

## Meaning-full Christian Education: Making Sense, Engaging in School Cultures

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*True education is not the dissemination of brute data but, instead, the development of shared meaning. This chapter looks at an holistic, biblical view of knowledge and how educators, through the curriculum and classroom practice, may encourage and facilitate the growth of God-focused meaning to all areas of knowledge and practice.*

As Christian educators, one may presume, we have an appropriate level of understanding of the theory and practice of education and, hopefully, of what it means to be a Christian practicing within the vocation of education. This understanding begins with knowledge that develops into an understanding (the know what), to consideration of the wise use of that understanding (the know why), and finally to the practical application of that wisdom (the know how). Each of these steps still begs the question: Yes, but what does it *mean*?

Meaningful education, that is, education filled with meaning, has always been something of a contentious issue as different people will see different purposes for education and wish to shape education to those purposes. Prior to the introduction of Western models of schooling, many rural villagers around the world conducted their own educational programs to which they adhered strictly. This was necessary because if the next generation lacked appropriate education they would quite literally starve to death, they would not have the skills to provide themselves with shelter, nor be able to avoid many of the dangerous animals and plants that they may come across. In addition to providing guides in life-and-death situations, this education also involved training in the beliefs and cultural patterns of the village or people group.

Western education has been shaped by different views of the world and life over the centuries and today we see a strong emphasis on individualism, consumerism, scientism, economism and so forth. Governments and government agencies desire to see their image of the world and life perpetuated in the next generation and compulsory education is the instrument that they have most readily at their disposal. Of course, parents are also attempting to do the same thing, as are the media—especially the advertisers. The *meaning* of education therefore has tended to differ from generation to generation, as well as from one culture, sub-culture or group to another.

In order to look at some of the aspects of an education that is *meaning-full* we will begin by looking at truth and our understanding of knowledge, the importance of understanding meaning in language and the sense that gives to educational practice that is Christian and meaning-full.

### Truth Statements

Much has been written on the concept of truth—what constitutes truth, or a true statement, how one may determine if something is true, and so on. (See also Richard Edlin's comments regarding truth at the beginning of Chapter 4.) Indeed, this is the bread and butter of many philosophical endeavours. Christians, in particular, have an interest in truth claims, believing that the validity of the claims of God in the Bible are something on which they can wager their eternal destiny. Quotations from the Bible such as Jesus' claim to be "the Truth" or Pilate's question, "What is truth?" spring readily to mind.

In our post-Enlightenment world, dominated as it is by thinking with its origins in Plato,

Aristotle, Newton, Descartes and others, we tend to think of truth in referentialist terms. Something is true if it can be shown to *refer* to something. We say that it is true that a normally formed cat has four legs because we can link the statement to physical properties of cats we have seen. If there is any question, we can call a cat as evidence. This is something that can be shown empirically (detected by our senses) or “proven in the laboratory”.

Much of our day-to-day living functions at this level, and necessarily so, and simplifies our coping with the world. But there are many things that are not referential in the sense that they are linked to a word or phrase. There are many abstractions (some feelings for example) that we would find difficult to express and there are unfamiliar words for which we may not have a well-formed corresponding concept. Also, it is quite possible for us to get by without having a particular word-object reference point. Merely by observing, one can learn to play chess, without knowing that the game is called chess or the names of the pieces. In this particular example, the meaning of the game comes from our sense perceptions and cognitive processes rather than spoken or written language, though there is a symbolism represented in the different shapes of the pieces. While we may be content with trusting our senses as origins of truth in many instances (for example, this stove-top is hot!) there are many other examples that are not verifiable for us in the same way (for example, Elizabeth I’s reign in England was from 1558 to 1603, or hadrons contain quarks). In these last two examples, as with much of the curriculum content, there is a necessity to trust the statements of others (experts, textbooks, etc.) regarding what is true.

### **Stolen Truth: The Ownership of Truth Claims**

Truth claims that are presented to us in the curriculum or in our society come with a range of values attached. Some are of little value to us and are discarded while to others we give a much higher value. Some of these values we determine ourselves and some are predetermined by others. The pressure of the culture to perpetuate itself through mandated school curricula places pressure on teachers who are not comfortable with the particular view of the world the culture wishes to perpetuate. This is something with which Christian teachers must deal on a daily basis. The strident argument of secularist education authorities and textbook writers that their version of truth is correct is very strong indeed. And to an extent in some cases they may be right. A science textbook makes the truth claim that two hydrogen atoms combine with an oxygen atom to form water. As far as we know, that is a true statement. But is it theirs?

One perspective pertinent to this comes from the oft quoted saying from the writings of Augustine in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century is, “All truth is God’s truth.” This idea is taken from his book *On Christian doctrine* where he wrote the following (emphasis added):

We should not avoid music because of pagan superstition if we can take from it anything useful for comprehending the Sacred Scriptures . . . . We should not ignore literature just because Mercury is reputed to be its presiding deity. Nor just because [pagans] have consecrated temples to Justice and Virtue and have chosen to adore in stone what should be carried in the heart must we, therefore, shun justice and virtue. On the contrary, every good and true Christian should understand that **wherever one discovers truth, it is the Lord’s** . . . . (18.28)

The position of the secularists therefore may be one of telling the truth but their claim that it is theirs is incorrect because the truth they are claiming is not *theirs* but God’s. They have sequestered, or kidnapped, the truth—stealing it from the origin of all truth to claim it as theirs. It is the task of the Christian teacher to take back God’s truth in the sense of recognising and teaching the true, divine origin, value and purpose of that which is true.

Undertaking this challenge and then developing faithful practice based on this understanding requires a range of relational contexts.

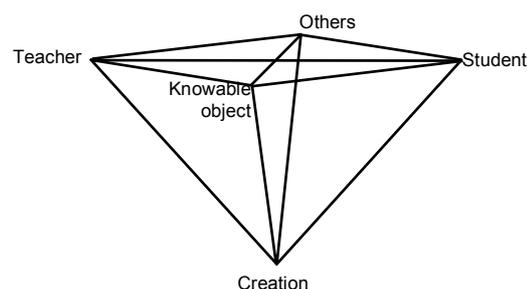
### Understanding Is Embedded in Relationship

Added to understanding knowledge or truth as belonging to God, there is also the need to recognise that God did not create unique quanta of knowledge scattered randomly around the universe. At a number of levels, truth involves relationship. Neergaard and Ulhøi (2007) spoke of this relational epistemology (theory of knowledge) in these terms:

The relationships within a relational epistemology framework may be seen in a number of ways. They may be seen in terms of perceived use or usefulness . . . or, in a related way, in terms of the perceived potential impact or influence each may have on the other. Another way that they may be seen is with reference to the four main love relationships noted in the New Testament—as in C. S. Lewis’ use in *The Four Loves* which speaks of Affection (Companionship), Friendship, Eros (Passion, not necessarily in the erotic sense) and Charity (or the New Testament agape). Heidegger’s use of referential totality went a step further, however, in that it also took into account temporality as it referred to “the historically learned practices and background understandings we have of the world as a holistic web of interrelated things” (Neergaard & Ulhøi, 2007, p. 79).

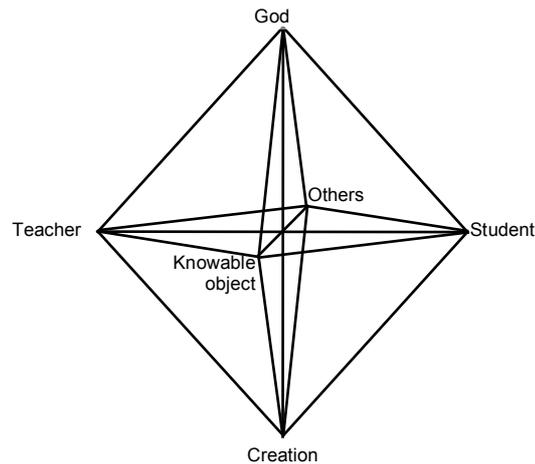
There are many contexts to knowledge and the art of teaching is never about pouring neutral facts into a student’s head. The student not only has some learning object brought to their attention—either by the teacher or something they are discovering for themselves—but there are others involved: their class, their teacher and the producers of educational materials such as textbooks, who, in turn, may have a relationship of some type with the knowable object.

Khine (2008) used a model of relational pedagogy based on a relational epistemology of which he wrote in terms of a social constructivist theory: “From this perspective, epistemological beliefs are constructed in a social context, rather than an individual process of construction and meaning” (p. 419). Of course, we can go further and contextualise all of the above with a relationship to all of the environment or Creation.



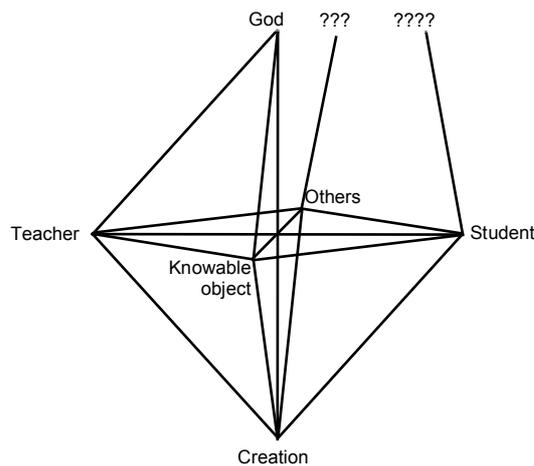
This model, while probably satisfactory to secular humanists, is far from satisfactory for Christians. From a biblical point of view we must include the relationship God has with all of the elements in the diagram. Only when God is added does the model become complete (Beech, 2014).

The figure below represents a more holistic relational epistemology: an understanding of knowledge that is integrated, holistic and dependent on the network of relationships that exist. Some of these relationships may exist through reading the textbook an author has written, by personal knowledge of a teacher, or by relating to a knowable object via the senses. To take a practical example, a student may learn about the structure of a leaf by looking at it and feeling it. The student's knowledge of leaf structures will be enhanced by linking what they see and feel with what is written in textbooks or what they have been told about them by some relative. They will have the knowledge enhanced by the relationship they have with the classroom teacher who may explain or confirm their observations. Placing the leaf structures in the broader context of plants in the environment adds further meaning



to their observations in the classroom. Seeing the relationship to God and understanding His creation of, and purposes for, leaves and plants as part of His grand Creation narrative provides the necessary context for true richness of meaning. One can see then that the depth of knowledge the student has will be linked to the strength of the lines of relationship they have.

There are other important observations that should be made about this model. First, while the diagram has been drawn with God as the key linking the components, others, who do not believe in God—actually having other gods, will operate automatically or subconsciously with a similar model, substituting the true meaning-giving God of the Bible with a god or integration point of their own (Romans 1:25). They will recognise at some level that there is a source of being. For them it may be the sun or the moon or chance operating on physical laws. The source of being for the teacher, the others, such as textbook writers, and for the student, may therefore all be different and this complicates the teaching, learning and communication processes.



Another consideration is that the model is not static but all components have temporality—moving and changing as part of God’s narrative. Every element below God is passing through time and may be subject to slow or fast change. Teachers will change in their knowledge, perhaps in their demeanour, in their relationship with the subject material, the Creation, the others, as well as with the student.

From a student perspective, the teacher is seen to be an integral part of the holistic epistemology package. The presence, comportment, words and actions of the teacher, often including unspoken attitudes, beliefs or biases, form for the student, part of their understanding of the world and of the subject matter they are learning in a particular teaching/learning situation. A teacher is a very significant part of the student’s lifeworld and therefore a very important part of the development of the student’s worldview.

### Understanding in Community

A part of seeing knowledge and learning in a relational context, is the relationship provided by communities (see Jack Fennema’s comments on relationships in Chapter 1). For educators the most significant of these is the educational community of practice with which we are engaged for much of the year. The significance of this is due to the meaning given to words and phrases by the community. These provide the “tricks of the trade”, as it were, that are passed down within particular contexts.

The representationalism of Enlightenment realism mentioned above is often the methodology of education. The German philosopher Wittgenstein and others, however, have questioned the usefulness of representationalism. We can teach a child by pointing to a picture of a cat in a book and saying, “Cat,” but are we teaching meaning? The child has had to learn about what it means when someone points to something, what a teacher means when they point, what is meant when they point and say a word, that the drawing is meant to represent an animal in real life, and many other cues.

What does it *mean*?

The student must learn what to *do* with the information and their understanding of the processes. To use an illustration from the classroom similar to one used by Wittgenstein: You are pinning something to a board in the classroom and you call out to a student, "Drawing pin." What does this mean for the student? Is the statement meant only to conjure up in the student's imagination an image of a thing called a drawing pin? This would correspond to a realist/representational view of language. No. Depending on the circumstances, the statement may carry with it the intended meaning of, "Can you please pick up a drawing pin and hand it to me so that I can pin this picture to the wall." There is much more to the *meaning* than mere representation and yet in education so often we may over-rely on matching quizzes, standardised tests, and so on, all with a much more limited

purpose than dealing with true meaning. Fortunately, all is not lost because the students, acculturated into families and communities—including the school community—will have context analysis and other cues at their disposal to allow them to interpret the real meaning of the spoken and written words we use.

The networks of social interaction and meaning derivation are very complex and we rarely give them much thought. When one learns a foreign language and lives within a foreign culture, however, these subtleties begin to take on considerable significance. It quickly becomes apparent that the one to one correspondence of word translation that might be suggested by representationalism is actually an impossibility. Apart from the fact that there will be many words that do not have an equivalent or good approximation in the second language, many words have a particular culturally imbued *feel* to them that cannot be translated easily if at all. One example of this is the German word *Weltanschauung* that we translate as worldview and use often in Christian education circles. Sigmund Freud once commented that it was impossible to translate the word into English. On the surface the German word world-view seems to pose no problem but the point Freud was making was that within a German philosophical context there were subtle nuances of meaning that are intended but that do not translate, and cannot be translated, into the simple *world* and *view* terms in English. As James Smith (2014) has written:

You can only learn meaning as reference [or representation] if you have *already* learned all kinds of other modes of meaning that no one has ever pointed out . . . . This kind of training is caught more than taught, if you know what I mean: we absorb such understanding *in practice*, without any ostensive definition. (p. 45)

A personal note may serve as an example that illustrates the cultural embeddedness of meaning. Some years ago I had meetings from time to time with an older friend who was not an Australian. This friend was someone I greatly respected and had known for some time, though we met probably only every six months or so. My friend had lived in different cultures and was keenly aware of the importance of cultural differences and tried to be culturally appropriate when he could. He had come across Australians before and was aware of the fact that Australians often “insult” each other as an indicator of their relationship or friendship. Because of this, when we arranged to meet in his town he was known to call loudly across the car park, “G’day, ugly!” (Others in the car park would glance around and nod their agreement of course!)

What my friend called out, in his attempt to be culturally appropriate and to show his friendship, was, in fact, totally inappropriate. He was not an Australian, had not grown up within the Aussie culture, and could not have known the very subtle uses of insults used in that context. When he said it, it was simply—though very mildly—offensive. The Australian use of insults in this way, as with some other countries, can indeed denote a very strong friendship bond—a bond that is proven by the depth of insult, a bond the speaker knows will not be broken or damaged by the insult. It becomes both a test and a demonstration of the integrity of the bond strength. But there are many shades to be found within this bond proving system. The insult may vary in strength, and the depth friendship may not correspond to the degree of insult. In some situations the insult is meant to be offensive and in others it has more of an “I don’t really care that much about the relationship” feel to it. Being able to determine just what is appropriate to say, or to articulate an appropriate affective response, requires considerable submersion in the culture to gain the subtle, culturally embedded, nuanced meanings being employed.

This contextualisation of meaning has a great deal of significance for us—as Christians, as educators and as Christian educators. The situation in the classroom has been mentioned briefly above but there is also the understanding we have as Christians of truth as it is

revealed by God. The first thing to note, then, concerns God's Written word, the Bible, and our understanding of its *meaning*.

The Bible was written in three different and ancient languages and by writers from a range of different cultural settings—none of which correspond closely to our Western cultures of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The intended subtle meanings of the words in their original languages may therefore be difficult for us to determine today in our different culture—apart from the difficulty of finding a dynamic equivalence for translation. There are many obvious examples of problems such as that faced by Bible translators in New Guinea who need to find a translation for the Greek word *probaton* (sheep) for people who have never seen a sheep. Even those of us who grew up in the country in Australia and are very familiar with sheep may still have something of a problem. The *feel* and *meaning*, the *sense*, of the word sheep is different for us than it would have been for Jesus' disciples in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, or for the young shepherd, David. The people in Palestine had a different relationship with sheep. Unlike a farmer today who may have thousands of sheep that are herded as a mob, as a shepherd, David would have known his sheep by name and cared for each one individually. The concept of a blood sacrifice of a perfect individual from the flock thereby takes on a whole new significance—a significant meaning or *sense* that was of profound significance under the Jewish sacrificial system, but is largely lost on us. And yet, to lose that significance means to lose much of the significance of Christ's sacrifice. Therefore theologians, and preachers, within our Christian community, have had to try to help us to understand that significance in our particular context but the degree to which they will succeed will vary.

The idea of meaning derived in community, of course, is not new. The 17<sup>th</sup> Century fideist, mathematician and philosopher, Blaise Pascale (2003), wrote the following advice for those who were "almost believers" in God:

Endeavour then to convince yourself, not by increase of proofs of God, but by abatement of your passions. You would like to attain faith, and do not know the way; you would like to cure yourself of unbelief, and ask the remedy for it. Learn from those who have been bound like you, and who now stake all their possessions. These are people who know the way which you would follow, and are cured of an ill of which you would be cured. Follow the way by which they began; by acting as if they were believed, taking the holy water, having masses said, etc. Even this will naturally make you believe, and deaden your acuteness. (p. 68)

This community participation in speech and practice produces shared meanings with the result that one is helped to learn the subtle differences and shades of meaning, and hence curing oneself of unbelief.<sup>1</sup> And there would be some truth in what he said.

More recently, the social constructivists have made similar claims and their work has had a considerable impact on education in the Western world at least. While their statements about the relativism of language may jar with us at first, as we have seen already, there is a need to see language in these terms. Vygotsky (1986), basing his thoughts on the work of Frederick Paulhan, wrote of these subtle meanings we give to words as the *sense* of the words.

The sense of a word, according to him [Paulhan], is the sum of all the psychological events aroused in our consciousness by the word. It is a dynamic, fluid, complex whole, which has several zones of unequal stability. Meaning is only one of the zones of sense, the most stable and precise zone. A word acquires its sense from

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<sup>1</sup> The different situation is seen in Genesis 11 where the people shared meaning in the community but were sharing incorrect meaning and God dismantled their community and mutual understanding.

the context in which it appears; in different contexts, it changes its sense. The dictionary meaning of a word is no more than a stone in the edifice of sense, no more than a potentiality that finds diversified realization in speech. (pp. 244–245)

Where does this then leave us with claims of objectivity and a favourite topic for Christians: absolute, objective truth. Is there such a thing as absolute, objective truth and if so can it be known? Populist scientism and rationalism would claim that objective truth may be found and, indeed, is essential. It must be able to be *proved* empirically, for example, in the laboratory. Under analysis, however, this claim makes little sense and there are laboratory *proven* claims in the sciences that are disproved on a daily basis.

Nevertheless, the strident claim of Christianity over the centuries is that there is such a thing as absolute, objective truth. Unfortunately, however, I believe that we have had a poor understanding of what the claim means. First, for a truth to be absolute and knowable would mean that all the possible connections (as in the epistemology model above) would have to be known—including past and future connections. This is impossible for finite human beings and particularly for fallen human beings who lack the strong original and pure connection to God that He had intended. Second, in order to have an objective view, it would be necessary for us to be outside of the system under investigation but rather obviously, we are deeply embedded in the system in which we live.

This does not mean, however that there is no such thing as absolute, objective truth. God, and God alone, is omniscient and knows all things perfectly. The difficulty for us as His creatures is that He communicates truth to us and He does this through His word, by His Holy Spirit and through His Creation but our perception has been impacted greatly by the Fall (Smith, 2014) as well as our interpretation being coloured by the world pictures and worldviews we hold. Our ability to interpret what He has said with a high degree of accuracy therefore has significant limitations. If our correct interpretation of God's absolute, objective truth were a simple task then there would not be the myriad denominations and doctrinal perspectives—let alone sects—that we see today.

One of the great strivings of fallen humanity is evident in the attempts made to relativise God's absolute truth claims—and particularly His greatest proclamations of absolute, objective truth: the creation and the incarnation. As we study these truths—the creation through the sciences and the incarnation through the Bible, which is the story of the incarnation—we rely on the interpretive work of the Holy Spirit to enable us to try to “get it right”. But in our fallen-ness we often hear awry.

If our understanding of the concept of truth were to be a simple representational one, for example, based on a dictionary meaning, then we would be in rather a hopeless situation. God has not left us with this language/meaning problem, however, because He has a different *sense* (c.f., Vygotsky) of the idea of truth. Truth is a person and a relationship: Jesus is *The Truth* and truth is found in relationship with Him. He also expects us to work on meaning in community. The great truth claims of God are interpreted by us from within the context in which we live or via the world picture and worldview lenses that we use to make sense of the world. In order to shape these lenses we need to have a Godly lifeworld as our environment and this should include both the present Holy Spirit living within us and also the “people of God”.

“The people of God” is the name of a covenant community of social practice catalysed by the gracious revelation of the transcendent Creator. But that revelation is always and only received insofar as it is a revelation under the conditions that we finite, dependent, contingent creatures *know*—insofar as the transcendent God condescends to speak into our “worldly” environment. (Smith, 2014, p. 110)

This brings us back once more to relationality of knowledge and potential implications for classroom practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Despite the plethora of connection-promoting mass media messages we consume each day and the every present digital social media, there has been an ever strengthening proclamation of independence rather than interdependence: of individualism. The impact of individualism on education is a tendency towards a very high level of relativism. Each person claiming that their version of truth is correct. Not long ago a teacher of a Grade 2 class told me that one of her students had written that  $5 + 7$  was 11. The student would not accept that their answer was wrong. It was correct because they said it was correct and could not be convinced otherwise by the teacher!

The most significant task of education is a group of people—teachers and students—working together closely for long periods of time to build communities where they develop shared meanings (c.f., “everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher” Luk 6:40). Within any school context this implies a form of apprenticeship training or discipling. The question is, into which *story* are the students being disciplined?

Jesus lived closely with His disciples for around three years and during that time they had many opportunities to hear His words and to watch His way of living. The teaching that Jesus undertook during that time was distinguished by the fact that He used many stories. Some of these were in the form of metaphors and others short vignettes taken from the daily circumstances of His hearers. For post-Enlightenment people, with a Western need for objective, provable truth statements, this makes little sense. If Jesus meant to say something, why did He not just say it rather than telling a story that at times even His closest followers could not understand?

The point was that the meaning of the stories arose in the sharing of understanding in community. Sometimes Jesus would explain meanings but often the stories were left for people to puzzle over for themselves. He did not leave the interpretation there, however, but very deliberately instituted His Church and it is within the Christian community of the Church that we are to seek meaning: making God *sense* of truth.

Within the early Church we see a continued use of story as the Apostles and writers of the New Testament refer often to the story of God’s people through history. The frequent telling of this story by Paul, to his readers and to those to whom he would witness in the Jewish community, provided a common ground for understanding meaning. Rather than start from 33 AD, Paul, and others, chose to start from the beginning and thereby identifying themselves as part of a particular community with particular understandings and then demonstrating how that from these understandings the Gospel of Jesus could be understood.

This approach is rather problematic for us, however, in that biblical literacy in the community around us is very low and in many cases non-existent and so we cannot rely on any shared, culturally embedded meaning that may arise from, for example, references to Old Testament stories. But before we can begin to consider conveying the meaning and sense of the Gospel in the classroom we should look to deepen or enhance our own understanding—not merely of the Gospel but of the Gospel within the work context to which we have been called.

### **Classrooms Full of Meaning as Communities of Practice**

As Ludwig Wittgenstein may say, teachers play an *education word game*<sup>2</sup>, and Christian teachers also play a *Christian word game*. His use of the term *game* is not to trivialise the

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<sup>2</sup> Just as engineers play engineering word games, and so on, words take on particular meanings or have different senses depending on the use context. Even though there may be a relationship of

matter but rather to indicate the fact that different teachers will have different understandings (in thought, speech and action) of education and, indeed, different faculty areas in the school will have their own *word games* relating to their subject area. Christian educators have their own word games with regard to theology but also in terms of the practice of theology in, or through, education. It is the *sense* that we bring to, or make of, each sphere of our living. And this is best developed in community.

[A person] needs to be inculcated into this community of practice, needs to learn to play this game, which will require that he learn all kinds of *unspoken* aspects of the game that are never taught ostensibly but rather "caught" as we participate in a community of practice. (Smith, 2014, p. 46)

These communities of practice in which we participate assist us to engage with the culture at two different levels. First there is the gaining of meaning and sense from the development of shared meaning as we work together on what it means to be a Christian educator. On the logistical side, this may involve staff meetings, informal chatting in the staffroom, sharing after school in each other's classrooms, or through being a part of the school's communications network. Some Christian schools are very proactive in this regard and take time together as a staff to study the Scriptures together (relating their learning to classroom practice), or work their way through books such as *12 Affirmations 2.0* by Steve Vryhof or *Teaching Redemptively: Bringing Grace and Truth Into Your Classroom* by Donovan Graham. There are many other excellent resources that may be used from authors such as Michael Goheen, Richard Edlin, Harro van Brummelen, John van Dyk and many others. Of course, sections of this book may also be used. Sharing together in a constructive and purposeful way allows the development of at least a degree of consensus regarding the meaning and sense of teaching Christianly. (It also may help us to consider the other side of the Christian education coin: What does it mean to *learn* Christianly?) Smith (2014) modified the well known expression, it takes a village to raise a child, to say that "it takes a village to have an 'experience'" (p. 159) in the sense that it is within the close-knit village relational structure of shared understandings that we can understand a particular phenomenon together.

In the second locus of engagement—the classroom—the environment, acts of speaking, listening and teacher action, or modelling, all play important roles in developing shared meaning, or making sense of Christian schooling. The *sharing* of meaning implies also listening to students and helping them to shape their understanding as they will help to shape yours. In addition, the power of definition creation, of understanding, of making sense of what it means to be a Christian involved in education (as teacher or student) will come from relationships. The depth of the relationship (*agape* love) between teacher and student we know is key, but there is also the teacher's demonstration (modelling) of the relationship she has with others, with the curriculum material, with truth, and with The Truth.

### Questions

1. What structures might a school provide to assist teachers to develop strong and clear shared meanings within community?
2. What does it mean to teach in a biblically faithful way?
3. What does it mean to learn in a biblically faithful way?
4. How might a teacher develop a community of shared meaning within her classroom?
5. How may we, in our fallen-ness, relate the objective absolutes of God to our students in a

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meaning, a *plane* can have a different sense of meaning for a geologist, a mathematician or an aeronautical engineer. "To understand, you actually need to be a competent *practitioner*; you need to know how to play the (language-) game; you need to have been inducted into the community of practice," (Smith, 2014, p. 46).

way that is honest and meaningful?

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