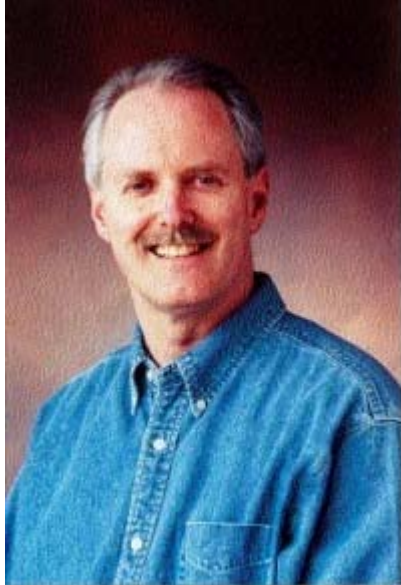

EXCERPTS FROM THE THESIS OF REV. DR. J. ROBERT CLAUS



Rev. Dr. J. Robert Claus (Bob) started using the Workshop Rotation Model in 1989 as the Associate Pastor at Southminster Presbyterian Church, Arlington Heights, Illinois. His wife, Joyce, who holds a Masters degree in curriculum and instruction, was the first advocate for use of "best practices" for the Model. Bob's D.Min. Thesis (1998), the first on the Workshop Rotation Model, identifies the underlying theological principles for transforming a church's educational ministry using this model. Bob graduated in 1998 from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois.

"A Theological Foundation for the Workshop Rotation Model"

In the practice of ministry, it is important to understand the historical and theological context of one's ministry. By examining one's location within the "flow" of history, we can discern the best practices for one's ministry. This first section attempts to understand a broad historical context for educational ministry of the church, particularly the Presbyterian Church. This retrospective identifies a few of the factors that contributed to developing the theological principles that guided the Workshop Rotation Model at Southminster Presbyterian Church in Arlington Heights. Hopefully, readers may learn how God was seen moving so that your own educational ministries can thrive, not merely survive, in this Quantum Age. A phrase coined by Bill Easum, the Quantum Age is the present, post-modern age, which is rapidly replacing the modern age and its Enlightenment ideals. This shift from the Modern to the Post-Modern is the wave we are attempting to catch and capitalize by using the best educational and theological practices in our churches today.

A Historical and Theological Context for the Workshop Rotation Model

In its past, the church has had to anticipate, accept, and adapt to a changing environment. We can learn from our past. In The Church the Apostles Left Behind, Brown examines the New Testament literature to answer this basic question: "Granting that the apostolic figures who 'saw Jesus' had passed from the scene, how did the New Testament writings enable communities to survive?" (Brown 1984: 48). As others have done in the past, Brown sounds a clear warning about overconfidence, stating, "All answers to a theological problem, of necessity being partial and time-conditioned, involve paying a price. One emphasis, no matter how necessary at a particular time, will inevitably lead to a neglect of truth found in another emphasis" (37). Among several models of the church discerned by Brown, his structural model more closely resembles the Presbyterian Church's polity, while the Body of Christ offers desirable traits that might be a needed corrective in this Quantum Age.

The structural model, as found in the Pastoral Epistles, offers stability and continuity, especially in times of unorthodox teachings and controversies. The Pastorals also set standards of conduct and maturity for the individual elders who were these early churches' pastoral leaders. This orientation toward pastor-leaders de-emphasized the need for the mission "mover," who was likely to see the need for innovation and orientation toward the future (37-46). The possible weak point in the Pastoral-based Presbyterian Church is the way it seeks solutions within its own polity and structure, instead of looking outside itself. Its focus is on institutional maintenance. If a church is experiencing some of the contextual issues related to the transition from the Modern to the Post-Modern context, a serious examination of how the Scriptures inform our response is also needed. Brown's prophetic view re-enforces a church's need to see its life from the outside: through God's Word, the Scriptures, and the business world.

The Body of Christ as Learning Context

The Body of Christ image, in contrast to the Pastoral view, offers to its adherents an "ideal and positive" view of *the* church (Brown's emphasis, 47-60). It is an "ideal" with two differences; first, because its purpose is to complete what Christ began on the Cross and in the Resurrection, and secondly, because it does not set up an authoritative administration that is institutional in nature (49). The theological mandate comes

...from Paul's reference to the Christians as members of a real body that suffered, died and rose, the thrust of the body imagery has moved to a corporate understanding with Christ as Lord over the body. . . . (But) the body of Christ does not become a corporation (Instead) the church is a growing entity, living with the life of Christ himself. (50)

Brown's prophetic critique underscores the value of re-thinking and the re-tooling of the structure and polity of the church in this Quantum Age.

A community of faith that knows itself as a body of Christ is guided, in part, by each member's knowledge of his or her body. Because the body metaphor personalizes knowledge of self, it also encourages love within and for the church. While the advice given in the Pastorals could result in an efficient, caring administration, it is important to remember that while many members remain loyal to their church, "ultimately people do not love a structure or an institution in itself" (53). A second strength of this image is, also paradoxically, a weakness. The body of Christ emphasizes holiness, or being "set apart". It is the classic, Johannine conundrum of "being in the world, but not of it." If the Presbyterian Church is experiencing its own exile from the dominant culture, being separate but spiritually alive could be the better part of God's design. Related to these two features, but only inferred by Brown, is the role of spiritual gifts as a means for inclusion and diversity within a body. As individuals are included and spiritual gifts are elicited for use within the body, the reliance on structure and ordained roles would moderate. Greg Ogden, in his book The New Reformation, seeks to return ministry to the People of God from a more radical starting point. Citing James Dunn's call for a reversal of method, Ogden accepts Dunn's conclusion:

The attempt to graft the concept of ministry of the people of God onto the root of ordained ministry has not really worked. Now it is time to reaffirm the root of all ministry as the charismatic Spirit given variously to the members of the body, to recognize our starting point as the New Covenant of the Pentecostal Spirit, and not the old covenant of priesthood. (54)

The church as the body of Christ is an organic unity composed of multiple members (Ogden 1990, 29-44), one that also has its disorders, divisions, and difficulties (Conzelmann 1975,14-

16). Conzelmann (1975,14-16) describes the Corinthian context as a community disturbed and made turbulent by thought forms imported from the culture that become attached to members' faith and where individuals' pneumatic experience incline them toward spiritual escapism, or moral indifference. Appreciative of the pneumatic experience, Paul intervenes by offering a shared vision of their community as the body of Christ, an organic unity directed toward a future in Christ--as a body. In this context, the model of Christ's physically real life and real death on the cross guides the community and shapes its service toward each other (18). Kee (1983, 242-3) asserts that Paul's theological view is framed by five principles, two of which are germane here: the Christian community and the future. Transitions toward a new style of leadership, from charismatic to institutional, for the then future order of the church required Paul to assert his eschatological convictions and ethics. The body of Christ is an eschatological reality, one that sums up how Christians are to act personally and in their group relationships. At stake, Kee asserts:

. . . is the basic conception of the Church as an organic unity, the body of Christ: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves, or free--and were made to drink of the same Spirit" (1 Cor.12:13). What was required was more than a feeling of togetherness: There must be mutual respect, recognition of the value of other's contribution and of the necessity for different gifts and capabilities within the church, if it is to function as an organic unity, not just a tightly run organization. (261)

While Kee is marking the trajectory of the church's past, this same conception is valid for the argument being made here--the church's identity for this decidedly different context will be grounded in a new paradigm formed by the Spirit breathing new life into a church's "dry bones." By the Spirit, a church can live as Christ's spiritual and organic body and as an organizational reality. The transition is now from the institutional to the charismatic, one that calls on the differentiating power of the Spirit.

The church had its starting point, thus its uniqueness, from the Spirit and its gifts. The social sciences, however, do provide a disciplined vantage point for developing an organizational life that fosters interdependence among its members. Peter Senge (1990, 5-16) identifies five disciplines for learning organizations: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking. Systems thinking is, in practice, a way of seeing and maximizing the relationships within an organization. Systems thinking, linked with critical biblical scholarship, re-introduces the body of Christ as the context for renewing a church's practice of ministry. Today, a church is called to move away from its over-reliance on formal governance structures and make the transition from an institutional to a charismatic organism for the purpose of edifying and equipping its members for ministry. This context of edification and equipping is found in 1 Corinthians 12--14.

The Body of Christ: A Context for New Ways of Thinking

Minear (1960,73-249) and Ogden (1990, 29-82) both argue and satisfactorily demonstrate that the body of Christ is the prevalent image in Paul's corpus and the desirable context for ministry in the twenty-first century. Before showing the inter-relational quality of all the New Testament images, Minear discloses his method that illustrates from within the Body of Christ's context the kind of new thinking needed. Minear explains the thought process:

[It] requires at least three types of thinking, each quite difficult in itself. The first is synoptic thinking, a thinking that embraces all the images at once, seeing them in a single

panorama and reacting to them all. The second . . . is reciprocal thinking, . . .the effort to think one image into the other, to make them almost yet not quite interchangeable, to see how the same meanings flow back and forth. . . . The third . . . (is) called retroactive or depth thinking . . . the effort to recover what was in the mind of the author before he said . . . "the body of Christ. (221)

These ways of thinking are encompassed by Senge's fifth discipline, systems thinking. Senge's fifth discipline is complemented by Ogden's biblical and theological critique of how Presbyterian polity restricts systems thinking of the church as an organism with human resources, and of how it is an organization that is overly dependent on political solutions to its problems (29-82).

The influence of individualism, representative democracy and the Pastoral structure in the Presbyterian Church is considerable. Like the relationship of individuality and volunteerism, the sacred cow of representational democracy is control, or power sharing, not permission-giving and unleashing lay persons into ministry (Easum 1995, 31-37). In a Presbyterian context, the representative role of elder and deacon is lifted up as "true" ministry, but reduces the role of others and the Spirit who equips members for ministry. If church leaders were to implement a body of Christ model of ministry, the members would also need a new way of thinking about that new context. In a church, Gardner's theory of multiple-intelligences and the Workshop Rotation model represents a church's first response to the Quantum Age. Gardner's theory represents a new way of understanding how we are created and how our different intelligences enrich our spiritual experiences of God. Simultaneously, computer technology re-introduces a way of thinking that represents a systems thinking style that also has a spiritual quality. In an article on the place of computers in spiritual formation, Theime implies this link between computers and spirituality:

Recursion is a mathematical term referring to a cyclical or repetitive process generated by a set of rules, which repeats itself indefinitely until a specific condition is met. Recursion differs from iteration or simple repetition, however, in that earlier rules are called upon or invoked by subsequent rules as part of the process. A rule, in effect, invokes itself. Iteration resembles a circle; recursion is a spiral. (1993, 352)

He concludes that, "spirituality is also a recursive form of thinking" (352). The new way of thinking is systems thinking as found in Senge, and "depth thinking," a discipline that is associated with spiritual reflection. The argument being made here is that "new contexts teach new ways of thinking and learning," and makes the Body of Christ based on oikos² a more desirable reality for church leadership in the Quantum Age.

The Role of Leadership in a Revised Paideia

Kelsey (1996) and Burgess (1996) identify a significant antecedent from the nineteenth century that diminished the role of pastor as teacher and contributes to the hierarchical split between clergy and laypersons. Using the typology of "Athens" and "Berlin," Kelsey distinguishes between the former as the educational paradigm for "character formation," which closely relates to Burgess' historic prototype, while the latter can be characterized as "professional leadership development." The former desired outcome is a life transformed by knowing God and having a character formed by God's Spirit; the latter focus is on critical thinking and theory as it relates to the practice of ministry. Begun in Berlin, this academic approach was imported to American universities and divinity schools, then to denominational seminaries. Critical studies of Biblical literature, sacraments, history, and doctrine altered the consciousness of church leaders. This same paradigm shift also influences how church leadership formulates contemporary models of

Christian education for the church, but not without considerable resistance from those whose paradigm was shaped by the classical “character formation” approach.

This split also leaves a void where members no longer feel adequate to do the ministry to which they are called; it creates a dependency on clergy. Speaking from within the Reformed stream, Janet Fishburn argues persuasively in “Leading: Paideia in A New Key” that the double structure of Sunday School and church, the Bible as the Church’s book, must be reformed by leadership for the purpose of spiritual formation directed toward ministry (193-217). Citing Don Smith, Fishburn defines the basic function of ordained ministry:

Equipping members for their ministries is the principal task of both pastors and elders. Of course, this is corollary to the conviction that ministry is the work of all the people. [If this is true]...then the clear responsibility of leadership in the church is to help members identify their gifts, develop those gifts, and make use of them in ministry. (208)

She cites a number of practical proposals for leadership that would contribute to affecting a corporate change toward equipping members for ministry (208-217). Writing in 1988, her analysis cannot adequately articulate the influence of today’s changing social context, but she does assume that a new form of ministry can rise up from the old form of church.

The present structures of the church and models of Christian education that compartmentalize also inhibit the kind of edifying and equipping she envisions. To release pastoral leadership to equip persons for ministry requires church leadership to honor their pastor’s spiritual gifts, not just their functionality to the organization. It also requires laity to be aware of their spiritual gifts, their roles and the tasks to be performed. Fishburn does, however, propose a corporate spiritual formation as a “paideia in a new key” (212). Her work is significant because it promotes the development of a revised paideia that is contextually and theologically sound.

Theological Principle

The historical framework locates the theological, spiritual, and educational antecedents to the development of the Workshop Rotation model. This framework also informs a church’s leadership to the theological grounding involved in using the Workshop Rotation Model in the twenty-first century. The historical research leads to a multi-dimensional theological principle that seeks to address a systemic condition with several contextual specifics. The research identifies the primary systemic condition as the relationship between the individual and a community. The influence of the Quantum Age and its commensurate features alter the character of individuals and the nature of communal life. As individuals are influenced by the multiple ways of learning and thinking, individuals seek out forms of community where those multiplicities are honored and valued. As communities of faith, seeking to be faithful to the Spirit, invite and nurture individuals in ways that are cogent for this present age, those communities of faith will adopt the best practices that conform to the Body of Christ.

God calls the church to theological faithfulness in every age. The theological principle presented here is grounded in the Spirit and its gifts to individuals, the Body of Christ, and an educational ministry using the Workshop Rotation model to introduce a new educational approach and a revised paideia. This principle seeks to heighten Christian maturity by promoting a Spirit-led paideia where adults, youth and children are influenced by an educational theory and practice that honors individuality and promotes cohesion in the community of faith. Howard Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences is the theoretical framework for proposing a new Christian education approach. This new Christian education approach has its genesis in

ministry with children, but it is also directed toward influencing adults and youth by introducing the Workshop Rotation model.

The first aspect of the theoretical framework drawn into this theological principle is the influence of the Quantum Age on individuals, communities and their ability to adapt to the changing nature of our culture. In particular, the influence of computers on children's identity and their character formation must be given important consideration as identified by Turkle.

The second aspect included in this theological principle is the influence of Christian education on faith development. Here consideration must be given to the adequacy of Christian education's ability to promote faith maturity and the question of whether faith development alone is an adequate goal for Christian education. This principle does not seek to negate faith development as a goal for Christian education or to diminish the importance of faith for living the Christian life. Instead, it seeks to add the theological dimension of the Spirit's work that equips individuals with spiritual gifts that guide and empower each member into ministry. In addition, the Spirit's work calls into being a community of faith that is graced with gifts and love to work interactively and interdependently. In the Quantum Age children, especially, will learn their faith by doing and through interactive relationships, particularly with the computer. God, in the Quantum Age, calls the church to create a community of faith that is itself interactive and interdependent among its members, but particularly toward its children.

The third aspect discovered through research and included in this theological principle is a new understanding of the nature of persons, their ways of learning, and how God's Grace is communicated to them. The educational theory and practice found in Gardner's educational theory of Multiple Intelligences presents such an understanding. Gardner's theory takes seriously the role of a community and the value of the individual. The communities of faith and faithful individuals communicate God's Grace. The Workshop Rotation Model calls out the gifts of its more mature members to become shepherds to a church's children and youth. The purpose of the shepherds is both theological and practical. Theologically, shepherds give evidence to the truth that knowledge and information is distributed among God's people. By calling on the variety of human intelligences and God's spiritual gifts found among its members, a church begins re-distributing its ministry among the church's members. Practically, the church school needs adults with a mature faith who can guide children in their faith and spiritual development.

The fourth aspect that is found in this theological principle is the way the Spirit and the Scriptures indicate that a church's structure is intended to meet contextual conditions. Based on the study of the Biblical models and conditions found in the New Testament, today's prevailing church is called to create a learning community patterned after the body of Christ.

The fifth aspect incorporated into this theological principle is the nature of theological thinking needed in this new cultural context; these new ways of thinking are systemic and recursive in nature. Systems thinking provide new ways of viewing a church's relationship to its context and its member's relationships to each other. In a sense, systems thinking navigate the surface of our social reality and patterns for living. Recursive thinking offers ways of solving problems that are complex. In another sense, recursive thinking is needed to grasp spiritual, or depth reality. Both modes of thinking are needed by a church's leadership to monitor, sustain, and advance the theological principle to equip persons for ministry according to their intelligences and spiritual gifts.

This theological principle maintains that a church's educational ministry with children, which uses the Workshop Rotation model, creates the opportunity for a new, contemporary approach

to Christian education. Together, all aspects of the theological principle call for a revised paideia patterned after the body of Christ to nurture faith and spiritual gifts across generations. The Workshop Rotation model is a seed planted in God's vineyard, but someone must water and nurture its development. It is God who gives the increase. The ones best positioned in the church, pastors and elders, are the ones who are called to lead toward a revised paideia proposed here. The significance of the Workshop Rotation model is that it gives theological and contextual warrants for implementing this revised paideia. It has been the Spirit's conspiracy to revitalize a church's educational ministry by giving birth to the Workshop Rotation model. The Spirit is calling the church to examine the ways it transmits faith to faith across generations and create a revised paideia that transforms the individual believer and the community of faith.

A Revised Paideia

The genesis of this theological principle began from "the bottom up", starting with the child as person gifted by God with multiple intelligences. The theological principle concludes with a call for a new vision of the church as the body of Christ, using a revised paideia. The warrant for a revised paideia is both Biblical and contextual and outlined below is an abbreviated action plan for implementing this revised paideia.

1. Leaders in a congregation, both formal and informal leaders, are invited to a series of one-day retreats where they experience this revised paideia. The content of such an event includes segments on an analysis of cultural context of a church, a process to identify strengths, dysfunction, the mission and aspirations for their church. The Scriptures are studied for images of the church and a spiritual gift inventory used to identify and confirm how each individual is gifted by the Spirit's gifts.
2. Leadership works cooperatively to present a vision of the body of Christ in ministry by consistently demonstrating to each other and the surrounding communities the value and practical power of this vision of the church. All members ministering in each arena of ministry work to help each other understand how Christ and the Spirit inform their individual and corporate living.
3. Learning groups are formed where leadership has been trained in group facilitating skills for the purpose of forming ministry teams based on the team members where they can lay claim to their portion of the vision of the church and its mission.
4. Restructure the church within its given polity to serve the vision of the church as the body of Christ, the church's mission in the community and the world, and will maximize persons' spiritual gifts and participation to deliver ministry.
5. Realign church staff according to their calling and spiritual gifts to serve the mission of the church and continually educate, nurture and spiritual guide members in their ministry as a partner.
6. By using the Workshop Rotation model, a church can create a vibrant ministry with children and youth which are directed toward nurturing upcoming generation's faith through a educational process congruent with vision of the church, and that equips children and youth to serve others with their own gifts.
7. Recreate the eco-system of family, child and church by instituting an Internet or Web based educational programs that will build accountability and regular practice of

study, reflection, problem-solving on issues that influence faith development and equip members for daily living.

The Workshop Rotation Model is one of many tools necessary to accomplish this revised paideia. Wise use of the Workshop Rotation Model will enhance a church's effort to be faithful. The goal of the revised paideia is provide the best possible channels through which God's Spirit can flow into the lives of individual children, their families, and the church. By the power of the Spirit, lives of people will be transformed into the image of Christ. By the power of the Spirit, the life of a church will be transformed to more closely approximate the body of Christ.

Footnotes

1. There are five assumptions underlying this thesis. First and foremost is that the presenting situation is multi-dimensional and the issues are systemic. Second, the Reformed tradition provides a common faith heritage but creates congregations with unique faith expressions. Thus, what is discovered may have limited application to other contexts. Third, a congregation, its structures and group norms forms a revelatory community that shapes the faith of learners, especially children. Fourth, Christian education is the most effective means for maturing the faith of individuals and influence the life of a congregation. Finally, the long-term members possess a mature faith that is the basis for faith development within the congregation.
2. According to Kittel (1967b:119-43) the delineation of oikos (i.e., edifying) means "house, or dwelling" (119) and strongly suggests a cluster of various human and divine realities as socially connected.

In the Old Testament oikos refers to "race and family" (120,129). For Jesus and the Gospels, oikos and oikia, refer to "the house of God" or "sanctuary" (121), but for the primitive Christian community, "house" is both a fellowship and a meeting place (130). In the Greek language, oikos also relates to a deceased person's total possessions left behind to be passed on to other family members (131) implying an inheritance is passed from one generation to the next. A final derivation, oikeios means "belonging or standing in relation to the household" (134). All these depict human institutions, corruptible and temporal, inhabited by God's spiritual presence. Next, oikodomeo, grounded in a unitative reality refers simultaneously to the divine activity, "planting", and human activity, "building", with the initiative coming from God (137). Cast in apocalyptic and Messianic terms, God will in the future build a "new community", meanwhile the term is re-cast in the church as, oikodomein, meaning "up building" (139-40). Understood correctly, it is the Spirit's activity in the "dwelling" (body) of the leader and members of the body of Christ. Finally, oikodona is Christ's spiritual goal for the body of the community and the individual believer. So, these terms' referents are a systemic reality: spiritual, theological, and organizational for a particular context. As a result, edifying is "the goal of knowledge, yet also the inner growth of the community and the content and purpose of its liturgical life and meetings" (141). Therefore, edifying is ministry by the members, for the members, and of the members. It is knowledge in action, and linguistically points to the body of Christ as a complex reality for ministry, one that calls for new ways of thinking. The role of leadership is to equip members by making them aware of their gifts and spiritual calling into ministry in and outside of the church.

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