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The Journal of Transformative Learning and Leadership (JTLL) is a twice-per-year, peer review academic journal, for the advancement of understanding and applying transformative learning to educational and leadership contexts in diverse disciplines.

JTLL Mission

The JTLL serves as a scholarly forum for the refinement and dissemination of research pertaining to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary implications of transformative learning and its applications for leadership in diverse contexts.

JTLL Core Values

The JTLL espouses the essential idea that learning that transforms is best understood through Biblical descriptions and processes. The JTLL is thus committed to refinement and dissemination of research and applications from the platform of the Biblical worldview in every discipline engaged. The JTLL also is rooted in the idea that those engaging in transformative learning ought also to be well equipped and active in transformative leadership – the application of transformative learning principles in the processes of assisting and guiding other individuals and communities in their own transformative growth.

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Table of Contents

JTLL, Volume 1, Number 1, Fall 2023

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1. EDITOR'S PREFACE: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING – Cone.....7-11

2. THE LIFE AND THEOLOGICAL METHOD OF LEWIS SPERRY CHAFER, PART 1 (INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND) – Gunn.....13-29

3. THE CREATOR/CREATION DISTINCTION: AN ONTOLOGICAL BASIS FOR PROPER TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP – Miles.....31-46

4. THE IMPORTANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF A BIBLICALLY DERIVED INTERPRETIVE METHOD AS MODELED THROUGH SYMBOLS WITHIN THE BOOK OF REVELATION – Oglesby.....47-69

5. THE APPLICATION OF ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES IN EFFECTIVE PREACHING, PART 1 (SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY) – DeVille.....71-96

EDITOR'S PREFACE:
A BRIEF INTRODUCTION
TO TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING
Christopher Cone, ThD, PhD, PhD

INTRODUCTION

While the term *transformative* learning has been used to describe other education methods (particularly by Jack Mezirow and the model he developed), we are using the term extensively and with a different referent altogether. The model we are attempting to describe and utilize seems a better fit for the moniker, because the model we are describing (not developing) is *guaranteed* by its Designer to result in transformation. No other educational model would make such a claim. If this model promises so much, then it will be beneficial to understand exactly what this model is and why it is so valuable. It further invites educators to ground their understanding of human growth and development in the fundamental principles of this model, and thus to recognize that our descriptions of reality, how we arrive at them, and what we should do about them are largely shaped by these ideas. In short, transformative learning is a central component to an anthropology that reflects reality; it is what we are designed for, and it has glorious purpose and outcomes.

THE TERMINOLOGY

The Apostle Paul tells us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds,¹ to be filled with the Spirit, which results in walking in wisdom.² In earlier contexts Paul explains that every believer already has the Holy Spirit indwelling them,³ it is evident then that Paul isn't prescribing that believers somehow get more of the Holy Spirit, but rather that they would

¹ Romans 12:2.

² Ephesians 5:17-18.

³ Ephesians 1:13-14.

be filled with Him in the same way someone might be controlled with wine (which he prohibits, by the way). Paul adds that the written word of God is the sword of the Spirit,⁴ and it is by that we are prepared for battle. It is by that written word that we are taught, reprovved, corrected, and trained so that we will be fully equipped for all that we are designed to be.⁵ We are directed to allow that word to dwell richly within us.⁶ Paul prescribes to Timothy that he should be diligent in handling that word accurately so that he will be a proven worker needing not to be ashamed.⁷

This word is central to the design and function of human life. Jesus Himself modeled responding to testing and difficulty by invoking the words, “It is written.”⁸ He spoke of how believers should abide in Him⁹ and how they are sanctified (continually grown and set apart) by the word of truth.¹⁰ There Jesus refers to the Father’s word. Paul adds that this word is Jesus’s word also.¹¹ Jesus,¹² Paul,¹³ and Peter¹⁴ explain how it is the Spirit’s word as well.

It is evident, then, that all three Persons – God the Father, Jesus the Christ (God the Son), and the Holy Spirit (who was sent by the Father and the Son¹⁵) – have worked together to provide us the incredible written word that has the power to renew our minds and is completely efficacious in any purpose for which it is sent.¹⁶ This is why I often refer to the Scriptures as *transformative literature* – because our Creator uses that literature in us to transform us and allow us to be who He has

⁴ Ephesians 6:17.

⁵ 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Ephesians 2:10.

⁶ Colossians 3:16.

⁷ 2 Timothy 2:15.

⁸ E.g., Matthew 4:4,6,7.

⁹ John 15.

¹⁰ John 17:17.

¹¹ Colossians 3:16.

¹² John 16:19.

¹³ Ephesians 6:17.

¹⁴ 2 Peter 1:20-21.

¹⁵ John 14:26, 16:7.

¹⁶ Isaiah 55:11.

designed us to be. There is no other recipe given in Scripture for ongoing human transformation, nor for the renewing of the mind which is the vehicle for that transformation.

There is, of course, the *positional* renewal and regeneration of the Holy Spirit,¹⁷ which is the new life given to all who believe in Jesus¹⁸ as an expression of the Father's grace, love, and sovereignty.¹⁹ That positional renewal is accomplished once and for all at the moment of belief,²⁰ and as illustrated by the principle of adoption as children of God,²¹ our position in Christ is certain and irrevocable.²²

With the joyous platform of that certain and eternal position, we are exhorted to walk in a manner worthy of our calling.²³ We are designed to do good,²⁴ and we have been adopted as children of our Heavenly Father.²⁵ The expectation is that we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we will be able to demonstrate what God's design (will) is.²⁶ This is the Biblical perspective on human education and growth. If it has indeed come from our Creator (and based on the recorded testimony of Jesus,²⁷ I believe it has), then it is *the*

¹⁷ Titus 3:5.

¹⁸ John 3:3, 6:47, see also Romans 4:2-5.

¹⁹ Romans 3:24, John 3:16, Ephesians 1:4-6.

²⁰ As in Genesis 15:6, Romans 5:1, Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Corinthians 5:17.

²¹ Ephesians 1:4-5, 1 John 3:1-2.

²² Romans 11:29.

²³ Ephesians 4:1.

²⁴ Ephesians 2:10.

²⁵ Ephesians 1:4-5.

²⁶ Romans 12:2.

²⁷ "Jesus' testimony in Luke 11:50-51 indicates that this basic structure of the Hebrew Bible as Genesis-Chronicles was recognized in Jesus' day. Although Chronicles is not chronologically the last book of the Old Testament (the events of Ezra-Nehemiah followed those of the Chronicles), it apparently was the last to be added to the canon. Note Jesus' observation: "The blood of all the prophets since the foundation of the world may be charged against this generation from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who was killed between the altar and the house of God" (Lk. 11:50b-51a). Abel was the first identified in Scripture (Gen. 4:8) to have been killed for his faithfulness; Zechariah, while not the last chronologically, is the last listed in Chronicles (2 Chr. 24:20-22), which

reality of human education and growth, and ought to be the subject of our inquiry and the basis of our educational endeavors.

A DEFINITION AND IMPLICATIONS

To distill the concept to its simplest idea, it may be beneficial to define transformative learning as *the model designed by our Creator for human growth, whereby people are transformed by the renewing of their mind as they are filled by and as they put into practice the transformative literature (Biblical text) authored and provided by our Creator.* Transformative learning, thusly defined, has implications for every area of human life as it is foundational for human understanding and conduct. One example is in what we might call transformative leadership, the application of transformative learning principles in the processes of assisting and guiding other individuals and communities in their own transformative growth.

Transformative learning as a theocentric rather than anthropocentric (or even biocentric) model allows us to

traditionally has been the final book of the Hebrew Old Testament. Jesus, therefore, by his statement emphasizes the present (at the time of His statement) generation's accountability for all the martyrs of the Old Testament...Further, Christ, in promising the coming of the Holy Spirit, identified His role in revelation and inspiration of New Testament writings (Jn. 16:12-15), and commissioned the apostles to bear witness of the truth He would reveal (Mt. 10:14, 15; 28:19; Lk. 10:16; Jn. 13:20; 15:27; 16:13; 17:20; Acts 1:8; 9:15-17; compare Ex. 4:15 and 1 Cor. 14:37; Rev. 22:19). Apostles, therefore, make authoritative claims for their writings (i.e., note Paul's claims in 1 Cor. 2:13; 14:37; Gal. 1:7-8; 1 Thes. 4:2,15; 2 Thes. 3:6, 12, 14). Those specifically referenced as apostles account for the greatest volume of New Testament writings...However, not all of the New Testament books were written by apostles. Those writers who did not have apostleship most certainly must have had the gift of revelatory prophecy (as identified in 1 Cor. 13:8-13), and each had significant ministries in direct association with the apostles." (Christopher Cone, *Prolegomena on Biblical Hermeneutics and Method*, 2nd Edition [Tyndale Seminary Press, 2012], 89-92.

contextualize learning properly, and helps us to recognize the core ideas (purpose, design, method, content, etc.) involved in human learning, so that we can engage that wonderful endeavor as our Creator designed and for the demonstration of His character and purposes.