congregations.⁹ Another is the growing body of literature on the ministry and vocation of laypeople in their workplaces, sometimes called "marketplace ministry."¹⁰ Because they arise from felt and expressed need, these kinds of initiatives have real potential for changing the way people live their lives, inciting Groome's "political activity."

Education offered in response to felt need can also change – and indeed, can create – new models and approaches to existing problems. Two examples from African women theologians illustrate this point. Ghanaian Mercy Amba Oduyoye, often understood as the "mother" of all African women theologians and scholars, found herself in a meeting with ten male colleagues sometime in the late 1970s, and during the meeting she was asked by her coworkers to get tea for the group. As she states, "We had the tea – but it was not I who brought it!" For Oduyoye, this incident underlined the need for African women theologians, many of whom at the time were the sole women among men theologians where they taught or served, to form some kind of support group. From that moment, Oduyoye began to work to found what eventually became the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. The Circle encourages women to study theology; advocates for women, both lay and professional, in religious organizations; supports the research of women theologians; and gathers African women theologians from across the continent and the diaspora for mutual support, encouragement, and challenge. In three different institutions of higher education on the African continent, the Circle has been instrumental in the creation of new degree programs and resource centers. Through its many projects, the Circle has become a powerful force in publishing, research, and advocacy for African women theologians.¹¹ The educational and political activity involved in the formation and continuing life of the Circle moves seminaries, churches, and the wider society to action that proclaims God's good news for all people.

Kenyan pastor and theologian Nyambura Njoroge recounts the history of a Christian women's movement that arose in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa from a foundation of felt need.¹² In the early part of the twentieth century, the practice of female circumcision, now referred to by many as "female genital mutilation" [FGM], was widespread, culturally accepted, and government sanctioned in Kenya and in many other parts of Africa. Three Gikuyu Presbyterian women in 1922, in response to the death of a friend in childbirth

from complications resulting from FGM, decided that their daughters would not be circumcised. They appealed both to missionary doctors and to the sessions (church boards) of their congregations to stand with them. Although they met stiff resistance, both inside and outside the churches, their movement grew from three women to hundreds of women's guilds in congregations, called *Kiama kia Ngo*, or "Council of the Shield," which sought to educate about the impact, physical, spiritual, and psychological, of FGM in the lives of women, girls, and communities. Eventually, the purpose of the council grew to encompass all issues "... nurturing African Christian womanhood and the struggle for human dignity."¹³ Through the work of this group to educate women, girls, the Christian community and wider African society about FGM and the need to eradicate the practice, life has been changed for millions of women and girls in Africa and in the African diaspora.

Oduyoye and Njoroge tell and participate in stories like those told by the Search Institute and those writing about the ministry of laypeople in the workplace. In many and various ways, these writers lift the good news of what occurs when congregations and other Christian organizations offer education in response to felt need: life is changed and action is engendered.

In Times of Crisis

In the U.S. and around the world, September 11, 2001, is remembered as the entrance of large-scale terrorist intrusion on American soil. Countless congregations, judicatories, seminaries, and church colleges and universities developed educational programs in response to the crisis. With seeming suddenness, the interest of lay people and church professionals was caught by a cluster of issues: the distinctiveness of Islamic belief and Islamic fundamentalism; geopolitical forces that led and lead citizens of other nations to regard the U.S. with distaste, contempt, and hatred; and how to be safe and to re-integrate a sense of security for children, youth, and adults in a world in which fear at home was a new reality for many.

Times of crisis are not the most fruitful times for education. Fear is not a force that engenders learning well, and the instability that is part and parcel of crisis moves most people to grasp for some sense of control. When we try ever more frantically to control that which cannot be controlled, we create a vicious and exhausting cycle that is not conducive to learning – or at least, learning anything more than the realization, finally, that we cannot control the crisis.

Crisis can open people's eyes to issues that in many cases were present for some time, but were not on the table for examination and dialogue. Once those in crisis face the fact that they cannot control everything happening around them or to them, they often look for safe places for dialogue and new learning. Those

who are gifted at curriculum planning and writing, authoring books, planning worship, preaching sermons and teaching and leading meetings of many kinds can find opportunities in crisis situations to address issues and offer education that might otherwise be ignored. With the wider perspective offered by learning about issues to which we have not attended in the past, people, congregations, and other institutions can find new ways to live into a more faithful future.

Examples of faithful response to crisis abound in the church. A slim volume edited by Langford and Rouner published in response to September 11 includes essays by ecumenical, international and interfaith scholars and theologians.¹⁴ The book, which is representative of a great body of literature produced in response to this particular crisis, can be used effectively with either seminary classes or congregational study groups. The essays share the benefit of having been written some months to a year after the attack, and so display individually and collectively the reflection that is needed to make meaning out of crisis. In the church, the goal in the use of this kind of resource for education is to move people to think differently about life, the world, and their own lives – and then to act differently as a result.

Global crises of many kinds can spark educational opportunities that lead people to action. The worldwide HIV-AIDS epidemic has spurred people not only to participate in learning opportunities, but to give their money and time, and also to visit affected regions and countries. Wars in faraway locales like Liberia, Rwanda, Chiapas, and the Balkan states have sparked interest in these and other areas about which North American Christians have known little previously. Such education has encouraged people to understand the world differently and to act to relieve suffering and to work for systemic reform in the root causes of such conflicts. And the global phenomena of poverty, violence, environmental degradation, and interethnic tensions have been the foci of many rich and deep educational initiatives in congregations and other Christian institutions. These have engendered action in ecclesial and secular spheres in the forms of advocacy, consciousness-raising, new approaches to stewardship, giving of time and talents and direct relief efforts, particularly in the case of natural disasters worldwide. Crisis comes in many forms, and it does not have to involve geopolitical forces to open people to opportunities for education. Personal issues, such as the death of a spouse or child, divorce, severe illness, unemployment, or financial difficulty in a family can throw people into crisis. Many congregations have a long history of marriage classes and weekends, as well as traditional educational programming for a wide variety of age levels and concerns through the life cycle. Strangely, although the types of personal crises listed above are experienced regularly by church members in North American congregations, neither the educational offerings in most congregations nor the curriculum at most seminaries offers much guidance in how to approach these crises personally or pastorally.

Educational planners and leaders sensitive to the painful reality of life for many Christians can take the initiative to offer opportunities for members to work through personal crises within the safety and compassion of a congregation's ministry. While, as noted above, those deep in the midst of crisis will in most cases not be able to take meaningful part in such offerings, for those at a later stage, well-planned educational programs can help people take faithful and fruitful steps toward action and healthy change.

To Clarify the Identity and Role of the Church

In an October 2003 interview on the PBS program *NOW with Bill Moyers*, Union Theological Seminary (N.Y.) president and United Church of Christ minister Joseph C. Hough called on disciples of the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) to, in Moyers's words, "engage in an act of refusal." Citing Proverbs 14:31a, "Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker" (NRSV), Hough called on believers to stand up and call U.S. government policy what it is: ". . . immoral on the basis of our religious traditions, and . . . an insult to God." Hough named "the growing gap between the rich and poor" as "obscene," and called for believers to understand that ". . . the stated intentional policy of bankrupting the government so that in the future there'll be no money for anything the federal government would decide to do" is a "deep and profound theological issue . . . having to do with whether we are faithful to the deepest convictions of our faith." By October of last year, Hough suspected that the time had "nearly come" for believers in the Almighty to engage in civil disobedience as an act of faith in protest of national policy.¹⁵

Hough's sense of the crucial nature of this moment for American believers is shared by Rosalind Hinton, who wrote last year:

We are not in a time when we can throw up our hands and write a disclaimer regarding our government's actions. For many of us, distancing ourselves from U.S. foreign and domestic policy is something akin to sitting in our rocking chairs on our North American plantations while the poor of the world do our bidding. We simply cannot deny the advantages that we experience as citizens of the most powerful country in the world. . . . Anything short of dismantling our own comfort zones is complicity in, perhaps, the most arrogant display of military and economic might the world has ever encountered.¹⁶

When challenged in this way, many believers may not have adequate resources to respond in any meaningful fashion. Embarrassment, anger, and shame can result, then, in turning off the message and tuning out the messenger. In the U.S., where many Christians understand that "God and country" are an

indivisible and sacred whole, the claim that the One would call us to stand against the other is confusing. Additionally, acknowledgement of the privileged comfort zones in which we live is problematic for many who are “comfortable” with their owned sense of having “earned” what they have and what we as a nation have. Even for theologians and biblical scholars, the raising of these issues can be disconcerting, as those of us who are dominant culturally in our nation and world are, as Richard Horsley puts it, “in and of the imperial metropolis.” Horsley suggests that, as all the fields and subfields of scholarship in which American theology and religion scholars work have been developed from a standpoint of empire and dominance, the question of “how to include some critical awareness of the results and implications of our position” becomes difficult.¹⁷ Most pastors in the U.S. labor under the same limitations. That is, many of those who pastor and lead congregations and churches are “in and of the empire,” and much of the training they have received comes from what Horsley would deem “imperial” sources. Hence, many U.S. pastors and church leaders are also in the difficult position of looking for effective ways to see with a critical eye the dominant cultural milieu, both in this nation and in the world, of which they themselves are a part.

In order to clarify the identity and role of the church in the U.S. in this crucial time, a wide variety of educational processes will be required. Because most American church leaders are from the dominant culture, we cannot rely solely on our own sense of what is true and right in this case. We will have to go to the margins to find those who can effectively lead us in this crucial educational endeavor.

At the margins, of course, God has placed many who have gifts. Members of the global church, leaders who are outside the EuroAmerican dominant stream, women pastors and theologians – these and others who see from their own context and from their experience of knowing imperial oppression firsthand can offer perspectives on “truth” which are different from the “truth” understood from the vantage point of dominance. Representatives of the great body of resources available for this learning include classic texts, such as *God is Red*;¹⁸ international voices, like those included in *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*¹⁹ and the *NOW with Bill Moyers* program “Rich World, Poor Women”;²⁰ feminist and womanist resources;²¹ and resources written to assist church leaders and congregations to minister multiculturally, such as the works of Eric H.F. Law.²² In fact, the Presbyterian Church (USA)’s Peacemaking Program employs Law’s “Community Bible Study Process” on its weblink about the war in Iraq, encouraging congregations to use this as a helpful way to talk about difficult issues, particularly issues that raise questions about the righteousness of American actions, both domestically and internationally.²³

The challenge, then, is not finding the resources to look at life and the role of the church in a different way. The pedagogical challenge is to lead U.S. Christians, church leaders, and pastors toward the realization that different understandings of truth *do matter*, despite the continuing evidence that the American way in the world “works.” That is, despite growing global tension and the fear and instability in the post-September 11 world in which we live, the U.S. is still the richest country in the world, with the greatest military might and grandest industrial base. The sense, then, that we are most favored among all people, that God has specially blessed us because God particularly loves us is hard to shake in some quarters. Carol Lakey Hess describes the place in which U.S. churches find themselves in this way:

. . . for North American churches, life is messier these days. No longer do the churches enjoy privileged status and . . . hegemony . . . [this may be] an opportunity for the church to really be the church. . . . When the nation was considered a Christian nation, the church learned neither how to discourse with the “other” . . . nor how to separate gospel from dominant patriarchal worldviews. . . . “Peace” and “stability” are often obtained at the great cost of subduing and suppressing voices who call for justice. The unleashing of the voices of the oppressed, who previously paid that price, has led to unrest, confusion. . . . but also new visions, revitalization, repentance and a new concern for justice.²⁴

Hess’s analysis suggests that while U.S. Christians may have a problem currently with self-identity and understanding rightly our role as believers in the world, we also have an opportunity at this *kairos* time.

The task for educators is clear: to make the most of the opportunity presented to us in this moment. To take up the challenge of that opportunity, we need to seek venues and constructive methods for effective education that moves American Christians toward the goal of understanding both the particular role played by the U.S. in international affairs at this juncture in history, and to discern what the role of the Christian church should be in the face of the actions of our government on behalf of we who are citizens. As we seek ways to achieve these goals, two prominent educators remind us that in action, education occurs. Rebecca Chopp argues for the understanding that theological education is not only about justice – it is justice itself. “We need to conceive of theological education as the doing of justice. . . . In American history the parallel . . . is the understanding of education as the training of citizens. Justice names not simply the goal but the process itself.”²⁵ Chopp echoes Thomas Groome’s sense of action as the praxis in which education occurs, and his belief that “. . . faith is in the doing,” which Groome understands as requiring “. . . the grounding of a trusting relationship with God who saves in Jesus Christ.”²⁶ Educational designs

that move believers not only to greater awareness but also to action itself can create a positive cycle in which education leads to action, which leads to more education.²⁷

Maria Harris has outlined “the powers to claim” the task of teaching. These powers have specific importance to the discussion at hand. Harris names five powers crucial to educational work: “. . . the power to receive, the power to rebel, the power to resist, the power to reform, and the power to love.”²⁸ Harris argues that we must first receive—that is, we must be still enough to be attentive to the real situation in which we live; we must then claim the power to rebel against the injustice inherent in the world’s life, which Harris calls teaching “. . . in the light, where the rage and grief of the world’s suffering provide our angle of vision.”²⁹ Having claimed the power to rebel, we must claim the power to resist. Teachers are especially called to resisting “. . . the privatizing, ghettoizing, and domesticating of the teaching act. To domesticate an animal is to take it and thus render it harmless. . . domestication is the process whereby groups in power seek to channel or neutralize the potentially resistance forces let loose when people realize they are exploited.”³⁰ Harris then claims the power of reform for educators, seeing reform as an activity of education, and finally claims the power to love, reminding us of Martin Luther King’s teaching that human deeds of love make God credible.³¹

These five powers can be used as a scaffold on which to build an effective response to the current educational need in the U.S. of providing clarity about the identity and role of the church. Building on the power to receive, educational programs can be designed that increase awareness of the reality of the role of the U.S. in the world and the impact, domestically and internationally, of the policies of our government. If we come to understand, through claiming the power to receive the truth, that those policies have caused suffering in the world, educators must offer to learners the opportunity to claim the power to rebel. Teaching in the light, as Harris proposes, can lead learners and teachers into wilderness wanderings when that which was assumed is no longer clear. At these junctures, both teachers and learners need safe places to express their completely normal rebellion to the injustices about which they have learned. As educators claim the power of resistance, they begin to get to the heart of the matter in moving from education to action. Too often congregations and other Christian institutions offer courses and educational programs that have no understanding that that which is taught becomes “political.” That is, too often, there is no expectation of actual impact on how people live resulting from what we teach. Additionally, if action was expected or hoped for as an educational outcome, too often we in the church do nothing when no action or change occurs. Education is presented in the church, and the education of the church is

presented in the world, with the goal of action – and quite often the appropriate response to what people have learned is resistance. This is a crucial step.

Claiming the power to resist can lead us to truly claim the power to reform. It is a heady realization to name and claim actual reform as the work of education – and it is a claim that many non-educators in the church would refute, seeing the root of reform in other places. However, if we in the church, and in Christian education, are about the forming of disciples, then part of the educational task must be central in the work of reform, both in the world and in the church. Particularly for those of us in the Reformed tradition who claim the motto, *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda est*, and who hold as precious our heritage of emphasis on an educated clergy and an educated laity, we must claim the power of reform as paradigmatic in the ministry of education. Assisting believers in understanding the ways in which reform of the society is appropriate – and even requisite – work for Christians will be central to this task.

Finally, educators must claim the power to love. Harris states that “. . . the political vocation of mediating the grace of power is incomplete if it does not end in love.”³² Indeed, love provides both the starting point and the end point of the educational task and must permeate every way station on the journey. Nothing is as ineffective as education that masks contempt and hatred of the other, whether for reason of gender, race, creed, or a different perspective on the issue. This is not so much education as hammering, and it has as much impact in the short or long term as Paul’s “noisy gong” and “clanging cymbal” (1 Cor. 13:1). Love requires respect, despite the ways in which the learner and the teacher are dissimilar. Particularly if education is called for in order to clarify the role of the church, a difficult journey will be taken by both teacher and learner. To stay adequately committed to one another to come to a succession of reflective way stations and potential endpoints and resolutions of such a journey, the mutual respect of love, modeled by the educator, is an absolute must.

Conclusion

The achievable goal of education is action. This goal is achievable because of the political power of education, begun in the waters of baptism and the sacred vows taken there, and continuing throughout the whole of life. Education can move people to action by moving us out of our comfort zones, out of the imperial metropolis, and out to the margins from the dominant center.

Education offered in response to felt need, in times of crisis, and when the role of the church needs clarification is *kairotic* education. In these times, the urgent need felt within the body of Christ for learning is served by Spirit-filled educational designs and initiatives that move people to grow and to act from their new understanding and perspective.

The common assumption that “Christian education” means “Sunday School” for children has led to the sense that education in the church is not supposed to do anything or to change anything. It is only training the young to rehearse the stories and practices of the faith in an uncritical way. Once children confirm the baptismal vows made on their behalf, in this assumption, the church transfers responsibility for continuing theological, ecclesiological, and biblical education to its professionals. This understanding of Christian education means that those who are physiologically, cognitively able to deal with information critically (that is, those who are adults) have no need of it. It is a highly political activity, then, to suggest that learning is a lifelong way through which Jesus’ disciples must take part in order to follow Christ in the church and the world. We mean by this that the work of the body of Christ requires those who are equipped with the ability to see the world and the church with a critical eye to reflect on the meaning of the church in the world. Informed in this way, believers can act faithfully and with integrity.

Finally, as Harris’s scaffold shows, love is key to the enterprise of education with the goal of action. Love is found when believers covenant together in mutual learning and growth through educational ministries. These ministries call disciples to mutual accountability, encouragement, challenge, and discipline. Through the sharing of love and compassionate care for all those who seek to learn, the body of Christ is nurtured for its task of service in the world, and we move further toward the goals of the sovereign realm of God in the church and in the world.

ENDNOTES

¹ Renita J. Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995).

² Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), 15.

³ Maria Harris, *Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 41.

⁴ This construction of the purpose of the church is outlined in Rebecca S. Chopp’s *Saving Work: Feminist Practices of Theological Education* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995).

⁵ The Commission on Worship, *Liturgy and Confessions* Part II, Baptism (Grand Rapids: Reformed Church Press, 1990), 4.

⁶ The Office of Worship for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, *Holy Baptism and Services for the Renewal of Baptism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 27-32.

⁷ Norman Kansfield, “Christian Education and the Ten-Year Goal,” in *Reformed Review*, vol. 57, no. 1 (Holland, MI: Western Theological Seminary, 2003), 55. Kansfield referred to Sonja M. Stewart’s work, particularly in *Young Children and Worship* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), as a signal resource for the kind of “rigorous education” he advocates.

- ⁸ Nelle Morton, *The Journey is Home* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985).
- ⁹ Eugene C. Roehlkepartain and Peter C. Scales, *Youth Development in Congregations: An Exploration of the Potential and Barriers* (Minneapolis: The Search Institute, Inc., 1995).
- ¹⁰ Many resources on this topic are referenced in Pete Hammond et. al., *The Marketplace Annotated Bibliography: A Christian Guide to Books on Work, Business and Vocation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002).
- ¹¹ Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "The Story of a Circle," in *Ecumenical Review* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, January 2001).
- ¹² Nyambura J. Njoroge, *Kiama kia Ngo: An African Christian Feminist Ethic of Resistance and Transformation* (Legon, Ghana: Asempa Publishers, 2000).
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 20-36.
- ¹⁴ James Langford and Leroy S. Rounder, eds., *Walking with God in a Fragile World* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).
- ¹⁵ *NOW with Bill Moyers*, Public Broadcasting System, October 24, 2003. Transcript of interview found on Common Dreams News Center at www.commondreams.org/views03/1027-01.htm.
- ¹⁶ Rosalind Hinton, "Contextualizing Rosemary," in *Cross Currents*, vol. 54, no. 1 (New York: Association for Religion and Intellectual Life, 2003), 23.
- ¹⁷ Richard A. Horsley, "In the Belly of the Beast," in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 71, issue 1 (Atlanta: American Academy of Religion, 2003), 128. In this response article, Horsley continues developing the line of argument he began with the lead article of the same issue, "Religion and Other Products of Empire," 13-44.
- ¹⁸ Vine Deloria, Jr. (New York: Dell Publishing, 1973).
- ¹⁹ R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed.
- ²⁰ September 5, 2003. At www.pbs.org/now, under "Archives" and "Lesson Plans," there are lesson plans, quizzes, and other educational design aids, as well as other links for adaptation and use in a wide variety of educational designs.
- ²¹ A few notable texts from this large body of literature from the past decade include Alice Ogden Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994); Traci C. West, *Wounds of the Spirit: Black Women, Violence and Resistance Ethics* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1999); Christie Cozad Neuger, ed., *The Arts of Ministry: Feminist-Womanist Approaches* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996); and Chopp's *Saving Work* (see note 4 above).
- ²² These include *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*, 1993; *The Bush was Blazing but not Consumed: Developing a Multicultural Community through Dialogue and Liturgy*, 1996; *Inclusion: Making Room for Grace*, 2000; *Sacred Acts, Holy Change: Faithful Diversity and Practical Transformation*, 2002; and *The Word in the Crossings: Proclaiming and Teaching the Good News in a Pluralistic Society*, 2004. All are published by Chalice Press, St. Louis.
- ²³ Process directions can be found at www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/iraq/biblestudies.htm.
- ²⁴ Carol Lakey Hess, "Education as an Art of Getting Dirty with Dignity," in Neuger, ed., *The Arts of Ministry: Feminist-Womanist Approaches* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996), 63-64.
- ²⁵ Chopp 1995, 105-107.
- ²⁶ Groome 1980, 63-66.
- ²⁷ This is a central assumption of Groome's "Shared praxis" model; *ibid.*, 184-238.
- ²⁸ Maria Harris, *Teaching and Religious Imagination: An Essay in the Theology of Teaching* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 89.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 93.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 95.
- ³² *Ibid.*