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Learning to Connect Life and Faith

Theological Reflection

The purpose of this chapter is to 'break open' the process of theological reflection, to explore the processes of learning involved and the kind of knowledge that results. I have been teaching TR now for over ten years and I know from experience how life-giving it can be. Using the techniques of TR helps students to make vital connections between their faith and the situations they encounter not only as part of their practical placements but also in their daily lives. In the words of one of our students:

> I found that the Pastoral Cycle can be a quick response in any situation, even simply taking a pause in proceedings to re-centre yourself theologically. I have found that using the Pastoral Cycle in a structured way means it is weaving itself into my everyday life. I feel it does not require setting aside a huge amount of time to specifically apply a process to a situation but enables me to more easily bring God into the heart of situations and moments. I recognize that some situations will need more time and a mixture of approaches, and being aware of a variety of reflective tools is crucial, but as a working model I can use even while driving from one place to the next, I am finding the Pastoral Cycle to be effective. I am aware of the limitation of reflecting on my own and think that like other approaches, theological reflection becomes most transformative when done with others.[1]

Over the course of two terms this student has learned to use a particular technique of TR in a flexible way to help her 're-centre':

to make sense of the situations she encounters in the light of faith, to be able to bring God more readily into situations. She also illustrates the way learning to work with a formal technique of TR can help to make our whole life more 'theologically centred', how the implicit question at the centre of TR, 'Where is God in this?', can become a habitual part of our thinking, fed by the confidence that we have well-tried ways of exploring and answering the question. As another student at a different institution testified:

> When I consider my use of this method over the last three years, I am struck as to how much it has, almost without thinking, shaped my reflections and in turn my actions and thus the narrative of the communities in which I have been placed.[2]

The crucial words here are 'almost without thinking'. The methods of TR she had learned had become her habitual way of relating life and theology. Theology had become an 'inhabited wisdom', enabling her to bring her understanding of God and his ways into any and every situation she encountered.

These students are discovering TR as a vital tool for ordained ministry. But it is equally important as an element in discipleship learning. In fact I regularly urge my students not to keep it to themselves, but rather to think of it as a gift to their congregations: to teach it and help others to use it as a regular part of their everyday Christian lives.

The 'pastoral cycle'

Before introducing a concrete example and looking in detail at its various facets, it may be helpful to begin with a brief description of TR, using the technique known as the 'pastoral cycle' as our standard example.[3] I have chosen the pastoral cycle because in my view all valid methods of TR are essentially cyclical, so that all the other various techniques are, in effect, variations on the pastoral cycle. And second, because the pastoral cycle is itself a variation on the well-known 'learning cycle' based on the work of David Kolb, which provides an account of the processes that apply to all learning.[4]

The pastoral cycle has four stages, which for the sake of simplicity we will call Experience, Exploration, Reflection and Response. It is

usual to begin with the stage of Experience for the simple reason that so much theological reflection does in fact arise from concrete situations. But it is not necessary to begin there: it is equally possible to begin with any of the stages and follow the cycle round. And although, especially when working as a group, it can be helpful to take a careful step-by-step approach, following the cycle stage by stage, the cycle itself does not require this. In reality, every stage is in continual dialogue and interaction with all the others. It is also important to stress at this stage that using the pastoral cycle for TR is best seen as an aspect of prayer. Unless approached in a spirit of prayerfulness, it can become a dry and barren mechanical technique. But used prayerfully, it shares important characteristics with contemplative disciplines like *lectio divina*: above all the quest for God's presence in the midst of everyday life and experience.

In the Experience phase, the aim is to focus on the experience from which the reflection arises, be this a specific incident, an ongoing situation in the life of a church, family, workplace or organization, encountered in person or through the pages of a newspaper or a television bulletin. And here we need to allow the experience to speak for itself. This may begin with getting the facts straight: 'Where and when did this take place?', 'Who was involved?', 'What was actually said as far as we are able to remember?', 'What were the immediate feelings to arise from it?' At this stage it is important to avoid making judgements as far as possible, except to record any that may have been expressed in the situation itself, perhaps in the course of a conversation.

It can be difficult to separate out our perception of the incident or situation on which we want to reflect from our immediate judgements about it. To do so successfully takes discipline and openness. In this way it is like the discipline of attentive listening, in which we aim to give the person we are listening to our full attention. We put aside our own needs, perhaps to be able to solve their problem, our desire to point them to what seems to us the best path, in order simply to listen: to allow them to tell the story in their own words, to give value to the feelings they want to express, to offer a hospitable space for their bewilderment, anger or perhaps rejoicing. In another context the philosopher Iris Murdoch has written of 'a just and loving gaze', 'a patient

and loving regard directed upon a person, a place or a situation'.[5] The words 'just', 'loving' and 'patient' alert us to the dispositions required truly to allow an experience to speak to us in its own terms without rushing on to use it as a springboard for our own reflections and judgements. Already we begin to see how our ability to reflect successfully is heavily dependent on qualities of character, and how the process of reflection calls forth those qualities.

The second phase of the pastoral cycle is Exploration. Here is the stage at which we do begin to bring to mind our previous experience. The purpose is to begin to connect the experience we have chosen to reflect on with previous experiences, both similar and dissimilar. Here we both examine our own feelings and the judgements we find ourselves making in response to the experience; and begin to call on what we already know. In relation to our own feelings and judgements, this is the stage at which reflection becomes reflexive: these judgements and feelings are as much part of the reflection as every other element, and part of the purpose of reflection is to allow ourselves to become aware of them and subject them to critique, including that of others. Examining our feelings and judgements also helps us to locate what for us is the heart of the matter: the issues most at stake, the reason the situation stirs up these particular feelings, the questions we most want to resolve.

Exploration is also the stage at which the pastoral cycle becomes truly interdisciplinary. Often it will involve using frameworks of explanation drawn from disciplines other than theology. Depending on the subject of the reflection, these might include: the psychology of human development, of bereavement, of group behaviour; understandings of leadership styles, teamwork and collaboration, change management, systems theory; adult education; the anthropology of ritual and symbol – and many more. All truth is God's truth, and all these fields of endeavour are attempts to describe and understand the world he has created. But we may need to be careful about the assumptions embedded in these disciplines or espoused by the particular writers we choose to use. For this reason, the pastoral cycle envisages a critical conversation between the perspectives we choose to call on for the Exploration stage and our knowledge of theology.

Up to now we might simply have been describing reflective practice as it is carried out in a number of fields. The key element of distinctively *theological* reflection is the space given at the Reflection stage for the resources of Christian tradition, and especially for the Bible. Some techniques of reflection will ask at this stage: 'What passages from Scripture does this incident/these feelings bring to mind?' In this way we bring the Bible as an authoritative source for Christian faith and practice directly into contact with the particular incident or situation at the heart of the reflection. Later in this chapter I will be examining in some detail the role the Bible plays in theological reflection, and the reasons it is particularly suited to such a role. But beyond the Bible, the Christian also has the resources of tradition: church history with its many accounts of the lives and struggles of brothers and sisters in Christ; liturgy and hymnody, which may sum up the particular insight we need in an apt phrase; and of course the tradition of formal theology stretching back over the centuries, through which the church has endeavoured to understand God more deeply.

The resources for theological reflection at this stage are so extensive that a choice will need to be made about which are most appropriate. Sometimes the perspectives required are fairly obvious, such as the Christian tradition of hospitality in a reflection on the plight of asylum seekers. At other times the relevance of a particular theological theme may be less obvious but nevertheless powerful, as in 1 Corinthians 9.9 where Paul draws on a provision of the Old Testament law made for the benefit of oxen to make a point about the right of Christian teachers to support from their congregations; or the theme of hospitality may be found to speak to a situation of conflict in a church or other organization. And of course, the Reflection stage also includes a dialogue or 'correlation' between the theological perspectives chosen and the interdisciplinary insights that figured in the Exploration stage.

To provide another example, one of my students chose to write a dissertation on the experience of pastoral reorganization in one particular group of churches.[6] The benefice in question had been brought together a few years before. The rector of the two parishes left suddenly, without explanation. In the ensuing interregnum a decision was taken to carry out a pastoral reor-

ganization involving a merger with a third parish. The benefice was still experiencing dislocation and uncertainty, with a considerable degree of resentment at the changes that had been made, largely without the involvement of the congregations. The interdisciplinary perspectives chosen to examine this situation were bereavement, change management and the experience of blended families; and to accomplish this, the writer had to familiarize herself with each of these. The three theological themes she chose were the Body of Christ, the Good Shepherd and Holy Saturday, the day after the crucifixion, poised between despair at the death of Christ and the hope of resurrection. By carefully outlining the experience of the churches and working with these six themes, it was possible to build up a picture of a benefice struggling with its past while pointing forward to the possibilities for the future that emerge from Christian life and faith.

Exploration and Reflection together lead to 'new insight'. This is the point at which the various insights from the interdisciplinary approaches and the theological tradition crystallize to form a new perspective on the situation at the heart of the reflection. This may take the form of a fuller and clearer understanding of why the action taken at the time was in fact the most appropriate response; or it may provide guidelines for acting differently in future. The outcome of TR may be a holistic, theologically grounded interpretation of the situation or incident, which may itself form a pattern for responding to similar situations that may arise. Equally, the new insight may be a deepened understanding of a passage of Scripture or a theological doctrine, through having seen how it applies in this particular situation. Or it may be an awareness of a new question thrown up by the situation, a challenge to existing beliefs requiring further theological exploration.

All good reflection culminates in the stage of Response. In some cases this will involve concrete proposals for action; or perhaps, as a first step, an outlining of the possibilities. These may be highly creative: who would have thought that flip-flops provided by Street Pastors to young women affected by alcohol would make such an impact? But this is a response that emerged from theological reflection on the potential of enacted love and hope in a situation that appeared a denial of human potential and

purpose. Sometimes the response will be less a particular action than a transformed self-understanding or renewed perspective on situations such as the one chosen for reflection, to be taken forward into life and ministry.

I have given a brief outline of a formal process of TR. But most TR is informal and takes place spontaneously, often 'in the moment'. When teaching theological reflection I emphasize that what I see myself doing is like coaching. A tennis or golf coach may systematically take apart a player's forehand or chip to demonstrate where it is going wrong. For the time being the player must concentrate on getting it right, but during the game itself he will forget about the mechanics and simply focus on where he wishes to place the ball. In a similar way, learning how to do TR in a formal way alerts students to the possibilities for reflection in everyday life and ministry, gives them sound models for reflecting effectively and acts as a kind of quality control on their everyday informal reflections.

Now let me introduce the example I wish to use as the basis for the rest of this chapter. It is not an 'exemplary' piece of reflection, which demonstrates just how it should be done. It is, rather, a real example from the experience of Rob Gallagher, a parish priest engaged in the day-to-day work of ministry and mission. It has the further advantage that it is in print, in the book *From Strangers to Neighbours* by David Evans and Mike Fearon. It describes a pastoral encounter of a demanding nature, but not outside the range of experience to be expected in the context of inner-city ministry.

> Originally built by slave-owning white Liverpudlians as an Anglo-Catholic shrine, St Margaret's remarkably is now seen by the local people as being *their* church, where the traumas of births and deaths can be attended to, and where the deep questions of life and death can be asked without fear and ridicule. It is already part of its neighbourhood: a community ready to tell Rob its stories.
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> The neighbourhood looks to the church to baptize their children, though they don't want to be long-term members. The parents make promises they may not keep – at least not on the church's terms. 'I make the assumption that God is on their

side, and that my role is to work within their understanding of God, and to help them to deal with their own spirituality in their own terms', says Rob.

Rob speaks of a woman who asked him to go round to her flat. When he arrived, he noticed that the armchairs and settee were badly ripped. The woman explained that she had had a serious drug habit. She was a prostitute who sold her body on the streets to pay for her addiction. One day, she looked into the eyes of her eight-year-old daughter, and realized that she couldn't continue this way of life any longer, so she tried diligently to change her life. She found work and began to get her life back in order. But the neighbours came to believe that she must be pushing drugs, to have managed so well, so they called the police. *It was the drug squad who had ruined her only furniture, by slitting it open to search for narcotics*. Rob remembers:

> We were on the torn-up settee and she was in tears. Then she turned to me and said, 'I am determined not to go back to drugs and prostitution, for the sake of my child. But I've got to *mark* this resolution in some way. When I look at my child, all I can think of is having my girl baptized. Will you do her?'
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> My head was saying: What about church attendance? What about the vows? Does she know what they mean? Has she heard about Jesus? Will the child be confirmed afterwards? But my heart said simply 'Yes!' I'm not sure that the theology would have meant anything to her but, being well-versed in Scripture, the line that was going through my own mind – my 'gut feeling' – was . . . 'You are not far from the kingdom of heaven.'[7]

I have used an exercise based on this incident at least a dozen times to introduce both ordinands and practising clergy to the nature of theological reflection, and although I would not claim that the exercise is all that is needed to help someone understand TR, it has never failed to engage them and throw light on what we mean by it. In this chapter I want to explore six elements of the reflective process that emerge from that exercise, remembering

that although the example is drawn from the experience of someone in ordained ministry, these elements apply to all Christians, lay or ordained, and to everyday discipleship as well as ministry.

Critical Incidents

First, Rob's encounter is a classic illustration of what we mean by a 'critical incident'. In this context 'critical' is not being used to suggest that the event was some kind of crisis but rather as a technical term.

> What makes it critical is that it is an event, or series of events, which lie outside one's normal range of usual experiences. It is not a sense of crisis which makes it critical. It is the response it produces. A critical incident is one which produces an emotional reaction in the person who experiences it. It makes an impact. It makes one think. It suggests that there is more to a situation than meets the eye.[8]

In this explanation Charles Chadwick and Phillip Tovey mention both feeling and thinking, and we can already see from the example that in a critical incident there is often a demand for action of some kind: already it is apparent that reflection is intended to integrate thought, feeling and action.

Reflection begins with everyday life, with experience or practice. As we will see, it does call on the resources of formal academic study but essential to its very nature is that it is 'situated' in the flow of life. Life, as we know, does not run on rails. It is not predictable and can be distinctly messy, challenging us in a variety of ways. Life is made up of 'incidents' and 'situations', situations that frequently overlap, so that, for example, an incident that concerned a request for baptism was also about a mother's concern for her daughter, that same mother's relations with her neighbours and the ongoing campaign by the police against drug pushers.

Some of the incidents and situations we encounter are those it is usually possible to treat as 'routine': driving to work on a familiar route, cooking a meal, watching a television serial; or at work,

handling a familiar job like making a series of calculations, hanging a door or making a sales enquiry. Others are more demanding: they are situations where it is apparent that we will need to think more deeply. These might include finding an alternative route when our usual journey to work is likely to be delayed by road works; choosing which meal to offer to guests; visiting a friend in hospital; helping our children with their homework; or, at work, undertaking a new or particularly demanding job, getting to know a new colleague or taking part in a planning meeting dealing with a problematic situation. And some incidents and situations we might call 'critical': conflict, whether with a friend or colleague or in church, is likely to generate 'critical' incidents; likewise the surprising or unexpected, any situation that arouses strong feelings or 'makes us think', that leaves us uncertain how to act or, having acted, whether we did the right thing.

It is important to stress that critical incidents are not always negative: they include situations of joy and celebration, such as the time when my family were enjoying our meal out of doors on a particularly warm and balmy evening and a nightingale sang for about a quarter of an hour from a neighbouring tree; or an experience of uplifting worship with a tangible sense of God's presence. Feelings of joy, thankfulness, wonder and awe may also help to make an incident worth the effort of further reflection.

Some critical incidents involve large numbers of people, who may be responding very differently; indeed, those differences may contribute to making the incident critical. An example might be a church or a workplace where something the leadership or management think of as a small adjustment is seen by others as an enormous and challenging change. Other critical incidents involve just one person: it is their particular response, the thoughts and feelings that arise in a situation that is unremarkable for everyone else involved, but which lead them to reflect. An example is given in Chadwick and Tovey's Grove booklet:

> Last week, I called at a home where I am always warmly welcomed. I enjoy going to visit this person. The door opened as usual and I was told, 'I'm sorry but it's not convenient to see you today. The painter's calling to give me a quote for the guttering', and the door was shut. I felt pretty hurt and rejected by this. 'Surely my visit is more important than the painter's. I've worked really hard to make time to come here today', I thought as I left the property. I was inclined just to put it out of my mind or even not visit this person again. After all, many people said how good and conscientious I was at pastoral work. Reflecting on this incident with members of our Pastoral Team helped me to reconsider my reaction. What had made me so upset? Who might have been benefiting most from my visits? I resolved to spend time thinking about my own assumptions about being a Pastoral Visitor, not least in terms of my own wants and needs. I came to see that in visiting I had a need to be wanted, that this was a shadow side to my helping others and that I had felt rejected because this person was not grateful for my helping. I had to spend time in prayer to re-centre my thoughts and feelings and check through what I was doing. In the end this gave me a greater sense of calling and a more realistic view of ministry.[9]

This incident was critical for just one person; others might not have given it a second thought. But it served to bring to the surface something about the assumptions that sustained and guided this person in pastoral work. In this incident the Pastoral Team played a significant role in enabling reflection. Only a little is said about them, but enough to suggest they provided a context of both support and challenge: challenging the visitor to address difficult feelings and perceptions, and providing support in the process of change. As a result the visitor addressed thoughts, feelings and actions, recognizing that these were all closely tied together. And the outcome was a more 'realistic view' of ministry tied to a 'deeper sense of calling'. The visitor gained a significantly greater understanding of the purpose of pastoral ministry as a result of engaging with this particular pastoral encounter, as well as a greater understanding of their own weaknesses and contribution.

Here is an example of the way something that might have been a 'routine' encounter became a 'critical incident' because of the emotional reaction it prompted, which in its turn enabled the visitor to realize that there was more to it than might have met the

eye. He or she was tempted to put it out of mind. And for most of us there will be incidents and situations that we treat as routine, whereas deeper consideration may help us to realize that there is much worth pondering: the potential for wonder daily available to us through the beauty of nature; the precious gift present to us in each person we encounter in daily life; or the suffering, injustice and political upheaval presented to us in nightly news broadcasts.

All these and more are potential situations for reflection, but in theological reflection there is a distinctive added dimension. The purpose of TR is to discover the presence of God in the situations that make up our lives. Its basic question is: 'Where is God in this situation?' Or it may be relevant to frame the question in a way that highlights some particular aspect of God's presence: 'Where are the signs of God's kingdom?', 'What would Jesus have done?' or 'What is God's call?'

Intuition

In a challenging situation, unsure how to act, Rob sought to draw on the resources of Christian tradition, and into his mind came a verse from the Bible: 'You are not far from the kingdom of heaven.' He is thinking of the exchange between Jesus and one of the scribes about the greatest commandment in the Law, in which the scribe concedes that love of God and neighbour is more important than religious ritual (Mark 12.28–34). This verse provides Rob with a framework in which to interpret the woman's situation and in particular her request for baptism for her daughter, a framework that also guides his subsequent actions. There is a likeness between the present-day situation and the situation in the Gospel story. In both, someone without explicit faith in Christ is honestly searching for what is good and right and finding it in the dictates of love. In both, the demands of love take priority over those of religious rectitude. But the connection occurs to Rob spontaneously. He does not first analyse the situation, recognize the priority of love in the woman's request and then find a Bible verse to explain and justify his response. The quotation arises by way of intuition and, having arisen, provides the framework he

needs through which to interpret the situation and decide what to do.

Intuition plays a key role in theological reflection. Chadwick and Tovey's description of critical incident analysis includes a stage at which they ask: 'What does this remind you of in the Scriptures?'[10] Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer's 'Education for Ministry' method of reflection includes a stage at which the reflector pauses to ask: 'What is the heart of the matter?' and is then asked to bring to mind an image that sums up the thoughts and feelings that arise.[11] In this respect TR works in a very different way from the method of most accepted approaches to study and learning. These tend to place the emphasis on our ability to analyse explicit concepts, so as to be able to give clear reasons for our conclusions. In most academic contexts, relying on intuition would be dismissed as unscholarly. Intuition appears to be a mysterious, unaccountable and highly dubious way of arriving at the truth. And yet what I hope to show in this section is that it is much closer to *the way our minds actually work.* We really do use intuition to arrive at most of our conclusions – although it is important that we subsequently analyse these conclusions with some rigorous questioning to test out the validity and value of the insights that have arisen intuitively. And that is just what the process of theological reflection, properly conducted, involves.

In what follows I am attempting to present a condensed version of the conclusions I set out in my earlier book, *Divine Revelation and Human Learning*,[12] in which I used elements of the psychology of human learning: the way our minds work when encountering new information and unfamiliar situations, and the way we store information in our memories. I drew on research in a variety of psychological disciplines, including cognitive science and social learning, to build up a picture of human learning and relate it to the way we come to know God himself through the process of revelation. Since the work I carried out for that book, the new science of cognitive neuroscience has begun to further verify its findings. For example, it has demonstrated the importance of bodily mechanisms in the way we perceive and interpret the world, the way memory works and the importance of our emotions in the

way we respond to situations. How, then, are we to understand intuition in the broader context of human learning?

1 Learning is the outcome of a process of interaction

This interaction takes place between the new information contained in unfamiliar situations, such as the critical incidents we considered in the previous section or in formal educational contexts such as lectures, and the stored information derived from our previous experience. This stored information exists in the form of 'mental models': models of situations, based on past experiences, that tell us what those situations are 'about' and what to expect. In Rob's case, he would have brought a considerable amount of prior knowledge to his encounter with the woman and her daughter, based on his experience of ministry in that parish and including his 'mental models' of prostitution, drugs and the role of the police, as well as of baptism.

Rob will have used these mental models to interpret the situation facing him. They will have provided a framework within which to interpret the facts of his surroundings, such as the torn sofa and the mother's request. Rob's first requirement was to 'make sense' of the situation, to give it some coherent meaning. But it is not only in such challenging situations that we attempt to give meaning to our surroundings. We do this all the time. In the words of Sir Frederic Bartlett, a pioneer in the psychology of memory, there is an 'effort after meaning' in all our processes of perception and attention.[13]

Much of the complex process by which Rob adjusted to his unfamiliar situation will have been entirely unconscious. Our mental models are elements in what the philosopher Michael Polanyi called 'tacit knowledge'. Polanyi is famous for his dictum, 'We know more than we can tell.'[14] His great insight was that tacit knowledge based on past experience makes up by far the greatest proportion of our knowledge, and much of what goes on in our minds when we are attempting to make sense of the present situation takes place without our being able to explain or define what it is we are doing.

In this process of interpretation there is a complex dialectic at work. Without calling on our past experience in the form of mental

models, we cannot interpret our day-to-day, moment-by-moment experience. But on the other hand, we must not perceive *only* what our mental models lead us to expect. We must also be open to the new, and ready to incorporate new information into these mental models. The mental map I use to drive to work every day represents my 'working knowledge' of the route and includes the landmarks I need for navigation, though it may omit a good deal of what would be included in a paper map of the area. The cook's knowledge of baking teaches her how to follow each particular recipe. On occasion, these mental models may require updating: a new roundabout or one-way system needs to be incorporated into my mental map; or the cook decides to try a new recipe with an unfamiliar ingredient. For the more challenging situations, like getting to know a new colleague at work, I may need to draw on a wider range of experience, my knowledge of other colleagues and of the workplace, perhaps my knowledge of people in general, in order gradually to develop a set of expectations to cover this particular colleague.

The flow of life, where reflection takes place, is made up not simply of situations but of *interpreted* situations. It is the interpretation that defines the situation, as it did for the pastoral visitor: it was the interpretation of the words encountered on the doorstep that made the situation what it became for the visitor. And the dynamic of knowing is that we *must* interpret before we can understand: it is the expectations that we bring to each situation that define it. This creates what Thomas Kuhn called the 'essential tension': all our perception, comprehension and learning consist of a negotiation between our expectations of what we are likely to encounter in any given situation, based on past experience, and the present experience of what we actually do encounter.[15] As the cognitive psychologist Ulric Neisser puts it, 'There is a dialectical contradiction between these two requirements: we cannot perceive *unless* we anticipate, but we must not see *only* what we anticipate.'[16] With the work of David Kolb on experiential learning, this dialectic became an accepted feature of human cognition.[17] Our concepts or mental models by which we interpret the world are always held tentatively and provisionally. We are aware that they are in continual need of updating. And this

process of adjustment and updating is in fact continually taking place: it is the process through which we learn from experience.

2 Our mental models do not consist of abstract concepts but of patterns

In his encounter with the woman and her daughter, Rob will have been able to call on his considerable store of information about pastoral visits in general and visits in this parish in particular in the form of a mental model, providing him with the readiness to respond to each new situation. But his mental model for a pastoral visit will not have consisted in a 'general theory' of pastoral visiting. It will rather have consisted in a flexible set of patterns based on his memory of scores or even hundreds of previous visits. These will make Rob alert to the patterns of each subsequent visit: the kinds of need people in his parish are likely to have, the range of attitudes to authority he is likely to encounter, his expectations of people's attitude to the spiritual and religious dimensions of life.

This, I think, is one of the reasons why Jesus, who was obviously a penetrating observer of human life, framed so much of his teaching in the form of parables. A parable is a pattern, a metaphor, inviting us to see something in a particular way: the kingdom of God as like a seed growing secretly or yeast in a loaf or treasure in a field; God's mercy as like that of the father of the prodigal son; his grace as like that of the employer of the workers in the vineyard. Unlike a concept, a parable is open-ended, inviting us to explore further. And also unlike a concept, it invites an emotional as well as an intellectual reaction: we may be drawn to the father's example or scandalized by that of the vineyard owner.

Some of the patterns in Rob's memory will have become *exemplars*. These are the examples of pastoral visits that stand out, perhaps the time when he was able to help resolve a difficult conflict situation or when he led someone to faith in Christ. The pattern of those visits may take central place in Rob's memory. They will be the patterns that organize all the rest, and the ones he is most likely to go to for guidance in new situations.

In the previous chapter we saw that Paul urged his readers to take Jesus as their exemplar, to model their lives on the pattern they found in him, and that Bonhoeffer writes about being 'assimilated to the form of Christ'. To share the 'mind of Christ' will mean that whenever we come to respond to the situations that confront us, especially the 'critical incidents' that challenge us, the mental model we reach for will be the 'form of Christ', as we have come to understand him. And the Holy Spirit is given for precisely this purpose: to be the living presence of Christ in our lives, directing us to his qualities as the 'treasure chest' in which knowledge and understanding for any given situation are to be found.

3 The relationship between these patterns or mental models is one of likeness or analogy

As long ago as 1961 the scientist and philosopher of science Norbert Russell Hanson suggested that the 'logic of scientific discovery' might be analogical.[18] In other words, the scientist, looking for a theory to explain his findings, looks for a pattern similar to a theory with which he is already familiar. Later, Thomas Kuhn built on this to trace the progress of scientific discovery in terms of relationships of similarity.[19]

In an unfamiliar and challenging situation, the way we make sense of it is to interpret it in terms of situations we have already encountered, finding likenesses between these and the new situation. This is exactly what Rob was doing: he drew on his knowledge of Scripture for a situation, or in this case some remembered words of Jesus, that helped him to make sense of his encounter and decide how to respond.

But here is the crucial point: there are no hard and fast rules telling us *which particular* likeness or aspect of similarity we should use to interpret the situation. In Rob's case there were several possible mental models open to him to supply the interpretative clue based on his experience of baptism, of the police, of the drugs trade, of prostitution and of motherhood. There were no 'logical' features of the situation dictating that he was led to one rather than the other. Rather it was his *feelings* and his *values* that led him in a particular direction: his feelings of compassion, his stated intention to encourage the people of his parish to find their own way to faith. And what appears to have been most salient or important for him in the situation, unsurprisingly for a Christian

minister, was his perception of the woman's relationship with God: 'You are not far from the kingdom of heaven.'

Because our mental models are orientated to action, they *integrate* thoughts, feelings and values. They exist to suggest to us what we should *do* in a given situation. They therefore need to help us to determine not just the facts of the situation but what is important to us, how we feel and what goals we should pursue.

In a later section we will consider the role of the Holy Spirit in this encounter and ask whether we are entitled to see Rob's response as guided by the Spirit. But at this point we simply need to recognize that Rob was faced with an enormously complex situation, a particularly good example of a 'critical incident'. And we need to recognize that *every* situation we encounter is enormously complex. If it does not appear so, it is because we have been able to simplify it for ourselves by the way we have interpreted it. One of the functions of our mental models is to reduce the complexity of our everyday lives to manageable order, bringing to mind the information we need based on our past experience to be able to respond.

The function of theological reflection is to ask the crucial questions: 'Why that particular analogy?', 'Why those assumptions?', 'Why that response?' TR *slows down* the process of interpretation, requiring us to examine our intuitions. It creates the time for us to notice aspects of the complex situation we might otherwise have overlooked, such as the role of the neighbours, and in particular to recognize and analyse the assumptions we bring to any situation. And it focuses on God, using patterns from Scripture and Christian tradition that appear in some way to be 'like' the present situation and so may help us in discerning God's presence.

Theological reflection thus implicitly incorporates Michael Polanyi's insight: 'While tacit knowledge can be possessed by itself, explicit knowledge must rely on being tacitly understood or applied. Hence all knowledge is either tacit or else rooted in tacit knowledge.'[20] Theological reflection examines the roots of our explicit judgements in tacit knowledge, the influence of our existing ways of thinking on our intuitive responses and plans of action. It is thus inherently reflexive, requiring the willingness to open ourselves to judgement, the judgement of ourselves, of

others who may share the process, and ultimately of God, in order to see situations more clearly through the lens of Christian faith and thus to learn and grow in discipleship and ministry.

To sum up: the intuition by which the phrase 'You are not far from the kingdom of heaven' came to mind as the key to the situation is entirely in keeping with the way our minds habitually function. It was guided by the values Rob brought to the situation: his assumption that God was on the side of his parishioners, and his desire to work within their understanding of God 'to help them to deal with their own spirituality in their own terms'; and his desire in this particular situation to empathize with the woman, which is itself an enormously complex tacit skill. Consideration as to why this biblical phrase might hold the interpretative key to the situation and the possibility of questioning whether this were the only or the best possible biblical model to use might come later. But first intuition was required in order to create a coherent pattern of meaning for the situation.

Scripture

The phrase that occurred to Rob as the clue to the meaning of the situation he had encountered was taken from the Bible. In theory all sorts of possibilities might have occurred to him: a quotation from Shakespeare, from the novel he had been reading the night before or even from a conversation with a neighbour. But Rob needed authority for any response he made and, as a Christian minister, he turned to the Bible for that authority.

Millions of words have been written about the interpretation and use of the Bible and it is impossible to give a complete account of them here. The aim of this section is to provide an account of the role of the Bible in theological reflection, but to do so against the background of the ongoing debate about the role of Scripture in the life of the church. Perhaps the first and most fundamental observation to make is that the church is the inheritor of a tradition stretching back over more than 2,000 years, which includes the nation of Israel in the centuries before the coming of Christ. Second, that within the church this tradition functions as a source of authority, providing the church with its essential

purpose and identity and guiding its ongoing life. Third, although Christian tradition is broader than the Bible, incorporating its worship, its history and the writings of its scholars throughout the ages, the Bible plays a central and definitive role, and indeed the rest of Christian tradition may justly be evaluated according to its faithfulness or otherwise to Scripture.

Having made these observations, however, it is important to recognize that the decision to confer the authority of Scripture on certain books rather than others and discernment of the ways the Bible may rightly be interpreted are both elements of tradition. This complex relationship between Scripture and tradition reflects the fact that the meaning of any particular Bible passage and indeed the 'meaning' of the Bible itself as an authoritative source are not obvious. On the one hand, the meaning of a passage of Scripture is that conferred on it within a community of interpretation. On the other, that community recognizes in the Bible an authority given to it directly by the work of the Holy Spirit, who is also the guide of the community and thus the guarantor of whatever is faithful in Christian tradition. And finally, in the words of Alasdair MacIntyre, any tradition has to be seen as an ongoing conversation or even 'an historically extended, socially embodied argument' about the 'particular point or purpose' of that tradition and the values it expresses.[21]

The Bible as theological reflection

Having acknowledged the place of Scripture within the complex history of Christian tradition, it is necessary to make a decision about the Bible's role and purpose in the light of which to explore its place in theological reflection. My suggestion is that to do this we need to ask why the Bible came into being in the first place: why the various books that make it up and the individual parts of them were originally written down and then preserved, collected, edited and finally put together into the book we know as the Bible. The answer to this question, I suggest, is to be sought along the following lines: underlying every part of the Bible is the question: 'What is the outward form and inward character of a faithful response to God in this particular situation?' In other words, I am suggesting that just as we have seen human knowledge situated in

the flow of life and relating to particular interpreted situations, so we see the Bible as arising in particular situations and expressing the desire of those who wrote it, and those who preserved and edited it, sometimes for new situations, to declare, teach or simply explore the form and character of a faithful response to God.

In other words, the Bible itself is to be understood as theological reflection: it is a record of men and women asking such questions as: 'Where is God in this situation?', 'How are we to understand our situation in the light of what we have been taught about the character of God?' or 'What is God's call or demand in our situation?' We can fill out this observation by exploring the way particular texts and in some cases whole books are themselves examples of theological reflection:

- Take for example Psalm 8: 'When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, / the moon and the stars that you have established; / what are human beings that you are mindful of them, / mortals that you care for them? / Yet you have made them a little lower than God, / and crowned them with glory and honour' (vv. 3–5). The psalmist considers the wonder and majesty of the night sky and discerns in it an indication of the grandeur and glory of God. Comparing this with the position of human beings, the inhabitants of the world God has created, he nevertheless realizes that humankind has its own grandeur and glory, but that this is ours solely as a gift of the creator. The psalm is a biblical anthropology in miniature, expressed as a theological reflection.
- Sometimes theological reflection in the Bible takes the form of what Elaine Graham, Heather Walton and Frances Ward call 'constructive narrative theology': presenting a reflection in the form of a story, which evokes rather than directly teaches the insights it seeks to convey.[22] One example of this is the book of Ruth, with its theme of God's gracious providence, showing a Moabite woman experiencing the reality of protection under the 'wings' of God, which is a theme of so many of the psalms (Ruth 2.12; Psalm 17.8; 36.7; 63.7 etc.). Another is the source found incorporated into the narrative of 2 Samuel and 1 Kings and often known as the 'succession narrative', telling the story

of the strife in David's household, which eventually led to the succession of Solomon. David Gunn has suggested that this narrative, with its insightful character studies (of David and his sons; Joab, his general; Ahitophel, his erstwhile counsellor), be seen as an extended reflection on the nature of power and leadership, and the interrelation of the personal and the political in the life of a leader.[23] Unlike so many biblical narratives and more in keeping with Israel's wisdom tradition, these chapters make very few references directly to the actions of God. Instead the reader is led by the narrative itself to consider where God may be found and to decide what the lessons of the narrative may be.

- A development of the narrative style of reflection is the parable, the story that draws us in and 'puts us on the spot'. An Old Testament example is the book of Jonah, with its repeated references to Israel's orthodox beliefs about God (Jonah 1.9; 4.2), suggesting that those very beliefs extend the possibility of God's mercy and grace to Israel's hated enemies (Jonah 4.11).
- An example of reflection of a different kind is found in the creation narratives in the early chapters of Genesis. Most of these are attributed in the old theory of sources to the writer 'J', and may well be the work of a group of scholars working together in the court of Solomon. These scholars put together an epic of great sweep, theologizing 'less by formal religious statements than by the linking of the stories and by the more or less direct way that the deity participates in or permeates the action'.[24] The epic begins with the myths of creation and early human history, such as the Creation itself, the Flood and the Tower of Babel. Although drawn from the mythology of the ancient Near East, the J writers have adapted the myths in such a way as to change the portrayal of God. In contrast to the collection of squabbling gods who appear in the pagan versions of these stories, Israel's God is one, and is furthermore portrayed as 'personal but not as mere creature, as parent of all creatures without being sentimental, as respectful of human freedom without being impotent, as moral without being moralistic, as strong-purposed without being dictatorial'.[25] Moreover, the anthropomorphism that records God as fashioning a human creature from the earth, 'walking in the garden in the cool of the day' and later going in person to investigate the crimes of Sodom and Gomorrah, is used in a subtle way to express the relationship of a God who is transcendent and yet personal with his human creatures. In these and a variety of other ways the stories convey a 'feel' for the God whom Israel worshipped, without tying down these observations as doctrine.
- As a fifth example, we may point to the book of Deuteronomy. The book as a whole is a reflection on Israel's tradition of law up to the point of its compilation, probably during the reign of King Josiah of Judah. Conceiving its task as reintroducing God's people to the tradition of the Law and motivating them to keep it, the book's compilers work through collection and arrangement of the material; changes to some provisions to bring them up to date; perhaps also through the inclusion of new material, such as that on the duties of kings in chapter 17; through placing the Law firmly in the historical context of Israel's rescue from slavery in Egypt; but above all through lengthy set-piece exhortations, all to present a picture of Israel's Law as the gracious gift of a benevolent God, which, when it is obeyed 'from the heart', becomes a source of 'life' and 'wisdom'.
- And finally, before leaving the Old Testament it is important to observe that within its pages it reflects the nature of tradition as 'historically extended and socially embodied argument'. Especially is this true of its approach to the mystery of suffering, on which different writers such as the authors of Deuteronomy, the Joseph narrative in Genesis, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Job and Second Isaiah present contrasting, balancing and occasionally differing insights on the meaning of this perennial and bewildering feature of human experience.

The observation that the Bible itself has the nature of theological reflection is more than borne out by this survey of some of the writings of the Old Testament. The character of the book itself supports our contention. It is difficult to approach even the legal passages as one might a textbook, clearly setting out the nature of God and his expectations for human life, since the Law is subject to continual revision and extended reflection both within the

five books of the Torah and outside them, in the prophetic and wisdom traditions in particular. It is rather the record of a developing awareness of God's nature and Israel's vocation, arrived at through a long process of reflection over hundreds of years, and ultimately incomplete.

Is then the New Testament, in which the source of all grace and truth and the 'image of the invisible God' (Colossians 1.15) is presented in the Person of Jesus Christ, more of a doctrinal exposition than a reflection? Not so: here again theological reflection is very much to the fore in both the material of the New Testament and in the process of its compilation:

- Take first the parables of Jesus: as we saw in the previous section ('Intuition'), a parable is a metaphor, a pattern, offered to us as a way of grasping the truth of God. But few of the parables answer in a transparent way the underlying question: 'In what, exactly, does the likeness consist?' The way the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, or God himself like the father of the prodigal son, or Jesus like the king dividing humanity as a shepherd divides sheep and goats is not necessarily clear and obvious from the parable itself. It has to be explored through reflection and application. And that is exactly what Jesus asks his audience to do, precisely so that the inner meaning of his teaching is revealed to those who receive it with faith and obedience.[26]
- The book of Acts includes within its pages some significant examples of theological reflection. It tells the story of the way Gentiles eventually came to be included within the Christian church. It portrays Peter as clearly foreseeing this development on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2.39) and yet hesitating when the time came for its implementation. He is eventually convinced by the combination of a dream in which he is invited to 'kill and eat' a variety of unclean animals and an invitation to preach at the home of a Roman centurion, followed by the evident outpouring of the Holy Spirit on those of the centurion's household. Theological reflection runs like a thread through this story. First Peter is puzzled by the meaning of his dream, eventually deciding, in the context of his journey to meet Cornelius, that he 'should not call anyone profane or unclean' (Acts 10.28). Only the evidence of the gift of Holy Spirit finally leads him, and the believers in Judaea, to the conclusion that 'God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life' (Acts 11.18). The terms on which the Gentiles are to be incorporated into the church are only hammered out after long deliberation at the Council of Jerusalem, during which James draws on the book of Amos to explain this surprising development. And the eventual decision of the Council is conveyed to the churches with the words: 'It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us' (Acts 15.28), a sign of the Council's consciousness that, although called on to take responsibility for their decision, it has been arrived at only through reflection with the aid of the Spirit.

- As a third example, we may explore the evidence of his letters for examples of Paul's approach to conflict and controversy in his churches. Habitually Paul uses a clear and consistent approach: he outlines the problem, states the principle he believes holds the solution and explores the way this principle is to be applied. In 1 Corinthians 8—10 the problem is conflict between believers over their attitude to meat sacrificed to pagan idols. The Corinthians appeared to be attempting to resolve the issue on the basis of 'knowledge'. But Paul is clear that the operative principle is rather to be love. Love requires each party to respect and care for the conscience of the other and to adapt their behaviour with this in mind. In the same way love is invoked in chapters 12—14 as the guiding principle for the conduct of their worship. In Philippians there are two principles, *phronesis* and *koinonia*. The church is to 'order its common life' in a way that reflects the 'mind' of Jesus Christ, a disposition to humility, service and sacrifice. Paul offers his own example (twice) and those of Timothy and Epaphroditus as concrete exemplars of the form this disposition might take and then urges the quarrelling Euodia and Syntyche, along with the whole church, to adopt this attitude as the pattern of Christian maturity.
- And finally, the compilation of the Gospels is another obvious example of theological reflection. Scholarship has shown how

each of the Gospel authors structures their book in a richly theological way, each emphasizing different facets of Jesus' character and self-understanding, aiming to present a coherent portrayal not only of Jesus' life but of his identity and significance.

The Bible is thus a resource for theological reflection in the present because it is a record of the theological reflection of previous generations, made up of texts in which God's people in a variety of ways set out to discern the nature of a faithful response to God in their particular situations. Given this understanding of Scripture, biblical scholarship has an important role to play. The scholars can help us to understand in greater depth and detail the historical situations in which the reflections we find in the Bible arose: the nature of the problems and dilemmas facing God's people and the intellectual, historical and religious contexts that form the background to these writings. They can draw out the coherence – or lack of coherence – of the writings and show us the levels of meaning embedded in them. And they can show us the ways the Bible 'talks to itself': one writer drawing on the wisdom of another, such as the way the early Jeremiah draws on Hosea; one writer using another as the context for their own message (in the way Joel 3.10 refers to Isaiah 2.4; Zephaniah looks back to the Flood narrative and the Tower of Babel; Third Isaiah and Daniel build on the prophecies of Second Isaiah); and in particular the way the New Testament takes the Old as its background and responds to it in the light of Jesus.

The Bible in theological reflection

All this means that what Rob was doing in using a particular text to provide a framework of meaning for a given situation was not necessarily simple proof-texting but the bridging of the two 'horizons' of the text and the present day, calling on the insights of God's people as recorded in Scripture to provide patterns for reflection in the present. Viewed in this way, the use of the Bible in theological reflection bears important resemblances to its use in *lectio divina*, in which both mind and heart, intellect and emotions are opened to the message of a particular passage, with the

aim of hearing what God might be saying through it in the present. It also echoes the Seven-Step process, originating with the Lumko Institute in South Africa, in which the group listen intently to a passage in order to determine a 'Word of Life' for the coming week or month and decide together how to apply it in action in their own context.[27] In both, the intention is to discover in the text a likeness to the present situation and a pattern of faithful response.

Implicit in all we have said so far is the idea of the 'authority' of Scripture: the idea that in some way the Bible is an authoritative source for the way the Christian life is to be lived and the church conducts itself. Unless the Bible is treated in this way, theological reflection makes no sense. But implicit in the activity of TR is the idea that the Bible is capable of providing a key to answer questions that lie at its heart: 'Where is God in this situation?', 'How is he calling us to respond?' As Tom Wright points out, 'The phrase "the authority of Scripture" can make Christian sense only if it is a shorthand for "the authority of the triune God, exercised somehow *through* Scripture".'[28] This means that if we are to understand the way the Bible exercises authority, and the role it plays in TR, we have to understand the way God exercises authority.

What the Bible shows us is that the authority of God is tied up with the coming of his kingdom. In other words, his authority is not a 'steady state': it is in the process of coming to be. God is at work, through his choice of Israel, the life, death and resurrection, and cosmic enthronement of Jesus and the sending of the Holy Spirit, to restore and renew his broken creation. In this loving process of renewal, God's authority does not impose itself; rather, he invites all who wish to become partners with him in his loving purpose. This is why the Bible is neither a doctrinal manual telling us what we should believe, nor yet a rule book, imposing a certain pattern of life. Rather the Bible is a story: the record of God's gracious action in history. And because so much of the Bible is in itself theological reflection, the record of God's people seeking to respond to God's call in the circumstances of their time, it is ideally suited to be the means through which that process of reflection continues today. But because God's rule is dynamic, still in the process of bringing about the full acknowledgement of

his authority, the Bible is far more than a record, far more than simply true information about God's nature and purposes. It is an invitation to join him in the work of the kingdom: to see the world from his point of view and to allow him to take over our lives and use them for his purpose.[29]

Church

At the time of Rob's encounter with the woman who asked him to baptize her child, he was handicapped by the expectation arising from the professional model of ministry that as the vicar, his job was to wrestle with the issues, decide on a course of action and take responsibility for it *on his own*. The record of the story given in *From Strangers to Neighbours* does not make it clear whether anyone else was involved in the ministry that took place on this particular occasion or whether the decision to baptize was Rob's alone.

In this section I want to explore four related aspects of theological reflection:

- First, in New Testament terms, the exercise of Christian ministry by a single person acting alone is not a 'normal' situation. Christian ministry is collaborative by its very nature since it is intended to express the nature of the church as a loving, Christ-centred community.
- Moreover, shared reflection plays a key role in both building up the church and in helping to define the nature of ministry.
- Third, reflection together is usually far more productive and fruitful than reflection alone.
- This is because theological reflection is, by its very nature, a corporate activity. The Christian tradition to which we turn for patterns of faithfulness emerges from the experience of the church in all generations. No one reflects alone: by its very nature reflection connects us with the community of which we are a part.

In the exercise based on the incident, I initially withhold the verse that occurred to Rob, 'You are not far from the kingdom

of heaven.' Instead I stop the story at the words 'the line that was going through my own mind – my "gut feeling" – was . . .', and then ask the group what passages of Scripture come to mind for them. As you can imagine, there has been a great variety over the years. They have included:

- The story of the Syro-Phoenician woman and her daughter from Matthew 15.21–28. Like the situation Rob faced, this is a story of a mother and daughter from outside the community, of someone, according to the prevailing understanding the day, strongly voiced on this occasion by his disciples, Jesus should have rejected. And Jesus grants her request for the healing of her daughter, though not without putting her through a rigorous test of her faith.
- 'Let the little children come to me' (Mark 10.14): another account of a situation where Jesus refuses to go along with conventional attitudes, again voiced by his disciples. And Mark's account of the incident tells us Jesus was made indignant by this attitude.
- The story of the woman taken in adultery from John 8.1–11. This is another story of a woman rejected by her community, this time because of obvious sexual sin. And like the other two examples, Jesus rejects and challenges the prevailing assumptions.
- 'Who can withhold water for baptism?' (a paraphrase of Acts 10.47). The link to this passage is obviously baptism, but again it is baptism granted to a surprising group of people, where the gift of the Holy Spirit is an indicator of God's acceptance.
- Isaiah 61.1 – 'The spirit of the Lord GOD . . . has anointed me . . . to bring good news to the oppressed . . .' This passage places the encounter in the context of mission, God's call and anointing to bring good news to the 'poor', the 'oppressed', the 'broken-hearted' and the 'captives'.

Each of the passages suggested has an obvious likeness to Rob's situation. Like the verse 'You are not far from the kingdom of heaven', each potentially provides a framework within which to explore the presence of God in the encounter and his specific call.

Each in its different way recognizes, explicitly or implicitly, the church's call to preach the gospel and to welcome the stranger without judging. And each provides material for further prayerful study.

Had Rob had the opportunity he may well have been able to take his story of the encounter to a supportive group, perhaps of fellow clergy, perhaps of prayer partners, perhaps of co-leaders within the church, in order to open his reflection to others. These and other passages may well have occurred to them. Equally, they may have been able to ask some questions to explore the situation in greater depth: 'What seemed to be the greatest need of the woman and her daughter (or, in other words, what seemed to be the 'heart of the matter')?'; 'Does the little girl have an independent role in this or is she being used simply to mark the mother's resolution?'; 'Might the neighbours have a different narrative of the situation?' And they may have been able to study the Scripture passage where 'You are not far from the kingdom of heaven' occurs, opening a commentary for further enlightenment and prayerfully waiting on the Spirit both in interpreting the passage and for his guidance on how to act in the situation.

At the heart of collaborative ministry lies the commitment to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit *together*. In the New Testament there is only one single-person leader and that is Jesus, the 'pioneer and perfecter of our faith' (Hebrews 12.2), who is in himself the source of the 'one new humanity' (Ephesians 2.15) in which the whole church shares, and the goal of both individual and corporate Christian maturity (Ephesians 4.13; Philippians 3.15). In the days of his earthly ministry, when he first called his disciples to participate in his mission to the world, Jesus sent them out two by two. When the young church was led to emulate him, they did the same thing, setting apart both Paul and Barnabas, who also took Mark with them as apprentice (Acts 13.1–5). After his break with Barnabas, Paul maintained the same pattern, taking Silas as companion and recruiting Timothy as apprentice (Acts 15.40; 16.1).

In some sections of the church at least, it is commonplace to think of Paul as a single, even 'heroic' leader, but this is very far from the New Testament's portrayal of him and its approach to

leadership in general. In the New Testament not even Jesus is called 'leader'; in fact the New Testament writers seem deliberately to avoid the words *archon* (ruler) and *hegemon* (governor) to describe either Jesus or church leaders. The whole framework of understanding seems to derive from Jesus' words: 'it is not so among you' (Mark 10.43). This is not to say that leadership does not take place. As in every group, there must be the exercise of leadership. But in Jesus' community, leadership is not rule but facilitation. The aim is to hear and respond to the voice of the Holy Spirit who, in the words of John Taylor, is the 'chief actor in the historic mission of the Christian church' and 'the director of the whole enterprise'.[30]

Discerning the guidance of the Spirit is therefore a key task for the church, and theological reflection a tool through which to accomplish it. But this process of discernment is a corporate process, in which a group or team reflect together, drawing on the wisdom of Christian tradition, which is our inheritance from the church of previous generations. As Graham Cray puts it: 'In this era, which requires discernment before there can be any strategic planning, leadership is not so much about how leaders discern as about their enabling God's people to discern.'[31]

So in Acts 16 we observe Paul and Silas, having completed the first stage of their missionary journey by visiting the churches established by Paul and Barnabas in Syria and Cilicia, trying to discern the next step. There is clear guidance from the Spirit against preaching in the province of Asia or going further north into Bithynia. Instead Paul has a dream of a man from Macedonia asking for help. This is also the beginning of the first of the 'we' passages in Acts and it is generally assumed that Luke, the book's author, had joined Paul and Silas in Troas, on the Aegean coast. Significantly, in Acts 16.10 it is 'we' who become convinced that God was calling them to Macedonia. There is a clear implication that Paul had shared his dream and that the whole group, including its newest member, had been involved in the final decision.

We misread the New Testament if we read its approach to leadership through the lens of the 'heroic' models of expert leadership current in our individualist society. In the early church, leadership was plural. There are many titles, such as elders, deacons and

overseers, but these are always plural. Leadership is a corporate activity. Moreover, the models of our contemporary culture are beginning to change. More and more writers and practitioners in the field are recognizing that one person cannot possibly fulfil all the functions necessary to lead a healthy organization. Leadership is rather a shared activity in which ideally strengths and weaknesses complement one another.[32] And in relation to Christian leadership it has been suggested that one purpose of the fivefold pattern of leadership set out in Ephesians 4.11 is that it brings the very different perspectives of the apostle, the evangelist, the prophet, pastor and teacher to bear on any given situation.[33]

Collaborative theological reflection aiming to discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit plays a key role Christian ministry. Theological reflection is still a tool for the individual disciple, seeking for guidance, help or reassurance, but she will usually find it helpful to share her situation with fellow Christians and invite them to reflect with her. In the groups of ordinands and clergy I have facilitated in theological reflection there have been several occasions when one or other member of the group would bring an incident for reflection, believing that they themselves had already gained a full understanding of God's presence in the situation, only to be amazed at the variety of perspectives opened up by the wisdom of the group. Even without this dimension no Christian reflects alone: as soon as she opens a commentary or Bible study aid to help her understand the Scripture, she will be drawing on the wisdom of tradition.

Finally, reflection plays a key role in building up the church as a loving, nurturing community and, when necessary, bridging the divide between leaders and led, clergy and laity. In his 1983 book *The Reflective Practitioner*, a seminal study of reflective practice, Donald Schön outlines what he sees as the crisis of confidence in the professions, which was then a feature of society in the United States and has since become a feature of our own. He points to the regular occurrence of scandals in which professionals are shown to be incompetent, uncaring or misusing their power, such as we have seen in social work on a regular basis as well as in the mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust in 2013. He points out that in contemporary culture the power of expertise is coming

under suspicion. Rapid change means that it is increasingly difficult for professionals to know everything they need. For example, a doctor may misdiagnose a disease or prescribe the wrong drug simply because he has not been able to keep up with the latest research. And finally, there are the periodic conflicts of value that arise between the professions and the public, as when an architect wants to design a striking and impressive building whereas the client simply wants something that works, and the public may look on the result as an eyesore.

Schön suggests that professionals can rescue themselves from this situation by changing their status from that of expert to reflective practitioner and, moreover, by sharing the task of reflection with the client. When this takes place, instead of trying to sustain the mask of a fount of all knowledge, the professional uses his uncertainties to continue learning. Instead of distancing himself from the client, he actively seeks his co-operation, thereby pursuing real connection instead of status. The client moves from passivity to increasing involvement, from dependency to interdependence, from reliance on the expertise of another to the ability to use that expertise to learn and grow.[34] In the context of a local church used to relying on the professional model of ministry, this approach and the change in status that results represents a transition to a collaborative pattern of ministry, one with the potential to build the confidence of lay disciples and their ownership of the church's ministry.

At the outset of his study of collaborative ministry, Stephen Pickard acknowledges the challenge it poses with a quotation from a colleague: 'To exercise ministry in a collaborative manner requires spiritual maturity.'[35] It requires maturity not only of church leaders, who may have been trained in a hierarchical, one-person pattern of leadership, but also of congregations invited to share responsibility for the church's mission and ministry. But the very tool that lies at the heart of a collaborative approach to ministry, theological reflection, is also a tool that builds maturity, individual and corporate. As Roger Walton points out, shared reflection requires a number of attitudes. 'Courageous openness', 'a faith that is open to God at all times' faces the possibility of change and challenges; 'careful accountability' recognizes the

importance of each other and sets aside selfish desires for the outcomes one would prefer; 'conscientious immersion in the tradition' places oneself under the authority of Christian tradition; and 'constant prayerfulness' is open to God's presence in reflection at all times. Each of these both requires and further builds maturity of the congregation willing to take the risk of shared reflection.[36]

The church only becomes a learning organization, capable of adaptation and change in response to challenging circumstances, by engaging in a shared process of theological reflection. Not only does this enable it to recognize the hidden assumptions shaping its life, it does so by calling on the wisdom of all its members committed enough to join the process of shared reflection, rather than that of only a few. And it is this process of shared life through prayerful corporate reflection that enables the church to grow in both unity and maturity, sharing 'the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind' (Philippians 2.2).

Holy Spirit

In everything I have written in the previous section about shared reflection I have assumed the presence of the Holy Spirit. The goal of theological reflection is to discern the presence and call of God, and this is precisely the purpose for which we are promised the gift of the Spirit. Comparing the wisdom of the gospel with human wisdom, Paul writes:

> What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived . . . these things God has revealed to us by the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God . . . no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. (1 Corinthians 2.9–12)

In John's Gospel, Jesus promises that in place of his physical presence his followers will be taught by the Holy Spirit:

> If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive . . . But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. (John 14.15–17, 26)

In the new era inaugurated by his death and resurrection, Jesus' followers will not be reliant solely on Scripture and tradition. They will have a divine guide who will point them in the right direction, reminding them of Jesus' words, bringing to mind those elements of their heritage most relevant to their situation, providing patterns to help them recognize God's presence. In Jesus the deepest truths of God became incarnate, embodied in his Person. Now this truth is to be available to the disciples through the Spirit dwelling within and among them.

Of course, there is a variety of ways it is possible to exclude the Spirit from the process of reflection: inattention or lack of prayerfulness; the pride or self-confidence that we already understand the situation and know the answer to any problem; the desire for the rest of the group to agree with our point of view; the fear of challenge or change. To acknowledge the Spirit's role in our reflection requires humility, the patience to wait on his timing and the willingness to examine ourselves and to be changed. Indeed, the participation of the Spirit makes theological reflection into an aspect of prayer, through which we seek to know God more deeply, to share his love for the world and discern his will in a particular situation.

The Spirit is an indispensable partner in theological reflection. First, this is because he opens us to the Bible. The Spirit is its author: as the inspiration and guide of those men and women whose reflections are recorded there; and because the church acknowledges the role of the Spirit in the selection of those writings deemed to bear the authority of Scripture. The Spirit is also the interpreter of Scripture, the one who helps us discern the presence of God and the message for us within its pages. Second, the Spirit is indispensable because he opens Christians to one another.

He is the member of the Trinity who binds the Father and the Son in eternal unity, and the one who extends this unity to human beings by drawing us into their loving relationship. The Spirit is the creator of that unity of heart and mind that is the goal of reflection together.

To accomplish this, the Spirit works in and through the normal human processes of perceiving and understanding, valuing and relating. He is not given to us as an added, much less an alien extra. Rather his role is to root our natural abilities in the soil for which they were originally intended: the relationship with God in which all human beings find ultimate fulfilment. The reason this is possible, from the point of view of human cognition, is that, as we have seen in the previous chapter, all learning involves a reconstruction of our sense of identity. As Paul Jarvis puts it, 'In a sense we are constructing our own biography whenever we learn. While we live, our biography is an unfinished product, constantly undergoing change and development . . . People are always *becoming* . . .'[37]

When God draws us into relationship with himself in Christ, the gift of the Spirit, which is the 'pledge' and 'seal' of that new relationship (2 Corinthians 1.22; Ephesians 1.13), creates in us a new identity. It is through the Spirit that we are enabled to cry 'Abba! Father!' (Romans 8.15–16) and to confess 'Jesus is Lord' (1 Corinthians 12.3). Significantly, Paul writes that in the cry of 'Abba! Father!' the Spirit is witnessing 'with our spirit' (Romans 8.16). Our new identity as children of God and companions and followers of Jesus Christ is the gift of the Spirit, who makes the 'form' of Jesus, the exemplar of our new life in restored relationship with the Father, available to us at a deep level of personality. But that identity impacts the rest of our mental world only gradually, as we live it out in the flow of life, interpreting situations and responding to them in new ways. When this takes place we experience the cycle of Colossians 1.9–10. Discerning and living the life pleasing to the Lord, we bear fruit in all kinds of good works and grow further in the knowledge of God.[38]

It is in this way that theological reflection plays an important role in the development of Christian character. Reflection requires of us that we not only focus on the incident or situation but on our

own response to it, our feelings, our assumptions and our habitual ways of responding. It invites us to evaluate our actions and attitudes in the light of what we find in the Bible and Christian tradition, guided by the Holy Spirit. It challenges us, implicitly or explicitly, to consider doing things differently. Theological reflection holds the potential for 'deep learning': fundamental changes of perspective and ways of behaving that facilitate growth in virtue.

Here too the Holy Spirit works with the natural processes of human learning and acting. For Aristotle, the virtues were human potentialities, achievable through the exercise of practical wisdom, decision and self-control. The same perspective is shared by the character literature of today. In the educational field, as we have seen, character can be inculcated by a whole-school ethos, the presence of suitable mentors, active pedagogies and direct teaching. In that segment of management literature that concentrates on 'personal mastery', the traits of character helpful to the business leader can be learned through decision and practice.[39] The development of Christian character also requires thought, decision and discipline; but the Holy Spirit is the one who challenges us and enables us to see situations through the eyes of Jesus, who convinces us of the need to change when often we would rather he did not, who teaches us with which virtues we need to 'clothe' ourselves (Colossians 3.12), and who frequently gives us the power to do so when our own inclinations and abilities fall short. We may have to 'work out our own salvation', but true Christlikeness is possible only because 'God is at work in us' through the Holy Spirit, 'both to will and to work for his good pleasure' (Philippians 2.12–13).

Risk

There is one final aspect of theological reflection to which it is important to pay attention at this stage: it is not rule-governed. In TR there are few hard and fast answers. It does not consist in the application of a critically tested general theory to specific situations. Rather it acknowledges there can never be complete certainty about *which* general principles are the ones most relevant and important in a given situation, nor about *how* those

principles should be put into practice. Instead, through TR the practitioner seeks to discern an appropriate *pattern* of response: a way of thinking, feeling and acting in the situation that seems to acknowledge the presence of God and the call of Christ in the situation.

In his response to the woman's request for her daughter's baptism, there are several different ways Rob may have 'got it wrong'. There may have been important things about the situation of which he was unaware. He may have chosen the wrong Bible passage as a framework within which to interpret the situation. He may have misinterpreted the passage. He may have been wrong in trusting his 'gut instinct'. Theological reflection opens us up to the possibility of error precisely because it is situated in the flow of life, where every situation comes already interpreted, and many are messy and ambiguous, and often subject to conflict.

In some situations, such as where the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is at stake, there are procedures that have to be followed. In most there are principles of good practice. On the other hand, we live in a society that is increasingly risk-averse and in which, as a result, professional practice is becoming subject to ever closer control and accountability. In an article entitled '"Professional Wisdom" in Practice', Joseph Dunne deplores the tendency to organize and regulate even people-centred practices such as nursing and social work according to the dictates of 'technical rationality'. In essence, argues Dunne, this is an attempt to 'disembed' 'the knowledge implicit in the skilful performance of the characteristic tasks of the practice from the immediacy and idiosyncrasy of the particular situations in which it is deployed' and convert it into 'explicit, generalizable formulae, procedures or rules'. The assumption behind this approach is that the only valid knowledge is 'objective' knowledge. The practitioner's tacit knowledge, her 'practical know-how' based on accumulated experience, which she is capable of deploying in a flexible way in a complex variety of situations, is discounted. Holding her accountable is deemed to require a procedural rule book made up of 'objective' standards of practice for which only explicitly codifiable knowledge is allowed to count as relevant. 'The ideal', comments Dunne, 'is a practitioner-proof practice.'[40]

When we put ourselves in the place of Rob Gallagher in his encounter with the reformed prostitute, however, it is comparatively easy to recognize the ways 'technical rationality' fails completely to capture the multi-dimensional complexity of the accumulated experience on which he is drawing:

- In the first place, Rob brings his existing mental models, drawn from his experience of motherhood, prostitution, drug addiction, the police, baptism and the relationship between the church and this particular local community. He needs to deploy all these to help him interpret the situation facing him.
- He also brings with him not simply his existing experience but his values. There is a variety of outcomes in this situation: that this mother experiences acceptance from the representative of the church; that she comes to know God's love; that she joins the church; that she remains free of drugs; that her daughter's future is not blighted by association with drugs and prostitution; that the church is well thought of in the neighbourhood. The relative importance Rob assigns to each of these possible outcomes will depend on the values he brings. For example, in his role of vicar, is it important to him that someone comes to church? He has told us that his approach is to meet members of the community on their own ground and their own terms, which suggests that this may be less important for him than supporting the woman in the pursuit of her own hopes and aspirations.
- In the light of his previous knowledge and his experience, and the values he brings, Rob will be defining and redefining the task in the course of the encounter. Is it simply to ensure that this mother experiences acceptance for herself and her child? That she remains free of drugs? That she understands the baptismal promises? That she is enabled to continue on a spiritual journey? That the relationships between her and her neighbours are restored? That the police are challenged about their approach? As the mother tells her story, Rob will be trying to sort out the important from the less important, looking for clues to help him decide what his response should be.
- At the same time he will also be defining his role in the relationship, both for himself and for the woman. He is the local

vicar: but how does this woman understand that role? What does she expect of him? Is there a possibility of this encounter being transformative for her – or for him?
- Finally, Rob is deploying a repertoire of skills, such as empathetic listening, as he listens and attempts to steer the conversation. His eyes and ears and – perhaps in a house that has recently been used for drug-taking – his sense of smell will provide him with a constant stream of feedback as he seeks to interpret the situation and decide on his best possible course of action.

Donald Schön refers to this process as 'reflection-in-action': the process of reflection that takes place in the immediacy of situations. It is this that reveals most clearly the values, experience, habits of thought and feeling we bring to situations, and this reflection-*in*-action will itself become the subject of reflection-*on*-action, when Rob pauses later to consider the way he handled the encounter. If he does so with the support of others, choosing perhaps to make use of a formal method of TR, a variety of further factors may be taken up in that reflection:

- The meaning of the situation for the actors involved: the mother, the neighbours, the police, the little girl, Rob himself.
- Rob's awareness of his feelings about the police, drugs, prostitution and baptism, based on his experience of these things.
- The possibility of specialist knowledge that either Rob or the members of the reflecting group may have about such things as police methods, the drugs trade or the church's liturgical provision and rules.
- The Christian theological tradition, as found in Scripture and the writings of theologians down the centuries.
- All culminating in a decision about possible courses of action. Might the church seek to act as advocate for the woman, or as mediator between her and her neighbours? Should the baptism go ahead and, if so, who should be invited? What role might the congregation play in befriending and supporting her?

Painting a rich picture of the situation in this way allows us to recognize, with Michael Polanyi, that explicit knowledge, the

knowledge that can be 'disembedded' and codified, is dependent on a base of tacit know-how. The issue between the two approaches is: *What counts as valid knowledge?* For technical rationality, only universal, decontextualized theory is allowed to count as 'knowledge' and the legitimacy of situation-specific judgement is denied. For the reflective practitioner, on the other hand, knowledge arises from and is related to the flow of life, made up of interpreted situations.

Thus the principles of good practice consist of shared mental models derived from experience. They are similar to the habits that make up good character: reliable ways of interpreting and responding to similar situations. Moreover, not only are these principles similar to the foundations of good character but, being rooted in judgements of value, good character is required to recognize and apply them. For this reason, a 'good' doctor, 'good' teacher or 'good' social worker must also be a good person. The 'professional wisdom' required for good practice has the nature of a virtue ethic for a given field.[41]

The risk inherent in theological reflection is thus a reflection of the character of knowledge itself. Knowledge is the skill of responding to complex situations on the basis of previous experience. This risky quality is also a reflection of the nature of Christian faith. Jesus was not someone who followed the rule book. He rather sought to discern the presence of God in each individual encounter, responding flexibly to each person he met on the basis of his perfect love. Christian discipleship is not primarily a philosophy but first and foremost the communal practice of following Jesus and participating in the sharing of his love in the world. And the Bible is not presented as an instruction manual but as the record of a community's reflection on their encounter with God and with the truth incarnate in Jesus.

In this chapter I have given a brief introduction to the process of theological reflection and analysed some of its most important elements in order to show that TR is not only a reflection of the way people actually do learn and grow in both competence and maturity but also a means by which, under the authority of Scripture and Christian tradition, in company with fellow believers and empowered by the Holy Spirit, Christians learn

to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ in the way they live and seek to share in his mission. In the next chapter we will look specifically at the church's teaching ministry, whose aim is to enable Christians to grow, individually and corporately, as disciples of Jesus and to equip them for ministry. And what I hope to show is that good practice in Christian teaching not only makes full use of theological reflection but is faithful to the cycle of experiential learning, which itself underlies and gives shape to TR.

Notes

1 Ripon College Cuddesdon student assignment: used with permission.

2 Jane Leach, 'The End of Theological Education: An Analysis of the Contribution of Portfolio Learning to Formation in Ministry within a University Context', *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 7.2, 2010, pp. 117–204; quotation from p. 135.

3 For a full account, see Paul Ballard and John Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action*, 2nd edn, London: SPCK, 2006; Laurie Green, *Let's Do Theology*, 2nd edn, London: Continuum, 2009.

4 Kolb's learning cycle was, along with liberation theology, one of the two original sources for Green's formulation of the pastoral cycle. See Green, *Let's Do Theology*, pp. 17–18; also Judith Thompson, *The SCM Studyguide to Theological Reflection*, London: SCM Press, 2008, pp. 51f. A fuller account of the learning cycle will be given in Chapter 3.

5 Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, New York: Schocken Books, 1971, pp. 43, 40, 91; quoted in Charles Wood, *Vision and Discernment*, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1985, p. 75.

6 It is hoped that this work might become the subject of a Grove booklet at a future date.

7 David Evans and Mike Fearon, *From Strangers to Neighbours*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1998, pp. 134–5. I am grateful to Rob Gallagher for allowing me to use the story of this incident as the basis of this chapter.

8 Charles Chadwick and Phillip Tovey, *Growing in Ministry: Using Critical Incident Analysis*, Cambridge: Grove, 2003, p. 9.

9 Chadwick and Tovey, *Growing in Ministry*, pp. 10–11.

10 Chadwick and Tovey, *Growing in Ministry*, p. 15.

11 P. O'Connell Killen and J. de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection*, New York: Crossroad, 2004, pp. 27–43.

12 David Heywood, *Divine Revelation and Human Learning*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.

13 Frederic Bartlett, *Remembering*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932, pp. 14–33.

14 Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967, p. 4.

15 See Thomas Kuhn, 'The Essential Tension: Tradition and Innovation in Scientific Research', in Kuhn, *The Essential Tension*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, pp. 225–39.

16 Ulric Neisser, *Cognition and Reality*, San Francisco: W. H. Freeman & Co., 1976, p. 43.

17 See David Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984, pp. 43–51, 106–9.

18 N. R. Hanson, 'Is there a Logic of Scientific Discovery?', in H. Feigl and G. Maxwell (eds), *Current Issues in the Philosophy of Science*, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1961, pp. 20–42.

19 Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd edn, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969, p. 189.

20 Michael Polanyi, 'The Logic of Tacit Inference', *Philosophy* 41, 1966, pp. 1–18; quotation from p. 7; reprinted in *Knowing and Being*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 144.

21 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd edn, London: Duckworth, 1985, p. 222.

22 Elaine Graham, Heather Walton and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods*, London: SCM Press, 2005, pp. 47–77.

23 David M. Gunn, *The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation*, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989.

24 Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction*, Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985, p. 325; see also the comments of Gerhard von Rad in his commentary, *Genesis*, London: SCM Press, 1961.

25 Gottwald, *Hebrew Bible*, pp. 328–9.

26 This I take to be the thrust of Jesus' word to his disciples in Mark 4.10–12 (parallel Matthew 13.10–17).

27 www.fabc.org/offices/olaity/AsIPA docs/Gospel Sharing Methods/1. Seven Steps Method of Gospel Sharing.pdf.

28 Tom Wright, *Scripture and the Authority of God*, London: SPCK, 2005, p. 21.

29 Wright, *Scripture*, pp. 21–32.

30 John V. Taylor, *The Go-Between God*, London: SCM Press, 1972, p. 3.

31 Graham Cray, *Discerning Leadership: Co-operating with the Go-Between God*, Cambridge: Grove, 2010, p. 15.

32 See, for example, David Pendleton and Adrian Furnham, *Leadership: All You Need to Know*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2012, pp. 74–96.

33 Alan Frost and Paul Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003, pp. 165–81.

34 Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*, Farnham: Ashgate, 1983, pp. 3–20, 287–307.

35 Stephen Pickard, *Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, p. 1.

36 Roger Walton, *The Reflective Disciple*, London: Epworth Press, 2009, pp. 104–10.

37 Paul Jarvis, *Adult Education and Lifelong Learning: Theory and Practice*, 4th edn, Abingdon: Routledge, 2010, p. 39.

38 For more detail on the relation between the Holy Spirit and human cognition, see my *Divine Revelation and Human Learning*, pp. 132–44.

39 See, for example, Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, London: Simon & Schuster, 1992; and Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* and *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, published together, London: Bloomsbury, 2004; original publication 1995 and 1998. By 'habits' Covey means what we have described as *habitus*, settled dispositions translated into habitual actions. The introduction to Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* is entitled 'Aristotle's Challenge' and refers to the way Aristotle taught that the way to virtue was to handle emotion with intelligence.

40 Joseph Dunne, '"Professional Wisdom" in Practice', in Liz Bondi et al., *Towards Professional Wisdom*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2011, pp. 13–26; quotation from pp. 16–17.

41 See further several essays in Bondi et al., *Towards Professional Wisdom*: Daniel Vokey and Jeannie Kerr, 'Intuition and Professional Wisdom: Can We Teach Moral Discernment?', pp. 63–80; Elizabeth Campbell, 'Teacher Education as a Missed Opportunity in the Professional Preparation of Ethical Practitioners', pp. 81–93; David Carr, 'Virtue, Character and Emotion in People Professions: Towards a Virtue Ethic of Interpersonal Professional Conduct', pp. 97–110.