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Supporting Full Bilingualism Among the Children of Immigrants: Implications for Justice and Spirituality



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After beginning his career in education as a science teacher in Bogotá, Colombia in 1984, Nick Block (PhD, Claremont Graduate University; MDiv, Fuller Theological Seminary; Teaching Credential, Simpson University; BA, Stanford University) has worked most of his years in the U.S. as a public school teacher in grades three to five, in a variety of language settings. While concerned with all subject areas, in his teaching in East Los Angeles he most recently concentrated on issues of vocabulary development as a basis for reading comprehension and writing growth. At Biola, Block has taught in the Clear Credential, graduate, and undergraduate programs. He has as mainly taught courses in philosophy of education, academic writing, research methods, and multicultural education. Now with the implementation of the Common Core Standards, he feels that there is even greater urgency for improved teaching supported by sound research in these areas, especially for English learners. Past research in dual language education as well as decades of experience as a bilingual educator (including 26 years in Montebello Unified School District) contribute to his concern that students grow as expert users of language. In addition to his work in K-12 schooling and teacher preparation as an adjunct at CSU Long Beach, Block has been involved in theological education in Los Angeles, Colombia, and Rwanda. Whether supporting new teachers in teaching words or new pastors in teaching the Word, his greatest desire is to help others to be fruitful in their calling.

Overflowed with Compassion: A Biblical Model for Addressing Deprivation Faced by Today's African Widows and their Children

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Spiritual Warfare in the Pre-K – 12 Classroom: A Global Perspective



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Jesus, Justice, And Special Education Inclusion: A Case For The “Shalom Model Of Inclusion”



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Book Review: Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times (Soong-Chan Rah)

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*SUPPORTING FULL BILINGUALISM AMONG THE CHILDREN OF
IMMIGRANTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR JUSTICE AND SPIRITUALITY*
BY NICHOLAS BLOCK

Abstract

Children born to immigrants in the United States typically speak their parents' home language, but full bilingualism is not always the case, especially as children move into their teen years and become English dominant. Full bilingualism, however, seems to offer many benefits—cognitive, academic, economic, and advantages related to resiliency. Additionally, from a spiritual standpoint, full bilingualism seems advantageous due to the requisite that children be fully able to communicate as well as think deeply in the language of their parents if parents are to fulfill their biblical obligations of instructing their children spiritually. In this paper, the possible spiritual outcomes of full bilingualism were theorized based on the results of questionnaires completed by children and their parents in two-way Spanish dual language programs versus mainstream programs. From a justice perspective, the multiple advantages of full bilingualism pointed clearly to the need to support immigrant families by providing programs that promote thorough bilingual language development for their children.

Keywords: bilingualism, education, child rearing, justice, Spanish, immigrants, second generation

Author Note

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Immigrant parents in the United States often do not have the opportunity to learn to speak English with complete fluency, which can make meaningful conversation with their typically English-dominant children quite difficult. Although many people assume that second generation children, that is, the children of immigrant parents, speak their parents' language fluently, this is not always the case. Second generation children almost always have the necessary home language skills to communicate basic day-to-day concerns to their parents, but at least in the United States, they often become English-dominant by the time they are in intermediate school (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), with little further home language development. In the third generation home language loss only accelerates: Only 42% of third generation Spanish speakers have been found to be minimally proficient in their parents' language (Zsembik & Llanes, 1996), and an even a smaller percentage (17%) have been found to be fluent (Rumbaut, Massey, & Bean, 2006).

Full bilingualism is not always a priority for families when choosing an academic program for their children in the United States, and where there are options to choose dual language versus monolingual English programs, parents often choose monolingual programs out of concern that their children develop strong English skills (Block, 2007). Other parents, though, would indeed like their children to fully develop their home language skills (Block, 2007). Without entering into debate on the academic and other social merits of dual language or bilingual programs, the aim in the present article is to discuss why immigrant parents have good reasons to seek to support the full bilingualism of their children, with implications for both the well being and spirituality of the family. To do so, this article will examine both quantitative and qualitative evidence from an empirical study on dual language versus mainstream programs among predominantly Latino students, most of whom were second generation students who began school as English learners.

In this article, "full bilingualism" refers to the ability to speak a language with the fluency necessary to communicate on most topics with adults, and to read and write at a level commensurate with peers in countries where the language is the home language. A fully bilingual individual in this sense could live in his or her family's country of origin and be able to integrate linguistically into daily society, whether at school or in the marketplace. Note that this does not require the elimination of all language accents.

The children of immigrants, often called second generation children, are largely classified as English learners when they enter school in the United States, and up to 80% in some places do not reclassify as English proficient by the time they reach the middle school years (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011). Therefore, in this article, the concern for the language development of second generation immigrant children is synonymous with a concern for students who enter school as English learners, and the terms will occasionally be used interchangeably. The focus here will then be on the children of immigrants/English learners who speak Spanish in their

homes, as this constitutes by far the greatest number of students in this category, near 80% at a national level, with no other language groups (Vietnamese, Filipino, Cantonese, and Hmong being among the largest) constituting more than 3% of the total (Calderon et al., 2011). In approaching the factors that related to issues of justice and spirituality for these students, it is helpful first of all to understand the academic options available to these students in many locations.

Kinds of Bilingual Programs

Bilingual programs in the United States tend to be either subtractive or additive. Subtractive programs, which teach bilingualism in the early years as a kind of bridge to English, have been found to be deficient for the purposes of achieving full bilingualism (TABE, 2006), and they have many other disadvantages as well (Valenzuela, 1999). Additive programs, also termed developmental bilingual programs, which seek to develop both a child's first and second language skills indefinitely, have been shown to have a more positive effect on children's home language development and also on their progress in English (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002).

Two-way dual language programs, such as the study whose results will be shared in this article, are a kind of developmental, additive program. One kind of two-way dual language program is a 90:10 dual language program, where all students -- a mix of initial ELs and mainstream students -- receive instruction in Spanish 90% of the time in kindergarten, with only 10% of instruction in English. As students progress toward sixth grade the amount of time students are in English increase until half the coursework was in English and half in the target language. Immersion programs such as these that provide a greater proportion of time in the target language, rather than parity from the beginning in the two languages (which would be the case with 50:50 programs) provide a stronger foundation for full bilingualism.

A more common kind of bilingual program, called a transitional bilingual program, offers primary language support for just the first several years of schooling. It has some value in easing initially Spanish speaking students into English, but as a subtractive program that does not aim for full bilingualism, it lacks many of the advantages of two-way immersion programs (TABE, 2006; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002).

Full Bilingualism and Justice: A Biblical Perspective Regarding Benefits

Because concerns for justice and compassion are central to a biblical worldview, whenever possible it is important to provide what is needed for children of immigrants and their families, who often suffer great needs both before and after immigrating. If it is clear that full bilingualism offers a series of advantages and that school districts can provide this kind of language development without great cost or disruptions to other programs, the provision of that service truly becomes an issue of care and kindness -- and even of justice. As stated in

James 4:17 states, “Anyone who knows what he ought to do and doesn’t do it sins (NIV).” It becomes a societal sin of omission, then, when research shows that certain educational approaches are beneficial, and yet they are not provided. In addition to what the research says, it simply makes sense that supporting students’ ability to speak multiple languages would be an important service to them, as specified in the *California World Language Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*.

There are other approaches that one can take when considering a biblical perspective on meeting the needs of immigrant families. For example, the Old Testament contains frequent exhortations to act compassionately toward foreigners (Lev. 19:34, Dt. 10:19); indeed providing opportunities for Spanish-speaking children of immigrants to gain the advantages described above demonstrates compassion for them and their families. In addition, these programs, which reach out and involve families in their home language, provide a compassionate “soft landing” for immigrants so that they and their children can more easily integrate into schools.

Cognitive Benefits for Students

One issue to clarify is the misconception, common for many years, that knowing a non-English language inhibits the development of intelligence and as a result, academic performance. The research carried out by Peal and Lambert (1962) marked the beginning of a long path to dispel that misconception. Working in the context of language concerns in Canada, these researchers found that, contrary to the dominant view at the time but still not eliminated today, bilingual individuals outperformed monolinguals on both verbal and non-verbal measures of intelligence. The (erroneous) idea that the human brain has only a limited amount of space for language development and that such space must be reserved for the mainstream language simply has never been demonstrated to be true, and in fact, common experience is that learning one language facilitates the learning of subsequent languages.

Cummins (1981), a major theorist and researcher regarding second language development, theorized that continued development of the primary language up through advanced academic levels allows students to reach the threshold necessary for students to attain the cognitive associated with bilingualism. These cognitive benefits have not been proven to offer advantages in general cognitive domains (such as intelligence), but evidence is much stronger for advantages in specific domains such as metacognition, and especially for tasks that require mental flexibility and creativity (Ricciardelli, 1993). Some of these cognitive advantages, including ones that entail increased attention and focus, and ignoring of misleading information (Bialystok, 2005), are relevant to the development of mathematical concepts. Ensuring that students receive the cognitive benefits of bilingualism, then, is one important reason for primary language instruction in schools to progress past basic literacy skills.

Academic Benefits

The academic advantages of full bilingualism, an extension of the cognitive ones just mentioned, have been discussed since the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, but only until recent decades have these been firmly established in the research literature. Four major research reviews, several using meta-analytical techniques, including those of Willig (1985), Ramirez (1992), Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass (2005), and Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian (2006), as well as the Thomas and Collier (1997, 2002) longitudinal studies, have demonstrated that programs that provide extended development of the primary language result in the greatest academic achievement for ELs *in English*. The National Literacy Panel Report (August & Shanahan, 2006) also clearly supported primary language reading instruction for academic achievement in English, without going so far as stating that longer periods of primary language study are increasingly beneficial.

Several studies have discussed the benefit of primary language instruction in terms of effect sizes. Goldenberg (2008), in a helpful primer to the August and Shanahan document (2006), described the effect size of primary language development in bilingual programs to be between .35 to .4, translating to about 12 to 15 points on standardized tests after two to three years of primary language instruction, an effect that he described as “not huge, but it’s not trivial either” (p. 16). Bernhardt (2003) spoke of “profound support” that the primary language offers second language literacy, mentioning a contribution of 20% (with the only other contributing factor known to be knowledge of the second language, at 30%). Almost all of these researchers provided the caveat that students need from four to seven years to fully experience native-levels of literacy in English. Lindholm-Leary (2001), and more recently, Lindholm-Leary and Block (2010), have established that initial English learners in specifically two-way dual language programs perform better than their peers in mainstream English programs.

One study, that of Rosell and Baker (1996), countered earlier research findings on the advantages of primary language literacy instruction, but the methodology and conclusion of that study have been challenged (Greene, 1997). In any case, Rosell and Baker’s main concern was the rapid development of English reading ability (which they persuasively affirmed can occur more effectively in English immersion settings), and what they perceived to have been unfounded claims by overenthusiastic proponents of bilingual education. Nonetheless, they recognized the potential beneficial long-term social outcomes of full bilingualism.

Benefits Related to Resiliency

One kind of benefit that is often overlooked is that which contributes to a young person’s resiliency. Werner and Smith (1992) defined resiliency as a characteristic of children and youth that allows them to develop in a healthy manner despite difficult circumstances. Rather than being the trait of a few exceptional human beings, it is something that all children can develop

if their deepest needs are met (Benard, 2004). Children develop resiliency when they experience relationships of caring and connection with adults, when they are surrounded by high expectations (mediated through inter-generational guidance), and when they have opportunities to participate actively and contribute in their social contexts (Bernard, 2004). It seems to be a great concern, then, that Benson (1997) found that only a small number of non-white youth sustain inter-generational relationships. One can but wonder, based on data presented earlier in this paper, if those of Latino background in particular are limited due to language constraints.

The perceived benefit of full bilingualism for the development of intergenerational relationships was noted earlier in this article (Block, 2012). Significantly, Benard (2004) found that children with stronger home language skills have higher resiliency. While Benard did not specify the mechanism through which primary language skills provide resiliency, it seems reasonable that skills of full bilingualism would enable a student to experience other factors that contribute to resiliency, such as having access to experiencing caring and loving relationships with adults who often are not proficient in the mainstream language, as well as having greater opportunities to contribute to their social context that students who do not have these language skills cannot enjoy. Moreover, it would seem that full bilingualism would facilitate the development of other characteristics, often considered in the category of “cultural competence,” understood here as the ability of a person to move between dominant and non-dominant cultures. Such competence, which by its very nature must depend on highly developed bilingualism, has been associated with school success and even lowered substance abuse among youth (Delpit, 1995; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Gandara, 1995; Oetting, 1993).

Economic Benefits

When Spanish-speaking immigrant parents were asked why they chose dual language programs over mainstream English ones, they often referred to the economic benefit of full bilingualism (Block, 2007). Of course, parental intention does not necessarily translate to fact in their child’s lives, but it seems self-evident in this case that speaking, reading, and writing a language at advanced levels can only offer increased opportunities to generate income and share with the family. Caution is in order, however, as research has not yet clearly shown this benefit to be true. Fry and Lowell (2003), using data from the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), analyzed the impact of bilingualism on wages and actually found no statistically significant advantages when holding the variable of education level constant. (Bilinguals indeed had higher educational levels.) This finding, although only a single study using relatively old data and focusing on immigrants rather than second generation bilinguals, precludes assigning undue importance to any possible economic advantage. It is worth noting that Fry and Lowell’s (2003) analysis seems to have attributed some advantage to a higher level of bilingualism; moreover, the authors did not address the fact that bilinguals in any case achieve higher wages,

but in the case of the NALS data, only through the mechanism of higher educational attainment. Perhaps educational attainment itself was an artifact of the cognitive and academic advantages of bilingualism discussed earlier.

Agirdag (2013), the only other investigator to analyze large databases to evaluate the possibility of economic advantages of bilingualism, found quite different results from those of Fry and Lowell (2003) on the issue of possible economic benefits of bilingualism. Looking at more recent information from different databases, and focusing on second rather than first generation immigrants, this researcher found statistically significant advantages for full (what they call balanced) bilinguals, even when holding educational attainment constant in the case of one of the data sets. This investigator clarified that there was both a direct economic advantage of bilingualism (or cost of assimilation, from a different point of view) as well as an indirect one that works through academic achievement. The economic effect is in the range of \$2100-\$3300 annually. One limitation in this study, though, was that the databases that this researcher used offered information for early career only – through age 24. Obviously more studies in this area of economic benefits could provide corroborating evidence.

Advantages for Initially English-Proficient Students

It should be noted that although this article has focused on the advantages of full bilingualism in the case of the initially Spanish-speaking children of immigrants to the U.S., almost all of the advantages discussed in this section would apply equally to initially English-speaking children. These students typically have English-speaking parents and thus do not face some of the obstacles that children of immigrants who become weak in their parents language face. Nevertheless, the research has shown that they accrue advantages that are not insignificant, such as positive affect toward other students, including those different from themselves (Cazabon, Lambert, & Hall, 1993; Cazabon, Nicoladis, & Lambert, 1998), and biculturalism (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). In the case of initially English-speaking Latino students in particular, more recent research has demonstrated advantages as more positive attitudes toward Spanish-speaking extended family members, in addition to gains in some measures of biculturalism (Block, 2012). From a justice perspective, then, dual language programs provide more ideally for the needs of these students who, similar to their initially Spanish-speaking peers, have traditionally not fared as well as white students in school (Llagas & Snyder, 2003).

Legal Perspectives, Varied Ethical Approaches, and Bilingualism

Every legal requirement does not imply moral concerns, but parallel with *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), which banned “separate but equal” academic arrangements for African-American students, *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) – the equivalent legal precedent for English learners – certainly did provide a moral mandate (Gandara, Moran, & Garcia, 2004). This latter decision of the Supreme Court, one in which the justices similarly agreed without a single dissenter,

banned the “sink or swim” approach for the English learners. The Lau decision did not require bilingual education, but it did require that action be taken on the part of English learners to provide them with full access to the curriculum. Bilingual education was indeed provided in many places, but typically it was a subtractive transitional bilingual education that did not support full bilingualism. In *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981), the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals determined that policy for English learners must be based on sound theory, include adequate training for teachers, and include program quality evaluation. Despite these laws, there has been great resistance to providing services based on sound and consistent empirical research support (Gandara et al., 2004; Crawford, 2004). One must wonder whether this is nothing less than a moral failure on the part of the U.S. educational system.

There are different ethical approaches to clarify the moral foundation for doing what is best for the children of immigrants and their families. A virtue ethic approach would consider that the human virtue of humility, defined by Roberts (2007) as a perception of all other human beings as one’s equal, guide our collective actions toward seeking the good of our immigrant neighbors. Certainly the virtue of compassion, defined by Roberts as “the construal of a suffering or deficient person as a cherished fellow” (p. 179), would also guide us in a similar direction. Alternatively, deontological ethics, particularly within a theistic perspective, remind us that our service to immigrant families is not just an expression of our virtues but rather emerges from our obligation to these families – one rooted firmly in divine commands. A deontological approach that takes divine commands seriously has the advantage of giving obligations a personal character to a greater degree (with our service not just to other humans but to God himself) and can have a transformational impact on our lives (Evans, 2013). Finally, an approach to this matter based on Natural Law Ethics would underscore “the goods” associated with supporting growth of bilingualism – especially the good of fostering human relationships and community (Murphy, 2001).

Spiritual Implications of Questionnaire Data on Dual Language Programs

The following discussion is based on a study that investigated 92 initial English learners (grades five through seven) and their parents in three schools with both dual language and mainstream programs (Block, 2012). The study did not examine issues of spirituality per se, but implications for spirituality – especially in the context of family relationships – were extrapolated based on the data from the study.

In the study, the three schools studied were located in two different school districts of southern California, and the initial English learners (ELs) were distributed almost evenly between the two programs. These students are referred to here as “initial English learners” because all began school as English learners, but teachers had reclassified many as English proficient by grades five to seven. The study also included initially English proficient and initial

English only students.

After questionnaires were gathered from both parents and children and studied via statistical analysis using SPSS 15, the researcher found that parents of students in dual language classes, where the students had received consistent instruction in their parents language, indicated that their children since their first years of schooling had grown closer to Spanish speaking relatives (presumably including the parents themselves) at a statistically significant level ($p=0.47$) when compared to the responses of parents in mainstream English classes. This was in answer to the question, ““Since starting elementary school, how much closer has your child grown in his/her relationships with relatives who speak mostly Spanish?” scored on a scale from 1 to 4. Additionally, the students themselves in dual language programs expressed more positive attitudes toward their Spanish-speaking relatives than the students in mainstream programs, also at statistically significant levels ($p=0.03$). This was in answer to the question, “Do you like to speak with relatives if you have to speak mostly in Spanish?” (Block, 2012).

Although this piece focuses on initially Spanish-dominant children of immigrants, the same study also included an analysis of initially English-dominant Latino students who served as English role models in the dual language programs. A comparison of the responses of initially parents of English-proficient students in dual programs with those of parents of initially English-proficient students in mainstream English programs showed an even a starker contrast than in the case of the parents of the initial Spanish speakers, with the students in the dual programs apparently much more interested in relating with their Spanish-speaking relatives ($p \leq .01$). The initially English-proficient students themselves also showed much more openness to speaking with Spanish-speaking relatives. The results of the study for both initially Spanish and English speaking students have been further discussed elsewhere in greater detail (Block, 2012).

In a different facet of the same study, parents were asked via a questionnaire to describe “an example or two of ways that your child’s educational program (two-way dual language or regular) has benefited your child” (Block, 2012). One of the most common theme among responses of dual language students -- second only to the development of full bilingualism -- was that children in these programs were better able to communicate with Spanish-speaking family members. On the other hand, parents of ELs in mainstream English programs mentioned only the advantages of learning English (Block, 2012).

The concern among parents in the mainstream parents that their children learn English (presumably instead of Spanish), as it turns out, seemed unfounded. As will be discussed below, additional research, both as part of this study and elsewhere, has found rather counter-intuitively that the students who have cultivated their Spanish in the dual language programs performed better on tests in English than their peers in mainstream English classes (Lindholm-Leary & Block, 2010). In the meantime some of the ELs in all English began to lose their

Spanish fluency. Parents of ELs in dual language programs expressed sentiments such as this:

Mi esposo y yo hablamos español y mis hijos más inglés. Cuando los inscribí para este programa supe que los beneficiaría. Ahora compartimos y disfrutamos muchos momentos felices porque ellos entienden más español.

My husband and I speak Spanish and my children more English. When I registered them in this program I found out that it would benefit them. Now we share and enjoy many happy moments because they understand more Spanish. (Block, 2007, p. 131)

On the other hand, a parent of an initial EL student in all English stated the following (similarly to several other responses) in answer to the question, “Describe any ways that your child’s educational program has affected his/her relationships with others in the family grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.”:

No puede comunicarse mucho con la familia porque no habla mucho español. El habla más inglés que español porque todos los años de escuela los ha hecho en inglés.

He can’t communicate much with the family because he does not speak much Spanish. He speaks more English than Spanish because he has done every year of school in English. (Block, 2007, p. 131).

Some Implications for Spirituality in Immigrant Families

Most family communication is not necessarily deep and spiritual in nature, but at least in Jewish or Christian contexts there is a biblical mandate for it to be so. Such deep and meaningful communication requires that children – and especially adolescents – need to be able to speak and understand the language that their parents speak at an advanced level. One passage in the Hebrew Scriptures in particular, Dt 6:6-7, exhorts parents to speak to children about topics other than mere transitory concerns: “These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (New International Version). This commandment, given in the context of the mandate to love God with all of one’s heart, soul, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5), instructed the Hebrews -- presumably as the first step in loving their God -- to make all of God’s commandments part of their own lives and part of the lives of their children through the medium of conversation. A superficial reading of this passage might seem to indicate that one could fulfill the command by speaking on four different occasions with one’s children, but the Hebrew grammatical structure implies speaking at every place within and outside of the home, and at every time between morning and evening. In other words, it means that a parent is to speak about God’s commands everywhere and all of the time. While trying to apply this rigidly is not necessarily good hermeneutics, this passage certainly requires parent and child to have a solid foundation

in the same language; to speak about God's commands in a way that will impress them on children requires that children share in a deep understanding of the language.

The New Testament equivalent of this ancient mandate concerning the spiritual aspect of child rearing is to "bring them up in the nurture and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Engaged conversation here is certainly implied, as nurturing instruction would seem to be that which contains "give and take." If Jesus' relationship with his disciples is at all a model of such instruction, the use of metaphors and references to ancient texts is part of this process. Again, this level of communication assumes that children have a thorough command of their parents' language. The disciples often misunderstood their Lord even when speaking the same language as one adult to another. Programs such as dual language programs that support deep language growth -- in addition to the advantages that will be outlined below -- make possible the kind of communication that is required for parents to fulfill their spiritual role in child rearing, and for children to share deeply with their non-English dominant parents.

There is an additional spiritual perspective that is important to consider here. Over 2400 years ago the prophet Malachi announced that a subsequent prophet, who we now know to have been John the Baptist, would come to "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers" (Mal 4:6). It seems clear that such "heart turning" assumes that parents and their children speak a common language well enough to engage in deep and meaningful conversation. In light of this, the educational endeavor of providing full bilingualism becomes all the more important although "heart turning," of course, is something that only God can do.

Spirituality and Cognitive Development

The approach in this article thus far has been on the implications of bilingualism within a context where biblical principles and knowledge are prioritized. It should be noted that theorists who are concerned with cognitive and spiritual development have designed models that when compared demonstrate the relationship between these two domains. Love (2002), who compared these different models concluded regarding cognitive and spiritual development, that "it is hard to imagine a situation where they would be significantly divergent in an individual" (p. 369). Due to the fact that there is evidence that bilingualism is associated with cognitive advantages (Bialystok, 2005), one could see that bilingualism, through the medium of cognitive development, supports spiritual development in a way that those who do not necessarily recognize a biblical perspective can accept.

Conclusion

The benefits of full bilingualism, including cognitive and academic advantages as well as those related to resiliency, and possibly even economic and spiritual advantages, together create a moral imperative to provide second generation students, who come to school with

both English and a non-English language in formation, with opportunities to develop full bilingualism. Evidence for these advantages is substantial, although in the case of spiritual advantages, little research has been done and the data examined in this study do not provide direct evidence that such bilingualism among children and adolescents in itself contributes to their spiritual growth. However, for parents to fulfill their biblical mandate of impressing God's word on their children's hearts, for them to be able to bring their children up in the "nurture and instruction of the Lord," and for them to be able to interact with their children as Jesus did with his disciples, parents need the foundation of strong language skills for their children in the language that they have common with them. Due to the fact that many adult immigrants do not have the possibility of developing their English fully—while their children are becoming English dominant (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut, Massey, & Bean, 2006; Zsembik & Llanes, 1996)—it would seem that Christian institutions should be supportive of public schools' efforts to provide dual language programs and should encourage parents to allow their children to enroll in them whenever possible.

In the case of spiritual advantages, this paper discussed the implications for spiritual instruction in immigrant families of a study done specifically on dual language students versus mainstream students in Latino dominant schools where Spanish was the target language alongside English (Block, 2012). Although much less common, there are two-way immersion schools in many other languages in the U.S. (CAL, 2016); there is no reason why the issues discussed in the paper would not generalize to other language communities. Studying the family dynamics of children in those programs utilizing non-Spanish target languages, however, would help confirm the inferences made in this study about the spiritual advantages of full bilingualism.

Further studies, especially qualitative in nature, examining the lives of immigrant Christian Latino families and focusing especially on young adolescents as they become English dominant, would help researchers and anyone interested in spiritual development to understand the way that interactions between adult immigrants and their U.S.-born children actually occur. Such studies could possibly corroborate the theory suggested in this paper that predicts that older children and adolescents who are truly fluent in their parents' language have more robust interactions around the Scriptures with their parents than do students who speak their parents' language less fluently.

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**OVERFLOWED WITH COMPASSION:
A BIBLICAL MODEL FOR ADDRESSING DEPRIVATION FACED BY TODAY'S
AFRICAN WIDOWS AND THEIR CHILDREN
BY CARA SALAZAR**

Abstract

Widows and their children constitute a population of more than 845 million worldwide. However, the mistreatment of widows in many cultures and countries is one of the most neglected gender and human rights issues, affecting not only the widow but also her children. The most severe conditions are found in Africa, where widows are greatly challenged by patrilinealism, disease, lack of education, stigma, property grabbing, and lack of economic opportunity. Home to nearly 25% of the world's Christians, Africa struggles to address the revolutionary changes needed to model the biblical treatment of widows. This paper aims to provide a clear picture of the realities of widowhood taking place on our second-largest continent, outline key issues facing widows, and provide solutions using the biblical widows of Zarephath and Nain to highlight ways we can model compassion and take action for African widows today.

Keywords: *widows, children, sub-Saharan Africa, women's rights, culture*

Introduction

During the past 25 years, the plight of widows has been painfully absent from social justice reports despite a plethora of global statistics on women's poverty, development, health, and social justice needs. Through this sin of omission, the extreme deprivation of today's 260 million widows is just now coming to light with the creation of International Widows' Day in 2010, a United Nations observance held annually on the 23rd of June. The Loomba Foundation (2015) estimates that 14.8% of widows live in extreme poverty; that is, their basic needs are unmet, and 33% suffer from abuse. These estimates, though conservative, represent the cultural spectrum, but clearly show that the most acute mistreatment of widows is found in sub-Saharan Africa, where one in four women is a widow. How did this start?

For centuries, African men have been "encouraged to see power as dominating and controlling and are placed at the top" (Crane, 2014, p. 6). Though pockets of matrilineal societies in Africa exist, for example the Tonga of Zambia and the Akan of Ghana, Africa by-and-large is very patriarchal (Peterman, 2012). Viewed as the ones to continue the ancestry, sons are treated better than daughters because daughters will eventually be married into other families, where they will essentially become part of those other families. In most parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the practice of bride price – a groom's gift of money or goods to the bride's family upon marriage – is common (Mwesigwa, 2015). Often when a husband dies, the marriage contract is considered over, providing the widow with two, culturally appropriate choices: stay with the (husband's) family and remain single, or remarry and leave the family. Because the cultural emphasis in Africa is on men marrying virgins, "a widow rarely remarries, except to a male relative of her husband" (Crane, 2014, p. 12). A husband's family is supposed to look after his widow and children, as these traditions were established to safeguard the widow from harm. However, today these traditions are slowly loosening their grip due to a decrease in available agricultural land, HIV/AIDS devastation, and conflicting gender identities.

Land as Livelihood

Land security equals livelihood in most corners of Africa. Land possession takes on a level of seriousness there "not typically seen elsewhere in the world" (The Loomba Foundation, 2015, p. 82). Once a woman becomes a widow, the land and house do not automatically belong to her, as in most Western cultures – instead it is traditionally passed down to the children. According to Pastor Ogechukwu Ibem, a Nigerian, Africans live a communal lifestyle, and after a husband dies, all possessions are shared accordingly.

"Land doesn't belong to the woman – she cannot take the family land," Ibem says. "Even if she wants to take the house, the family will say 'no' – this is a family property, a family heritage" (O. Ibem, personal communication, November 5, 2015).

Tradition does allow widows to live in the family home as long as she doesn't remarry.

Ownership of the home remains with the husband's family and the widow's presence is "merely permitted or tolerated" (Ezer, 2006, p. 12). However, due to scarcity of land, an increasing trend happening across Africa is property grabbing. This layman's term is used to describe the "unlawful and coercive eviction of lawful landowners through the use of physical force, forgery, fraud, threats, intimidation, property destruction and/or collective pressures" (International Justice Mission, 2014, p. 9).

Widows are particularly vulnerable to property grabbing due to entrenched sociocultural and gender norms that favor adult men over women and children. Occupying good farmable land can also be motivation for property grabbing. Intimidation tactics like threats, knocking down the house, and tearing down crops are sometimes used to drive the widow and her children from the property, thus leaving them subject to abuse and exploitation. The United Nations estimates that more than 30 percent of widows and orphans in sub-Saharan Africa experience property grabbing (Crane, 2014). In addition, a recent study of 15 African countries found that more than half of widows (ages 15 to 49) do not inherit any assets at all (Peterman, 2012). Despite these strong, revealing statistics, even Christian African men blame modernity, specifically the education of women, for the rise in property grabbing, Pastor David Ofumbi, a Ugandan national relates:

In a traditional African setting, there wouldn't be anything called land grabbing. In my culture there are different processes followed – things are culturally established. The idea of the land grabbing, this is where the women have gone to school and are educated, and are now detaching themselves from the cultural values. Africans are going to school and want their own land. That's where the land grabbing comes in. It is more of a problem of the influence of modernity in traditional settings (D. Ofumbi, personal communication, November 5, 2015).

Property grabbing is prevalent among widows in Africa because many do not understand their country's inheritance laws. Uganda, for example, has strict laws prohibiting the seizure of property belonging to widows and orphans, which includes:

Succession Act – Makes attempting to evict widows or unmarried orphans from the home of their deceased husband or father a criminal act.

Land Act – Makes occupying widows or unmarried orphans' property a criminal act.

Administrator General's Act – Makes intermeddling the estate administration and distribution after a death a criminal act.

Laws can only do what they are intended to do if a country's citizens understand them. Even if communities, clans, and local leaders are aware of these laws, they are "often ignored" in favor of traditional property distribution methods that favor men (International Justice Mission,

2014, p. 65). In a country like Uganda where nearly 85% of its people live in rural areas, agriculture is their livelihood, and without it widows cannot grow food for her family, let alone earn an income.

Tensions within a family can also result in threats and abuse toward widows and their children. A recent study of successful property grabbing in Uganda found that 31% of the widows and their children received threats, 18% received attempts threatening to end the widow's life, and 14% of widows and children were physically abused (International Justice Mission, 2014, p. 55). Overall, nearly 33% of widows worldwide, or 81 million, will suffer abuse, with the mistreatment of widows "most acute in sub-Saharan Africa" (The Loomba Foundation, 2015, p. 106).

The cruelty of taking a widow's property is not a recent trend. Jesus spoke of this very same issue while teaching in the temple courts. He issued a warning to those who taught religious law and then devoured widows' houses: "these men will be punished most severely" (Mark 12:40, New International Version). Just as it was two thousand years ago, should their land and property be seized or inheritance rights challenged, sub-Saharan African widows lack effective income alternatives to agriculture. Eviction can result in migration, often in deplorable conditions. In an attempt to recover her life, vulnerable widows will engage in sex work as a means of short-term survival. If a widow's husband did not die from HIV/AIDS and the widow is not HIV positive, sex work greatly increases her risk of becoming HIV positive (The Loomba Foundation, 2015, p. 93).

HIV/AIDS

Globally, more than 36 million people were affected by HIV/AIDS at the end of 2015, with nearly 70% of them living in sub-Saharan Africa (World Health Organization, 2016). Despite the number of HIV cases decreasing in the United States, the pandemic continues to be a cause of widowhood and a cause of death among widows in rural Africa (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). Two high-risk practices in sub-Saharan Africa responsible for HIV positive widows are the cultural traditions of widow cleansing and widow inheritance.

During the past century, Christianity has spread in tremendous numbers across the continent. Despite its influence, Africa has effectively held on to African Traditional Religions (ATR), which shape families, communities, clans, tribes, and countries. The beliefs associated with ATR are still very prevalent and fiercely upheld. Though there are variations to the practices that embody ATR, according to Turaki (2013), there are four commonly held foundational beliefs:

- Belief in impersonal (mystical) power(s)
- Belief in spirit beings

- Belief in divinities/gods
- Belief in the Supreme Being

These beliefs guide many things a widow is expected to do in the days, weeks, and sometimes months after the death of her husband. Superstition, lack of education and gender-based discrimination (widowers are not required to be cleansed) are drivers for the completion of widow cleansing. This ritual involves unprotected sex between a widow and one of her husband's relatives intended to break the bond with his spirit and save her from insanity. In some cases, if no male relative is available, the widow is required to hire a male 'cleanser' who she pays to perform the ritual. This humiliating and dangerous practice is carried out because not only the widow, but in some cases, the entire village is believed to come under a curse if the widow is not cleansed (Crane, 2014). This creates a virtual death sentence for countless widows living within communities ravaged by HIV/AIDS. The Loomba Foundation (2015) identifies the following countries as those who practice widow cleansing rituals: Angola, Botswana, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Often operating in tandem with widow cleansing is the practice of widow inheritance. Widow inheritance can be described as the modern day version of levirate marriage found in the Old Testament (Deut. 25:5-6, NIV):

If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.

Today, widow inheritance is defined as the "traditional cultural practice where a designated male assumes responsibility for the social and economic support of a widow upon the death of her husband" (Agot, 2010, pp. 1-2). Widow inheritance is essentially a marriage where inheritors can be brothers or cousins of the late husband, or they can have no biological relation. Almost always a polygamous marriage, the widow essentially becomes a second, third, or fourth wife. Despite an appearance that the inheritor is "taking care" of a vulnerable widow, in today's context it is "simply to acquire possessions" (Crane, 2014, p. 8). When a widow enters a plural marriage, sexual contact increases her likelihood of contracting HIV/AIDS, thus increasing the likelihood of her children becoming orphans.

Conflicting Gender Identities

In general, the commonly accepted belief in Africa is that women are inferior and men are best at deciding what is good for women (Okoye, 2005). For decades women's rights organizations, non-government organizations, as well as local governments, have been advocating for the fair and just treatment of women. Despite generous education, aid, and health assistance from sympathetic countries, gender-based cultural traditions in Africa have largely stayed the same. Progress for women has been made, and not all women experience male oppression. But due to the large population that lives in poor, rural areas and the lack of educational opportunities for women, the problem persists.

Culturally, women are expected to take on a passive disposition in Africa. The expression of self is not something typically voiced, displayed or communicated. Young girls quickly understand gender-based roles and are expected to follow the rules. When a widow is a mother and is left to her own means to support her children, often the female children suffer the most. This phenomenon is commonly known as girl-child deprivation, the neglect faced by girls when family resources are scarce (The Loomba Foundation, 2015). In this pattern, male children are usually cared for and educated the best, ensuring the widow will be taken care of in her old age. A widow can also be incentivized by her in-laws to care for male children, ensuring the family heritage is carried through. UNESCO (2015) cites that girls in sub-Saharan Africa account for 55% of all out-of-school children.

In many clans, failure to comply with tradition by bucking carefully governed rules includes ostracism and the possibility of banishment. In a culture where one's identity within a community is strongly upheld as a value, women rarely resist tradition. Many women today still believe men should have a higher social status compared to women. Even in urban settings, some women want men to have authority over them because they "take on a lot of responsibility in the family, so they should have more power" (Wyrod, 2008, p. 810). As testified by Monica Nsofu, a nurse and AIDS organizer working to end widow cleansing in Zambia, changing gender expectations is hard in cultures that have practiced certain traditions for a very long time.

It is very difficult to end something that was done for so long. We learned (widow cleansing) when we were born. People ask, 'Why should we change?' We are telling them, 'If you continue this practice, you won't have any people left in your village' (LaFraniere, 2005, pp. A1, A8).

As stated earlier, African widows rarely remarry out of their own choice. Gender rules vary from area to area, but generally men whose wives have died find themselves able to freely remarry without shame or question. According to Pastor Ibem, no one asks a man who wants to remarry, 'what are you doing?' He adds, but if it happens to a woman, "society will jump on her suspecting her of killing the husband" (O. Ibem, personal communication, November 5,

2015). The New Testament is very clear that it is acceptable and advised that “younger widows marry, have children, manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander” (1 Timothy 5:14, NIV). In sub-Saharan Africa, this verse should be modeled because many widows are not necessarily elderly, but rather have become a widow as a result of conflict, disease, or male low life expectancy.

A Model of Faith and Compassion

Scripture provides a redemptive example of how to care for widows. With more than 80 references highlighting the action, reasoning and warnings of not caring for widows, it is clear that this is a group of women of great importance to God. Dozens of scripture examples could be applied to addressing the needs of widows in sub-Saharan Africa, but two specific stories are of great value: the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17) and the widow of Nain (Luke 7). These are redemptive and reflect God’s heart to provide for his children, widow or not.

The story of the widow of Zarephath opens with her and her young son miraculously surviving a devastating famine. She is literally at a place of desperation, with only a handful of flour and a drop of oil left. As she collects sticks for a meager meal, she hears a stranger call out to her, asking her for a drink of water and then a slice of bread. “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she answers, “I don’t have any bread” (Tucker, 2014, p. 190). It turns out the stranger, Elijah, tells her to bake a loaf of bread and that God will provide enough flour and oil until the famine ends. She obeys.

The story continues later with the death of the widow’s son. She is furious at Elijah when he comes to her house. Taking the boy, Elijah cries out to God asking him to return the boy to life. Amazingly, the boy wakes up, alive, and the widow is stunned. “Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth,” she says (1 Kings 17:24, NIV).

The story of the widow of Zarephath serves as a preview of what Jesus will do when he ushers in the new covenant. The prophets, like Elijah, were waiting for the Messiah. God knew that this widow would be alone if not for her only son. There is no mention of anyone supporting her during the famine, no mention of relatives relieving her from her daily chores. Yet, God extends his mercy to her through the obedience of Elijah. Likewise, we see Jesus raise the widow of Nain’s son in the book of Luke.

The widow of Nain, like the widow of Zarephath, had only one son. This time he was being carried in a large funeral procession. “When the Lord saw her, his heart overflowed with compassion. ‘Don’t cry!’ he said” (Luke 7:13, New Living Translation). With that he touched the coffin and commanded the man to get up. News of the miracle spread and this once distraught widow is reunited with her son.

This story can be used to show salvation – God’s free gift to us all. Just as the son was dead, all of humanity is dead in sin. Jesus came to raise us to life, just as he did the man. There was absolutely nothing we, nor the widow’s son, could have done to get a second chance, except to accept it. The inclusion of these two stories in the Bible is reflective of God’s heart for the widow and providing for her needs. In both instances, the widow’s situation was serious. After the funerals, these widows would have likely been without money, vulnerable and alone. They are a lot like today’s African widows who are often stigmatized, rejected and left to their own resources to start life over. Jesus’ knowledge of the cultural traditions and mistreatment of widows is not by coincidence. Likewise, he sees the plight of millions of widows around the world today and is looking to the church to step up. This is a large task, but through examination of Jesus’ example, these three recommendations address simple steps that can greatly benefit the needs of African widows today:

- Provide biblical teaching and preaching on the proper care of widows
- Influence political, civic leaders, headsmen, chiefs and leaders to advocate the needs of widows
- Increase networking of widows across churches, denominations and countries

Regardless of gender, cultural expectation, ritual or age, the church in Africa should uphold Jesus’ model of compassion for today’s widow. Embracing a deeper level of compassion starts when we educate, share and come together as the body of Christ. As described in Margaret Owen’s book *A world of widows*, a poor widow’s house was seized by her brother-in-law. Ten friends of the widow marched to the house with garden tools in hand ready to confront the man, but they didn’t have to. Someone saw the women and ran to tell the brother-in-law. By the time the women arrived he had jumped out the window and never came back.

This is a true example of what is possible when believers around the world start standing up for widows.

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SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN THE PRE-K – 12 CLASSROOM: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE
 BY JUNE HETZEL, DAVID COSTILLO, LORENA VIDAURRE, ALY TAILLON,
 ROBIN LONGINOW, AND ROBIN LABARBERA

Abstract

The purpose of this study focuses on spiritual warfare as it relates to Christian educators in the PreK-12 classroom. Elements of spiritual warfare discussed in the literature review include: a three-fold model of spiritual warfare—worldly temptations, the human propensity towards sin, and Satanic influence (Arnold, 2011); a four-fold model of evil—the World Systems Model, the Flesh Model, the Ground-Level Deliverance Model, and the Strategic-Level Deliverance Model (Beilby & Eddy, 2012); and the history of spiritual warfare training. The questions examined in this paper are, *“As a teacher, have you ever encountered spiritual warfare? What happened and how did you or others confront evil in this context?”* This study is a subset of a larger study of 1,509 teachers in 38 countries on the “Spiritual Lives of Teachers” (Hetzel & Costillo, 2013). The subset examined includes 702 private PreK-12 teachers from 29 countries who responded to the spiritual warfare questions. Of the 702 participants, 598 or 85% indicated that they experienced spiritual warfare as a teacher. Narrative data indicates respondents experienced spiritual warfare through relational discord and lack of unity, demonic oppression, student misbehavior, and emotional disequilibrium. Spiritual warfare was described as daily and palpable in the classroom. When answering the question, “how did you or others confront evil in this context?” 49% of respondents exercised prayer and 11% Scripture as the primary defense against spiritual warfare. The results of this study indicate a critical need for teacher training as it relates to spiritual preparedness for the teaching profession.

Spiritual Warfare In The K-12 Classroom:

Public or private pre-K through 12th grade teachers readily describe the joys of teaching as well as the challenges. While the challenges of teaching often relate to learning, family, or environmental concerns, there is a growing need in school communities to re-examine the spiritual landscape of the classroom. In the decades of educational experience represented by the authors, we have observed an increasing need for teachers to have more skills in the areas of behavior management, stress management, and conflict resolution, and our hypothesis is that these are symptoms of the spiritual state of our communities. Crime, drugs, violence, broken relationships, rebellion, sexual promiscuity, and negative social media influence students, faculty, staff, and parents within our school communities, whether in public or private schools. Students and teachers do not enter classrooms with shared sets of biblically based morals and ethics, nor do they enter the classrooms with peaceful postures. Rather, students are needy and teachers are struggling with stress (Akpochofo, 2012; Chan & Hui, 1995; Chaplain, 2008; Forlin, 2001; Klassen & Chiu, 2010, and Kyriacou, 2001), whether you go to Nigeria (Akpochofo, 2012), China (Chan & Hui, 1995), England (Chaplain, 2008), or the United States (LaBarbera & Hetzel, 2015). As Anderson (2015) describes, “We live in times when *shalom* is missing from our lives, families, nations, the world as a whole – even from many churches. Many look to education for the answer to the problems of living in the 21st century” (p. 1).

While the classroom is about teaching and learning, the classroom is also a spiritual place, and spirituality cannot be separate from the teaching/learning process. What happens spiritually in the classroom either undergirds or undermines the spiritual goal of developing a lifelong learner, a good citizen (Ephesians 2:19; Lewis, 1939), and a spiritual soul who loves God and neighbor (Luke 10:27).

Simultaneous to the shaping of the child or adolescent, the teacher also is being shaped by the spiritual practices she or he exercises in the context of the classroom, desiring to educate for shalom (Wolterstorff, 2004) and produce students who are lifelong learners, good citizens (Ephesians 2:19; Lewis, 1939), and persons of peace who love God and love their neighbor (Luke 10:27). Yet, the researchers’ school observations, as well as personal communication with teachers in our local schools and in our teacher training programs, regularly indicate that this is not always the case. Negative spiritual influences in our communities fight against spiritual goals (Reutter, 2012). While many classrooms and schools are positive, life-transforming communities, many become negative communities of violence and chaos, rather than schools of shalom. Therefore, the researchers hypothesize that spiritual warfare might be a central cause to many of our schools’ challenges and a key area missing in our Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU) teacher training programs.

In exploring the literature, little is written about the spiritual landscape of the public or private school classroom as it relates to spiritual warfare. Therefore, the project at hand is an exploration as to whether private PreK-12 classroom teachers believe that spiritual warfare exists in their classrooms, and if so, how have they addressed spiritual warfare? If the findings are that spiritual warfare exists in our classrooms (and this study examines primarily private schools in global settings), should spiritual warfare be a part of Christian teacher training programs at our UCCC higher education institutions?

This paper gathers the perspective of 702 private school teachers in 29 countries on the topic of spiritual warfare. The questions examined are, *“As a teacher, have you ever encountered spiritual warfare? What happened and how did you or others confront evil in this context?”* This study is a subset of a larger study on the *“Spiritual Lives of Teachers”* (Hetzel & Costillo, 2013) that gathered perspectives from 1,509 private school teachers over a three-week period. Of the 702 private school teachers who responded to the spiritual warfare questions, 598 or 85% of teachers indicated that they experienced spiritual warfare and most provided specific narrative about their experiences. The purpose of the article is to 1) heighten educators’ awareness of spiritual warfare in educational settings as seen through the perspectives of 598 Christian educators from 29 countries, and 2) to increase educators’ awareness of the spiritually strategic role they play in the lives of their students.

Literature Review

Spiritual warfare, from a biblical perspective, is demonic opposition against God’s work. The oppositional forces of evil began in the Garden of Eden and continue to present day. Spiritual opposition can come from without (e.g., Elijah’s battle with the prophets of Baal), from within (e.g., Elijah’s discouragement and despair as he sat under the broom tree), or from Satan himself (e.g., Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness). Evidence of spiritual opposition can manifest in the physical realm, such as in the trial of Job, the trial of a classroom teacher, the trial of a disciple of Jesus, or manifestations in the unseen heavenly realm (Ephesians 6:12, NASB). 1 Peter 5:8 (NASB) reminds us, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” Satan desires to destroy the effective ministry of Christian educators in the education of children and adolescents, whether in public or private schools.

Spiritual warfare is understood as the “fight” between good and evil in the natural and supernatural realms; however, spiritual warfare has a wide range of interpretations. Some individuals would describe spiritual warfare as only involving the evil that is inherent in humanity and in our relationships and institutions, while others would describe spiritual warfare involving a cosmic adversary that fights against the ways of God (Beilby & Eddy, 2012).

Individuals may believe one of two extremes: that real spiritual evil does not exist or is not relevant; or that it does exist and plays an exceptionally large role in our lives (Taillon, 2013).

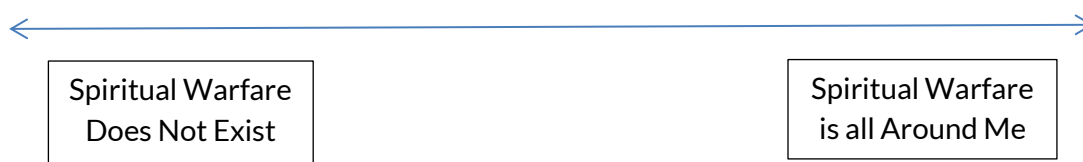


Figure 1: Spiritual Warfare Belief Continuum

While most believers do not find themselves at the extreme polarities of these viewpoints, they do find themselves somewhere in between (Taillon, 2013).

Three Elements of Spiritual Warfare

Clinton Arnold (1997, 2011b), dean of Talbot School of Theology at Biola University, describes three elements of spiritual warfare: worldly temptations, the human propensity towards sin, and Satanic influence. These spheres reflect spiritual warfare as coming from without, from within, and from Satan himself. In I John 2:16, John defines worldly temptations as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. I John 2:15 states, “If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” In other words, when educators allow space in their spiritual lives to be filled up with the love of the world (whether lust, pride, earthly goods, professional accomplishment, or similar temptations), worldly goods potentially become their god. When this happens, God’s purposes for their lives, as educators, are thwarted, negatively affecting their classroom, home, and school community.

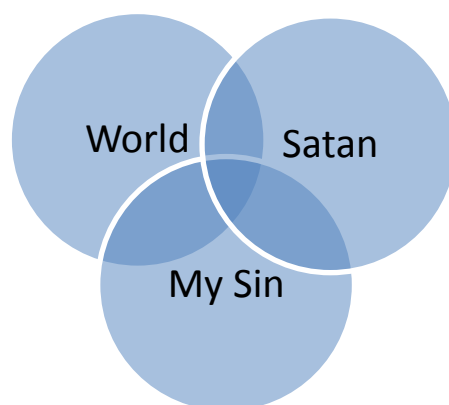


Figure 2: Arnold’s Three-Way Venn Diagram Depicting Spiritual Warfare (2011)

A second element of spiritual warfare that Arnold (2011) discusses is the human propensity towards sin: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23, NASB). As a result, educators can allow their own sin and brokenness to take over their interior world, rather than being filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). Sin, if left unchecked by the Spirit’s

work, eventually leaks into one's personal and public life, negatively affecting educational ministry, whether through pride, impatience, self-centeredness, hunger for power over others, anger, sloth, lust, or dissension.

The third element Arnold (2011) discusses in spiritual warfare is Satanic influence, as described in Ephesians 6:10-18. This passage literally commands the reader to “put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against *the schemes of the devil*” (Ephesians 6:11). Because Satan and his demons exist (Matthew 4; Ephesians 6), educators, and ministers of the gospel in any vocational path, are necessarily engaged in spiritual warfare. Hence, Christian educators are exhorted to wear the full armor of God and ready themselves for battle.

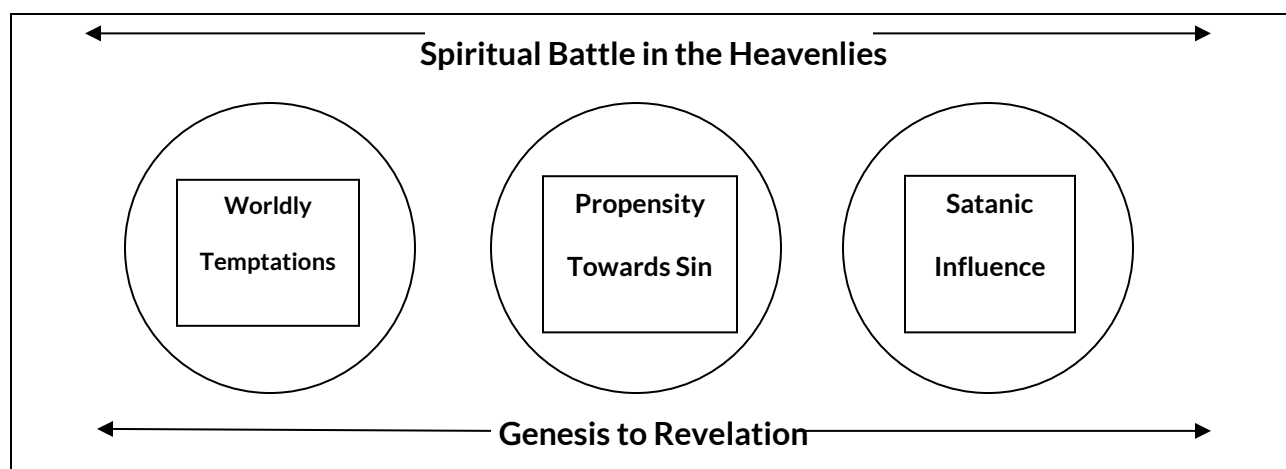


Figure 3: Spiritual Battle in the Heavlies (Hetzel, 2013)

These three overlapping elements of spiritual warfare—worldly temptations, human propensity towards sin, and Satanic influence—encompass our human experiences, providing the perfect confluence for believers to forget their spiritual mooring (Hetzel, 2011). Thankfully, Christian educators, indwelt by the Spirit of God in their inner being (Eph. 3:14-17), need not fear because the Spirit of God triumphs over evil and can enable them to withstand the trials of spiritual warfare in their public or private school classroom.

Four Models of Spiritual Warfare

Four models for addressing spiritual warfare emerge in the literature (Beilby & Eddy, 2012). The first model for combatting spiritual warfare, the *World Systems Model*, focuses on evil in the world and how it is imbedded within the constructs of human relationships and institutions. The second model, the *Flesh Model*, focuses on evil and how evil manifests itself in our personal brokenness and propensity towards sin. While the first two models focus primarily on human sin, the final two models focus on external evil and the devil (Taillon, 2013). The third model of spiritual warfare, the *Ground-Level Deliverance Model*, focuses on demonic influences at a personal level while the fourth model, the *Strategic-Level Deliverance Model*, focuses on territorial spirits (Beilby & Eddy, 2012).

<p>The World Systems Model (corporate sin manifestation) Q1</p>	<p>The Flesh Model (personal sin manifestation) Q2</p>
<p>The Ground-Level Deliverance Model (demonic influence at personal level) Q3</p>	<p>The Strategic-Level Deliverance Model (territorial spirits) Q4</p>

Figure 4: Four Models of Spiritual Warfare

Quadrant 1: The World Systems Model

According to the World Systems Model, spiritual powers exist only inasmuch as they are inextricably linked to the structures of human relationships and institutions in the world (Beilby & Eddy, 2012; Taillon, 2013). Spiritual realities then of any kind—good or evil—are neither personal nor independent in nature, but are linked to what is already good or evil in humanity (Taillon, 2013). Evil of this kind is seen in institutions that have “become oppressive, demonic systems of domination” or in “systematic evils [such] as racism, sexism, classism, and violence” (Beilby and Eddy, 2012, pp. 32-33).

Quadrant Two: The Flesh Model

Unlike the World Systems Model, the Flesh Model holds that the predominant trespasses of evil are not at the systems level but are instead the daily sins that we perpetrate against one another and against God (Powlison, 2012). The Flesh Model notes that the Bible gives the most attention to our flesh as the residing place of evil in the world—in the sinfulness of the human heart (Powlison, 1994; Taillon, 2013; Romans 8:6-8, 13; Galatians 5:16). In the Flesh Model, there is a spiritual enemy who seeks to kill and destroy, but his nature and direct activities are not our only or even primary concern. In its purest sense, the Flesh Model claims that even Jesus’ acts of demonic deliverances were momentary solutions in the course of His larger mission . . . to free us from the slavery of our sin. A focus on freedom from demonic evil, while important, is not what ultimately brings us redemption. Only Jesus’ work on the cross and the Spirit of God in us can transform the heart. This means that in addition to binding up the enemy or being delivered supernaturally from evil spirits, teachers’ and students’ hearts and character must be redeemed and shaped into the ways of Christ. This is the process of discipleship, and it is an act of war (Taillon, 2013).

Quadrant Three: The Ground-Level Deliverance Model

Different from the World Systems Model and the Flesh Model, which deal with evil in human relationships and in the heart of man, the Ground-Level Deliverance Model deals directly with independent and personal demonic agents. This view holds that evil in the world is ultimately derived from evil spiritual entities actively working against the will of God. This view argues that there are spiritual realities and agents beyond what we can see in the natural world. In this battle, the God of the Bible, YHWH, is the preeminent and superior Being who must continually battle enemies that seek to usurp Him and bring destruction upon His creation (Boyd, 2012; Taillon, 2013). In the gospel of John, Jesus said that we have a real enemy who seeks “to steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10; Kraft, 1997); he prowls “like a lion to devour us” (1 Peter 5:8). Jesus showed complete and unprecedented authority over the work of the enemy when confronted by him (Kraft, 1997; Taillon, 2013). Christian educators in public or private schools are not immune to the influence of spiritual warfare as they are broken themselves and

interact with broken individuals. As believers, we are called upon to partner with Christ in coming against the work of the enemy when we encounter him in the classroom.

Quadrant Four: The Strategic-Level Deliverance Model

The fourth view on spiritual warfare, the Strategic-Level Deliverance Model, integrates aspects of the World Systems Model and is related to the Ground-Level Deliverance Model as it focuses its attention on demonic spirits that have authority over geographical areas, nations, or human institutions (Beilby & Eddy, 2012). This view also holds that fallen angels have authority and rights over certain nations or areas of land (Taillon, 2013; Daniel 10). The Strategic-Level Deliverance Model focuses on these high level demonic powers that reside over areas of land, groups of people, alliances, or any other widespread spiritual captivities (Wagner, 1996) and requires a robust understanding of the spiritual world as it pertains to spiritual beings associated with geographic regions. Ultimately, the goal is for Christian educators to take the area for Christ through unified focused prayer against the territorial spirits (Beilby & Eddy, 2012).

History of Spiritual Warfare Training

Historically, new believers were trained for spiritual warfare. In the early church, new believers were called *catechumens*. This Greek word means “pupils” and is related to the word *catēcheō* which means “to instruct” (Arnold, 1997; Dujarer, 1979; Glazer, 1992). The early church took training of *catechumens* seriously. Arnold (2011a) describes that the training involved four areas, according to the *Apostolic Tradition*: “intensive instruction in the Scriptures, training in Christian lifestyle with admonitions to give up and renounce ungodly practices, deliverance ministry, and baptism—including renunciation of Satan and the confession of allegiance to Christ” (p. 6).

Deliverance ministry was exercised during the time of baptism and those who baptized prayed over the *catechumen*, renounced all evil spirits. Many traditions of baptism included the *catechumen* renouncing Satan and his evil works at the time of baptism (Arnold, 2011a). History of the *catechumen* training and preparation for baptism “is attested all over the Mediterranean world—Italy, Egypt, North Africa, Palestine, Syria, Greece, and Asia Minor. It is also attested by many early church writers to the time of Augustine. Although there were minor variations in the way the *catechumenate* was carried out, the basic outline remains similar” (p. 6) to the *Apostolic Tradition’s* four categories of training: 1) intensive training in Scriptures, 2) training in Christian lifestyle, 3) deliverance ministry, and 4) renunciation of Satan and confessed allegiance to Christ (Arnold, 2011a, p. 6).

Spiritual warfare training was essential for new believers. In studying the Gospels, spiritual warfare is present in each historical narrative, from the point of Jesus in warfare with Satan Himself, countering the devil by quoting the Scriptures (Matthew 4); to Jesus casting out

demons and or saying to Peter “Satan get behind me!” (Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33); to Jesus in intensive prayer with the Father to the point of sweat like drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44).

Following Jesus’ ascension in Acts 1, the Holy Spirit descends and indwells believers. Believers in the early church then experienced the power of the Spirit manifested in countless ways—speaking in tongues (Acts 2), healing (e.g., Acts 3; 4:22), and casting out demons (e.g., Acts 10:38). The disciples regularly experienced the Holy Spirit’s supernatural direction (e.g., Acts 16:9), empowerment (Luke 9:1-6), and victory over evil spirits (e.g., Acts 10:38). Ephesians 6 provides the most structured biblical passage for defining and preparing for warfare. Ephesians 6:12 reminds us that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (NASB). The warfare directive is to “put on the full armor of God” (Eph. 6:13) which includes having your “loins girded with truth” (Eph. 6:14), wearing the “breastplate of righteousness” (Eph. 6:14), shodding your feet with the “gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15), taking up the “shield of faith” (Eph. 6:16), wearing the “helmet of salvation (Eph. 6:17),” and carrying the “sword of the spirit” (Eph. 6:17) which is the Word of God. We are to put on these spiritual weapons and use them in the context of prayer (Ephesians 6:18), which is the central element of spiritual warfare.

While historically the early church trained new believers regarding spiritual warfare, this intensity of spiritual warfare training was mostly lost over time. While the Catholic Church retained the intensive training of *catechism*, the Protestant church at the time of the Reformation, found new paths for training new converts. John and Charles Wesley demonstrated one of the most intensive trainings in the Protestant movement for new believers as they provided the house groups where believers stayed accountable to one another in their Christian walk, committing their time to prayer and study of the Word (Whaling, 1981). However, a paucity of formal spiritual warfare training programs exists for the lay persons in our churches today, and spiritual warfare training for PreK-12 teacher training programs in UCCC institutions of higher education is almost non-existent. The exception to this is the spiritual formation movement emerging in many of our UCCC institutions that emphasizes prayer and the process of sanctification through the work of the Spirit, though spiritual warfare often remains on the sidelines of the curriculum.

Summary

Entering the teaching profession necessitates an intense engagement with spiritual warfare, involving three unavoidable spiritually negative elements: worldly temptations, the flesh, and the devil (Arnold, 1997, 2011b). Throughout Old and New Testament Scriptures, literature, and through life experiences, observations of evil in the context of the World Systems Model, the

Flesh Model, the Ground-Level Deliverance Model, and in the Strategic-Level Deliverance Model are evident. The *catechumen* of the early church were systematically trained for spiritual warfare regardless of their vocation; whereas, new believers today are seldom trained for spiritual warfare in the church and with rare exception in the Christian university's teacher training programs.

Research Question and Methodology

The central question of the "Spiritual Lives of Teachers" survey (Hetzel & Costillo, 2013) is, "What does the spiritual life of a Christian teacher look like?" thereby examining characteristics of a Spirit-led teacher as well as obstacles. This paper focuses primarily on one question on the survey, *"As a teacher, have you ever encountered spiritual warfare? What happened and how did you or others confront evil in this context?"* (item 24).

Twenty teachers, administrators, and professors assisted in the development of the 45-item survey, including professors of Education, Christian Education, Old Testament, New Testament, Theology, and Spiritual Formation. Responses were collected through an online tool and each narrative response was analyzed for themes and coded for reporting purposes.

In May 2013, ACSI Vice President, Dr. Derek Keenan, endorsed the survey and electronically sent the link to 3,390 Association of Christian School (ACSI) administrators in the U.S. and 200 ACSI administrators in English-speaking schools outside the United States, 88% of whom are registered as private schools. Teachers then elected to voluntarily complete the survey. Quantitative data was electronically summarized for central tendency, and qualitative items were analyzed following Creswell's (2013) qualitative procedures.

Participants responded to the survey in a three-week period in May 2013. Seventy-three percent of these teachers were from the U.S., and 27% resided outside the U.S. (item 7). Seventy-two percent were female and 28% male (item 6). The mean age was 44 with an age range of 21 to 76 (item 14). The mean number of years teaching was 16 with a range of 1-52 years of experience (item 3). The majority of the respondents taught PreK-12, and there were just a few higher education responses (Hetzel & Costillo, 2013). Most teachers reported they taught at a private school (88%), followed by international schools (13%), mission schools (7%), and public schools (2%) (Hetzel & Costillo, 2013).

Analysis of the Data

The directions asked teachers to pray about which questions to respond to and then to respond in narrative format. For the specific question of this study, *"As a teacher, have you ever encountered spiritual warfare? What happened and how did you or others confront evil in this context?"* (item 24), 702 teachers responded to this item and 598 of teachers responded in the affirmative that they did experience spiritual warfare. Regarding what happened when

they experienced spiritual warfare, 59% cited relational discord and lack of unity; 20% cited demonic oppression; 20% cited student misbehavior, such as disrespect and rebellion; 19% cited emotional disequilibrium of the teacher, such as negativity, discouragement, and confusion. See Table 1.

Table 1: *Spiritual Warfare Symptomatology*

Rank	*Themes	Percent of This Category	Frequency of Theme
1	Relational Discord and Lack of Unity	59%	355
2	Demonic Oppression	20%	123
3	Student Misbehavior	29%	123
4	Emotional Disequilibrium of the Teacher	19%	116

*Some responses were coded into more than one category.

Relational Discord and Lack of Unity (59%)

Relational discord and lack of unity was the most frequently mentioned theme in the narrative responses. Relational discord could involve other teachers, students, or parents . . . and even the board or administration . . . from preschool to graduate school. One preschool teacher described, “I have encountered spiritual warfare in the form of exclusion and backbiting by co-workers” (ID#0140, Preschool, Female, United States). Another teacher summarized the situations that arise among colleagues when she stated, “I mostly have experienced spiritual warfare in the area of unity among co-workers” (ID #0911, Preschool, Female, United States). A middle school teacher described the struggle with a controversial colleague as she wrote, “A spirit of dissension was growing around a controversial colleague. It took all of our spiritual resources to respond appropriately when we were so tempted to lash out and contribute to the mess” (ID# 1276, 7-8, Female, United States).

Some teachers, however, focused primarily on student behavior as how they encountered spiritual warfare. For example, a kindergarten teacher wrote, “Spiritual warfare often shows up in a child’s behavior. Prayer is the only answer” (#0578, K, Female, United States). A primary teacher from Taiwan wrote, “I have definitely encountered spiritual warfare with students’ behavior in class or unwillingness to help each other” (ID #0305, 1-3, Female, Taiwan). Other teachers focused in on the struggles with the parents. A teacher from Brazil wrote, “Parents’ attitudes made me feel I was being tested and the enemy was putting my Christianity in check” (ID #1425, Preschool, Female, Brazil).

Spiritual warfare was identified in relationships with colleagues, students, and parents, but it did not stop there. Teachers also encountered spiritual warfare in the context of

administration and boards. One teacher wrote, “A spirit of deception has blinded the school board in the decisions it has been making. Teachers have confronted the board about this” (#ID0017, 4-6, Male, Canada). Another teacher wrote, “At present, there seems to be spiritual warfare between the board and staff” (ID #0016, 1-3, Female, Canada). An upper elementary teacher stated, “To be a teacher in a Christian school is to invite and expect spiritual warfare. The only way to combat it is through faith and trust worked out in prayer” (ID# 0569 (4-6, Female, United States).

Demonic Oppression (20%)

Demonic oppression was described by 20% of the respondents. For example, a male kindergarten teacher said that he sees demonic oppression in children “in the fears, hatreds and self-worth problems students are always struggling with” (ID# 0025, K, Male, Canada). A middle school teacher explained, “Last week I taught students who recently watched an explicit horror movie, and presented that they thought nothing of it. I prayed through the conversation and with them” (ID# 0274, 7-8, Male, Canada). One high school teacher in the Philippines described, “Students occasionally chat to me about demonic activity and fear” (ID# 1459, 9-12, Female, Philippines). Teachers from all grade levels around the world readily described areas of behavior and activities that were suspected to be demonic from these respondents’ perspectives.

Student Misbehavior (20%)

Twenty percent of the respondents indicated that they saw spiritual warfare in the context of student behavior. For example, a kindergarten teacher from Peru recognized a trend of illness amongst students during their Spiritual Emphasis Week reporting, “We had more students sick and some had more behavior issues [during Spiritual Emphasis Week]” (ID# 0577, K, Female, Peru). A teacher in Taiwan acknowledged that oftentimes she experiences spiritual warfare in the context of student misbehavior. She wrote, “I have definitely encountered spiritual warfare with students’ behavior in class” (ID #0305, 1-3, Female, Taiwan). A teacher in the United States wrote, “. . . I believe many of the disciplinary issues that go on in the classroom are really spiritual issues . . .” (ID# 1243, 1-3, Female, United States). Indeed, teachers who taught across the grade levels described spiritual warfare evidenced in student behavior.

Emotional Disequilibrium of the Teacher (19%)

Nineteen percent of teachers who responded to the spiritual warfare question indicated they had experienced some type of disequilibrium in their personal lives. For example, a primary teacher wrote, “The spiritual warfare I often face is the lie that I am incompetent at my job. I fight this lie with the truth that I can do all things through Christ” (ID# 1260, 1-3, Male, Canada). A middle school teacher wrote, “I experience spiritual warfare on a regular basis. I

feel that Satan tries to plant seeds of doubt in my mind related to decisions I've made on behalf of my role as a teacher" (ID# 1426, 7-8, Female, United States). A high school teacher described, "I feel like I have to constantly fight feelings of inadequacy or comparing myself to older/more veteran teachers. I am reminded though that He has called and equipped me" (ID# 1268, 9-12, Female, United States).

Additional Observations

While respondents would describe or cite specific incidences of spiritual warfare, there was also clear evidence in the data regarding the *daily*ness of spiritual warfare in the lives of teachers. A high school teacher in this study described that she experienced spiritual warfare "all the time!" She went on to share, "I try to teach students to expect the attack, especially when they have set out to do something very intentionally for God" (ID# 0053, 9-12, Female, United States). Respondents also mentioned experiences of sight, sound, and touch or feeling, demonstrating the palpable nature of spiritual warfare. A teacher from the United Kingdom stated that "during Bible time I could see the children getting distracted and very restless when I started talking about salvation" (ID# 1193, Preschool, Female, United Kingdom). Another teacher mentioned that a student of his "would become like a dog, barking and crawl[ing] on floor . . ." (ID# 0435, 1-3, Male, United States). Teachers often described chaos, confusion, heaviness, or feelings of eeriness surrounding their awareness of demonic forces. These testimonies from teachers around the world explicitly describe the dailyness and palpable nature of spiritual warfare in the classroom while indicating that prayer and the Word of God are the primary means of defense.

Countering Spiritual Warfare

When analyzing the data related to, "how did you or others confront evil in this context?" 49% of respondents said prayer and 11% Scripture as the method to counter spiritual warfare. Also, some interesting patterns emerged regarding spiritual warfare prayer as well as spiritual warfare strategies. Five subthemes or observations about *how* teachers prayed emerged as researchers coded each narrative response on spiritual warfare that *included* prayer. The five themes were: secular strategy, sacred strategy, corporate strategy, supplication, and individual prayer. See Figure 5. The *secular strategy* subtheme meant that respondents *combined* prayer with a secular strategy that non-Christians would also deem as wise (e.g., prayer plus psychological assessment). The *sacred strategy* category meant that respondents combined prayer with other sacred, biblically supported strategies, such as fasting, trusting God, anointing with oil, confronting sin, etc. *Corporate prayer* meant that the teacher gathered strength by joining in prayer with other colleagues. The *supplication* category meant the teacher prayed for specific things in regard to the spiritual warfare issue. The *individual prayer* category meant the teacher indicated that he or she prayed individually, with no indication the teacher was praying

in conjunction with other believers. As the researchers coded the data, individual responses could be coded in more than one category, and it must be assumed that respondents may or may not have been comprehensive in their responses.

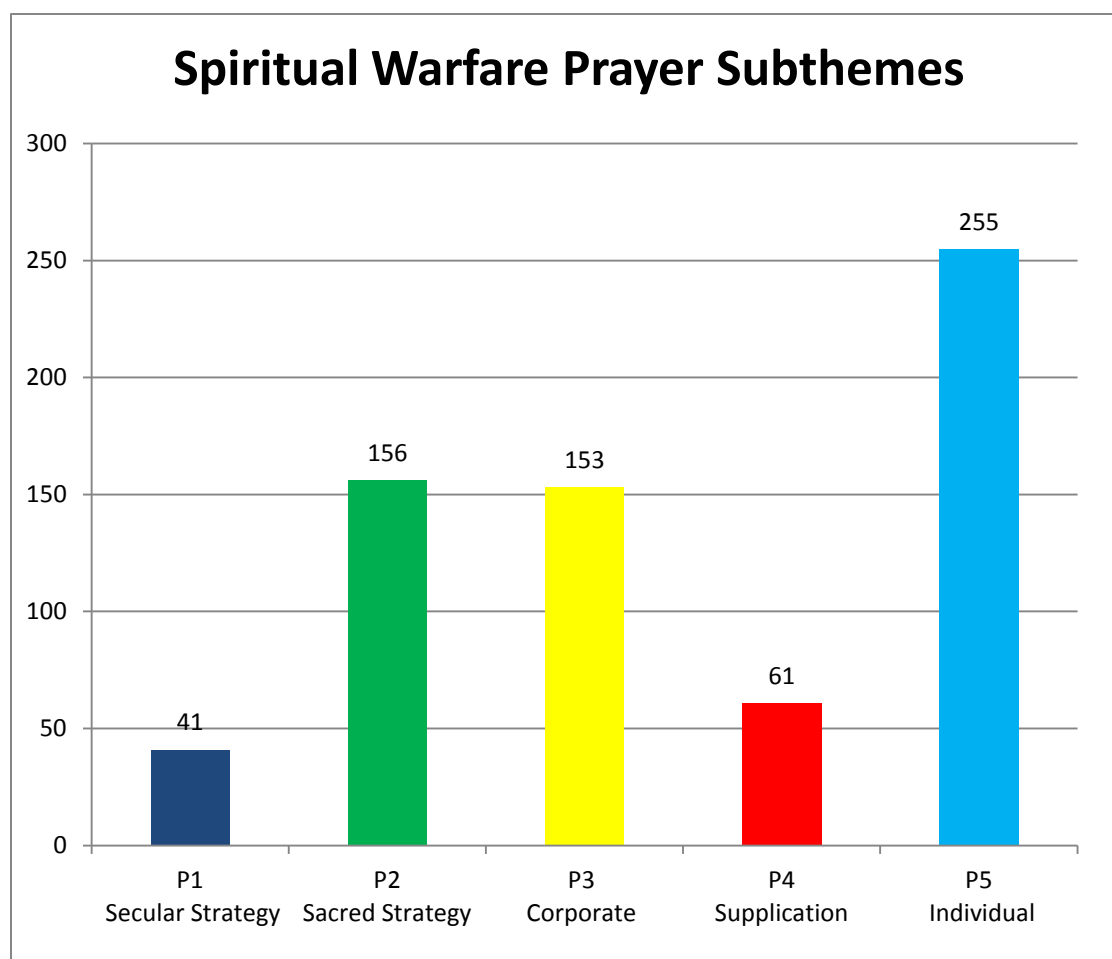


Figure 5: Spiritual Warfare Prayer Subthemes

Upon further review of responses involving prayer, researchers explored spiritual warfare prayer strategy subthemes, such as rebuke/power encounters, sacred strategies, secular strategies, strategic use of the Word of God, and body of Christ involvement. While the theme of prayer remains utmost in how teachers self-reported confronting evil in their educational roles, there were significant strategies within prayer that teachers incorporated in an effort to confront evil. See Figure 6.

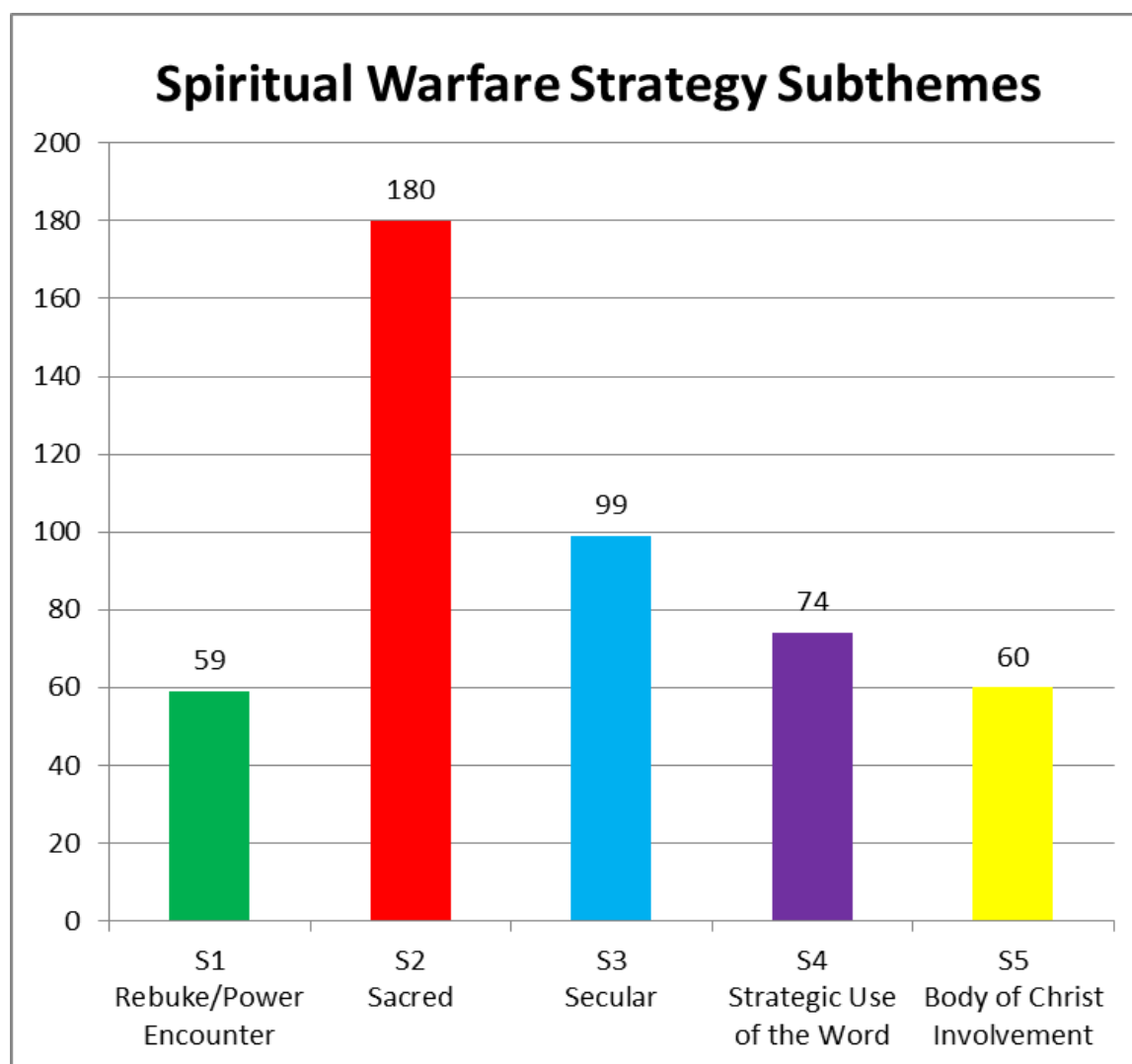


Figure 6: Spiritual Warfare Strategy Subthemes

A *rebuke* or *power encounter* refers to the concept of taking a stand against supernatural evil forces and includes laying on of hands, rebuking in the name of Jesus, claiming the blood of Jesus, and putting on the armor of God. The *sacred strategy* responses category included fasting, forgiving, confronting sin, seeking godly counsel, relying on the Holy Spirit, and worship. *Secular strategies* refer to wisdom strategies that non-believers would utilize to handle a challenging classroom situation, including classroom management practices, efforts to improve communication, and diligence in classroom preparation. The *strategic use of the Word* may include reading Scripture aloud, memorizing verses, and praying Scripture. The *body of Christ involvement* included practices such as recruiting prayer warriors, seeking godly counsel/guidance in prayer, receiving encouragement through prayer, and scheduling times for fellowship and corporate prayer.

Conclusion

Public and private school educators, by the very nature of their responsibilities, are in spiritually influential territory where they must be aware of evil as it exists in the World Systems Model, the Flesh Model, the Ground-Level Deliverance Model, and the Strategic-Level Deliverance Model (Beilby & Eddy, 2012; Boyd, 2012; Powlison, 2012; Wagner, 1996; Wink, 2012). Evil promotes injustices and the work of the Spirit rights injustices. Christian teachers are targets because of their spiritually strategic roles. Children and adolescents are prime targets for Satan's work, because they are the next generation of disciples of Jesus.

The data indicated that the role of prayer was primary throughout the spiritual warfare data from the Christian educators. The data also underscored the role of Christian educators to teach the truth via the Word of God, the second most prominent theme the educators reported as a method to combat spiritual warfare in the educational setting. As one teacher commented, "the very act of education is spiritual warfare, shining the light of truth into the darkness of ignorance . . ." (ID# 1174, 9-12, Male, United States); therefore, it is critical that teachers *know* the Word of God and *use* the Word of God, as Jesus did (Matthew 4), as they engage in spiritual warfare throughout the school day. The emphasis of the data on prayer and the Word of God was aligned with the training of Jesus' disciples (e.g., Matthew, Acts) and the historical training of the *catechumen* in the early church (Arnold, 2011a).

The study provides vivid insight into global spiritual warfare conditions in primarily *private* educational settings, providing evidence and argumentation to advance spiritual warfare training for pre-service and in-service Christian educators worldwide, particularly as it relates to prayer and a deepened understanding of the Word of God in the context of what it means to lead a Spirit-led life as an educator and to promote justice on our campuses in in our communities. "It is essential that educators who are Christian act as peacemakers (Matthew 5:9) to promote shalom in the individual classroom and throughout the school community [so that] the lives of the administrators, board members, teachers, staff, students, and their collective families" (Anderson, 2015, p. 2) might flourish in Christ and live in shalom.

"Spiritual warfare is a lifestyle. The battles will be many, but the ultimate victory is assured. We go with confidence that the strong man has been bound as we plunder his house, demolish strongholds, and set the captives free in the power of Christ" (Anderson, 2015, p. 6).

To be a Christian educator is to invite spiritual warfare.

Limitations of this Study

Participants in this study were teaching in schools registered with the Association of Christian Schools International. Public school teachers who profess the Christian faith were not included in this study. The researchers have not yet gathered formal data to indicate whether

Christians teaching in public school settings would have similar or different experiences than those reported by the private Christian schoolteachers.

The private Christian schoolteachers reported strategies for spiritual warfare, some of which could not be legally implemented in a public school setting. This limits the ability of a public school teacher in applying some of the spiritual warfare strategies that emerged in this study.

Only 702 of the 1,509 teachers who participated in the study, elected to respond to the spiritual warfare question. The researchers do not know if these teachers chose not to respond due to preference in responding to other items, the length of the survey (i.e., survey fatigue), lack of belief in spiritual warfare, or because they had no experiences in spiritual warfare. The directions on the survey specifically stated, “Feel free to skip questions if you feel uncomfortable, unsure, or nothing comes mind.” Therefore, an analysis could only be made of 702 teachers’ responses which represented only 47% of the entire number of participants in the survey.

Recommendations for Further Study

The results of this study indicate that spiritual warfare is a common experience among private school educators around the globe. Hence, there may be a critical segment of teacher training that is missing from most Christian university teacher preparation programs as it relates to spiritual preparedness for the teaching profession. Further research is warranted in regard to the following question—*what higher education training in spiritual warfare exists and/or ought to be included in a Christian teacher’s spiritual training?*

The researchers recommend that additional studies survey Christians who teach in public schools to determine whether or not spiritual warfare exists in the public schools and, if it does exist (which we suspect it does), explore how teachers are coping with the complexities of spiritual warfare in the public school classroom. Additionally, *if spiritual warfare exists in the public school classroom, what type of spiritual warfare do public school Christian teachers experience—is it more intense, the same, or less intense than in the private Christian school setting? What spiritual warfare strategies are being applied in the public school settings? What spiritual warfare strategies should be included in our CCCU teacher training programs? And, if spiritual warfare strategies should be included in our teacher training programs, what should they be so that our Christian educators are instruments of justice in our communities?*

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*JESUS, JUSTICE, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION INCLUSION:
A CASE FOR THE "SHALOM MODEL OF INCLUSION"*
BY BEN NWORIE

Abstract

This paper is a theoretical discourse that proposes a justice-infused, biblically based special education inclusion model, the "*Shalom* Model of Inclusion." After discussing justice, inclusion, incarnationality, the Hebrew concept of *shalom*, and *agape* love which form the foundational thinking for the proposed "*Shalom* Model of Inclusion," the author introduces the central concept of *Imago Dei* and the four domains of the "*Shalom* Model of Inclusion" which are: shared curriculum experience, shared strengths and needs, effective and differentiated pedagogy, as well as community and collaborative praxis. The model is illustrated with the love, compassion and collaboration shared in the L'Arche communities where disabilities, instead of being viewed negatively as problems to be solved, are viewed as gifts, and opportunities to learn new ways to love, to be faithful, to live together in recognition of the naturalness and goodness of difference, as well as discover the importance of weakness and vulnerability. L'Arche tangibly demonstrates the practicality and effectiveness of *shalom* inclusion.

Keywords: justice, inclusion, special education, love, shalom.

Introduction

If the practice of special education inclusion continues based on best practices as we know it, that is, our best human ideology, knowledge, and skills, etc., it will bring about *some* beneficial outcomes. However, even though we will see *minor* benefits, we will continue to get exactly what we have been getting—that is, lower educational outcomes in comparison with general education (Bremer, Albus, & Thurlow, 2011), litigations (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013; Pudelski, 2013; Yell, 2012), teacher attrition (Mamlin, 2012), lack of love and justice from the Christian perspective (1 Corinthians 13: 2-3, 8-9; 2 Corinthians 5: 19), and lack of human flourishing. On the other hand, if we conduct special education inclusion based on best practices of the finest human ideology, knowledge, and skills, in combination with Jesus' model of love and justice as demonstrated existentially and pedagogically by him, then we will realize a system of special education inclusion that is wholesome, biblically based, and characteristic of *shalom*.

The proposed “*Shalom Model of Inclusion*” will be characterized by positive and measurable educational outcomes; less litigation; and more thriving practitioners, who teach not only out of a sense of obligation, but out of a sense of vocational calling to *shalom*. The proposed “*Shalom Model of Inclusion*” will also be characterized by flourishing students who experience love, justice, and *shalom* demonstrated by their teachers, and service providers.

This paper is a proposal for a paradigm shift in the practice of special education inclusion. The basic idea of inclusive special education, as it is currently understood in schools, is the practice of educating children with and without disabilities in the same setting, which is usually understood to be the general education setting (Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen, 2015; Salend, 2011). Some essential components of the proposed “*Shalom Model of Inclusion*,” which are often missing in the traditional setting include acceptance (which encompasses the biblical concept of justice), innovative curriculum design, belonging (which incorporates the biblical idea of love), and community (Gargiulo, 2015; Salend, 2016).

This paper is a theoretical discourse that proposes a move from current conventional special education models of inclusion, to a more dynamic, incarnational and biblically based special education inclusion model, the “*Shalom Model of Inclusion*.” After discussing justice and inclusion, the concept of incarnationality, the Hebrew concept of *shalom*, and the concept of *agape* love, which form the foundational thinking for the proposed model, the “*Shalom Model of Inclusion*,” will be introduced. Following this foundational discussion, the four domains of the “*Shalom Model of Inclusion*”—shared curriculum experience, shared strengths and needs, effective and differentiated pedagogy, and community and collaborative praxis—will be examined, along with the central concept of *Imago Dei*.

The “*Shalom Model of Inclusion*” is illustrated with the love, compassion and collaboration shared in the L'Arche communities where disabilities, instead of being viewed negatively as problems to be solved, are viewed as gifts, and opportunities to learn new ways to love, to be

faithful, to live together in recognition of the naturalness and goodness of difference, as well as discover the importance of weakness and vulnerability. L'Arche tangibly demonstrates the practicality and effectiveness of *shalom* inclusion.

Foundational Concepts

"The *Shalom* Model of Inclusion" foundationally encompasses the concepts of justice, inclusion, incarnationality, *shalom*, and *agape* love.

Justice

According to the Oxford Dictionary, justice is to do, treat, or represent with due fairness or appreciation. As a noun, it is the quality of being fair and reasonable ([University of Oxford](#)). Justice means giving each person what he or she deserves. It is something everyone seems to desire for themselves. Here is a good illustration of the meaning of justice. Heather and Mark were living comfortable, safe lives, yet they became concerned about the most vulnerable, poor, and marginalized members of society, and they made long term personal sacrifices in order to serve the interests, needs and cause of those other people. That according to the Bible is what it means to "do justice" (Keller, 2010).

Justice (*mishpat*) in the Old Testament combines the abilities both to judge and to acquit which emanate from God (Doty, 2011). In other words, justice in the Old Testament illustrates the idea of the juxtaposition of God's Law against God's love. By abiding in love, we allow the justice (*mishpat*) of God to prevail in our lives (Doty, 2011). As the Bible clearly teaches, "*The one who abides in love, abides in God and God abides in him*" (1 John 4:16b).

Inclusion

Most dictionaries define inclusion as being really and truly an insider. In the educational context, it is being actively and essentially a part of the regular education curriculum. It refers to educating students with disabilities in general education settings (Gargiulo, 2015; Heward, 2013; Salend, 2011). Inclusive education is to create a fair, collaborative, supportive, and nurturing learning environment for all students.

The federal law that regulates special education practice in the United States, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), mandates the education of every child with a disability in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) which means educating them in settings as close to the regular class as possible where an appropriate program can be provided, and where the child can make satisfactory educational progress (Heward, 2013).

Although the concept of inclusion grew out of mainstreaming and shares many of its philosophical goals and implementation strategies, inclusion is different from mainstreaming. In Mainstreaming, a special needs student is temporarily placed in a general education classroom for content instruction at a time that the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team thinks that the student will be successful. Students in mainstream placements are "pulled out"

for services or for direct instruction in a more restrictive special education classroom. In full inclusion, on the other hand, a special needs child is placed in a general education classroom 100% of his/her day. The student's services and service providers all go to that classroom to assist the student in being successful. Inclusion in this full sense is not right for every student. The decision for a full or partial inclusion placement rests with the student's IEP team. For maximum benefit, inclusion must, therefore, be decided on an individualized basis (Salend, 2016).

Including special education students in the general education population has obvious benefits to it. That is why the majority of educators prefer a level of integration of students with disabilities with nondisabled students (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2015). There seem to be no detrimental effects or significant loss of instructional time due to the presence of a student with severe disability (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007; Gargiulo, 2015). On the contrary, inclusive programs tend to yield increased accomplishment of IEP objectives, in the same way that increased academic improvement tends to result from heterogeneous grouping of students rather than from grouping by ability level (Gargiulo, 2015; Nworie, 2013). In addition, in full inclusion, student's instruction time is better utilized as they stay in one classroom for services (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007).

The special education student often wants to emulate what the general education student is doing. When the general education student helps the special education student in a learning process it often increases the general education student's learning skills and knowledge base. Students learn to work with students who are different from what they see around them normally. Many students are willing to help accomplish social integration goals. When a general education student becomes a friend with a special education student they often become the special education student's biggest champions (Salend, 2016).

Special education students who are educated in inclusive regular education classrooms have more opportunities for "normal" relationships with their peers and to learn the normal cultural patterns (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007). Special education students learn to work together, develop friendships, collaborative skills, communicative, and interactive skills as they collaborate with their regular education peers in inclusion settings. Conversely the regular education students develop tolerance and appreciation of differences when they work with their special education peers through inclusion practices (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007; Salend, 2011).

Special education students taught in a self-contained special education classroom tend to have lower self-esteem and tend to be employed less than their counterparts in the regular education classroom (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007; Gargiulo, 2015; Salend, 2016). Since the special education teacher's job is to prepare students for the work world, this sounds like a sad commentary on self-contained, non-inclusive special education classrooms.

Shalom (as will be defined in the next section) happens when special education inclusion is done right. For example, Klingner and Vaughn (1999) investigated the perceptions of 4,659 students and found that students with disabilities want the same activities, books, homework, grading criteria, and grouping practices as their classmates without disabilities. The study also found that students with and without disabilities in inclusion setting value teachers who “slow down instructions when needed, explain concepts and assignments clearly, teach learning strategies, and teach the same material in different ways so that everyone can learn” (p. 23).

Incarnationality

The noun *incarnation* comes from two Latin roots, namely *in*, meaning “into”, and *carn*, meaning “flesh”. The Latin and the Greek equivalent (*en sarki*) of the word incarnation literally means “in-flesh”. Though the word *incarnation* is not used in the Bible, it is used in certain references in the New Testament about the person and work of Jesus Christ “in the flesh” (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 1: 22; Packer, 1996). Incarnation is the theological term for the coming of Jesus, the idea that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself” (2 Corinthians 5: 19). *Incarnation* is used figuratively to convey the idea of putting an abstract concept or idea into concrete form (Neal, 2006). The “*Shalom* Model of Inclusion” proposed is *incarnational* because it illustrates the idea of inclusion as concrete, ongoing tangible acts of love through the teacher and the community members towards the special needs student (Billings, 2012).

Shalom

The Hebrew word *Shalom* (שָׁלוֹם), generally translated in English as peace, has a much broader and deeper meaning and application than peace. *Shalom* (שָׁלוֹם) in Hebrew means completeness, soundness, wholeness, welfare, and peace. It is from *shalom* which encompasses the meaning of safety, wellness, happiness, restored, good health, and prosperity (Strong's Concordance, no date). *Shalom* is used in the Bible for salvation, justice, and peace (Yoder, 1998). The Old Testament usage of *Shalom* has these three shades of meaning: “A material and physical state of being, relationships, and a moral sense of duty” (DomNwachukwu & Lee 2014, p. 98). As a material and physical state, *shalom* seeks harmony for peoples’ physical and material well-being. A biblical example of this is seen in Genesis 37:14 when Jacob asked his son Joseph to go to his brothers and check on their *shalom* (or well-being). So a *state of shalom* ensures good physical health as well as the absence of deprivations. A state of *shalom* is what we desire for our special needs students.

In the Old Testament, another idea of this multifaceted concept, *shalom*, is illustrated in relationships that embody personal harmony with others, and harmony with God, as illustrated in the life and relationships of Abraham, especially in his relationship with Lot (Genesis 13:8). *Shalom*, in this sense of harmonious relationships, is also seen in Leviticus 19:18 “You shall not

take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD.” Here the justice that is in view is that of a holistic and communal state of well-being, peace, love, good health, and prosperity (Crisp, 2014; Fowler & Pacino, 2012). *Shalom*, as harmonious community state, is characterized by unity and obvious equality. *Shalom*, therefore, is accomplished when we go beyond mere tolerance, and delight to “live in right relationship with God, each other, and nature” (DomNwachukwu & Lee, 2014, p. 112). This state of shalom is greatly needed in special education.

In the Old Testament, *shalom* is also “the presence of moral and ethical relationships characterized by honesty, integrity, and straightforward character; it is the absence of deceit, lies, and hypocrisy” (DomNwachukwu & Lee, 2014, p. 98). These qualities of *shalom* such as completeness, wholeness, welfare, peace, physical and material well-being, communal harmony, honesty, integrity, and straightforward character, are embodied by God, and their potentialities are built into humans who are made in His image. In Genesis 1: 26 the triune God said, “Let us (*Elohim*, plural) make man in our image.” Since man and woman are made in the image of God who embodies these qualities of *shalom*, it should be within the repertoire of human beings to exhibit, share, practice and experience *shalom*. The idea of the image of God (*Imago Dei*) within humankind supports and sustains the possibility of a lived experience of the “*Shalom Model of Inclusion*” in special education. Wherever *shalom* is experienced, there is always present a God kind of love called *agape*.

Agape Love

The Bible describes the love that motivated Jesus' ministry as the first and greatest commandment: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22: 34-40). It is the exceptional God kind of love called *agape*. “It is the love that is used of God for man . . . based on the fact of a solid, unwavering love commitment. . . . This *agape* love is the kind of love that chooses to understand the needs of another and then responds to those needs by expending available resources to meet those needs (Stowell, 1997, p. 182). Agape and justice are integral and essential components of *shalom*. Where the two are lacking it will be difficult to find shalom. Conversely, where the two converge, as is the case in the life and ministry of Jesus, *shalom* is present. *Agape* love in the proposed “*Shalom Model of Inclusion*” for special education, is based both on God’s Word and on the words and ways of Jesus (his love and justice).

The Shalom Model of Inclusion

The L’Arche experience outside the classroom (described below) is proof positive that the “*Shalom Model of Inclusion*” can be actualized in the school setting. The “*Shalom Model of*

Inclusion” has in its center the concept of *Imago Dei*. That is, that humankind is created in the image of God, with all the potentialities of *shalom* living. Yes, we actually have this capacity to live incarnationally, to love with agape love, and to create communities characterized by *shalom* and inclusiveness. Built around this concept of *Imago Dei* are four domains: shared curriculum experience, shared strengths and needs, reflective and differentiated pedagogy, and community and collaborative praxis.

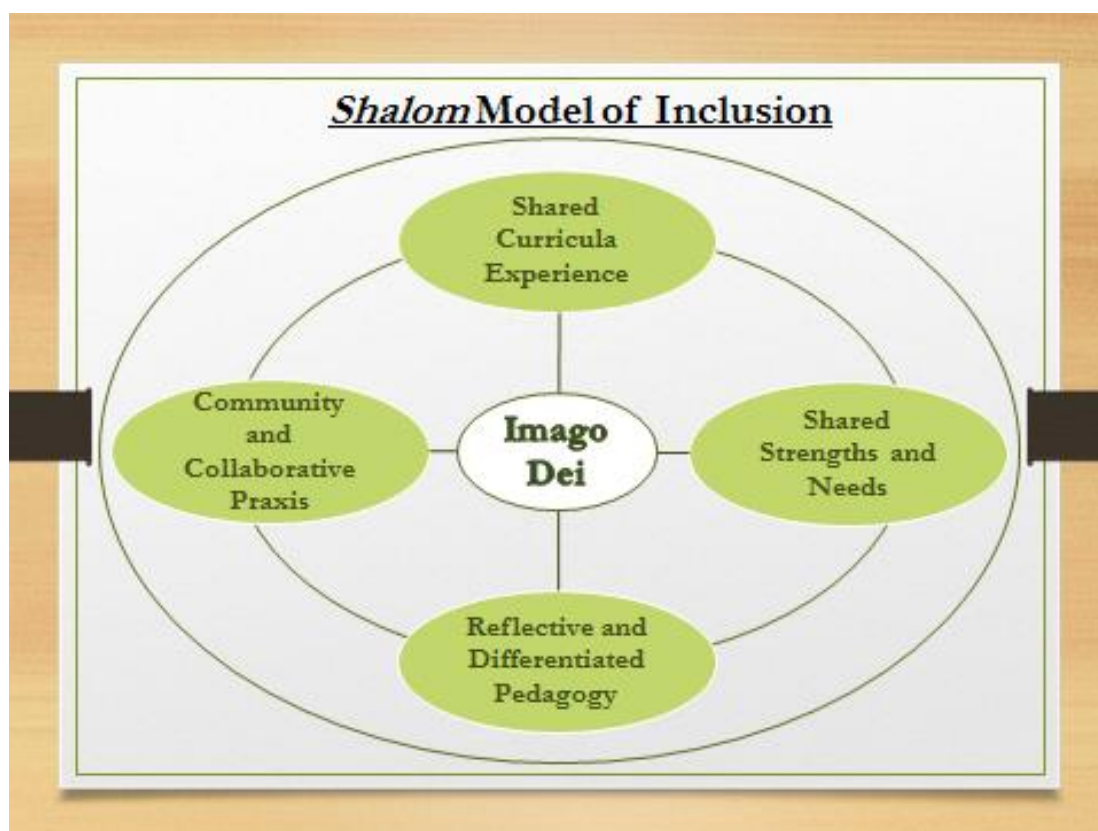


Figure 1.1: The “Shalom Model of Inclusion”

Imago Dei

The “*Shalom Model of Inclusion*” for special education is founded primarily on the realization that human beings are created in God’s image (*Imago Dei*). What does it mean to be created or made in the “image of God”? Genesis 1:26-28 states: Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

“Made in the image of God,” (verse 27), means that humans are a snapshot or facsimile of God. That is, we are godlike and have godlike aptitudes (Staub, 2010). Humans have great value, and occupy a higher place in the created order than animals and plants because we alone are imprinted with godlike characteristics. Humans, though finite and imperfect share the same attributes with God the Creator who is infinite and perfect. We bear the image of God and are godlike because we share attributes of God (Staub, 2010). We reflect God’s creative, spiritual, intelligent, communicative, relational, moral, and purposeful capacities.

The image of God we bear impacts our relationship with God as well as our relationship with fellow human beings. It is God’s desire that humans enjoy fellowship with Him as well as with each other. Just as the image of God is reflected in and through all people regardless of their needs, status, culture, or gender, the image of God we bear makes people of all races and ethnic groups of the same status and unique value before God. This *Imago Dei* concept negates the idea of social or racial superiority or inferiority, segregation, divisions, or separations. The fact that the entire human race shares common origins as well as this common bond of divine identity should produce a concern and empathy for all people (Lee, 2014).

The image of God is, therefore, the core, uniting piece of the “*Shalom* Model of Inclusion” for special education. *Imago Dei*, the central piece, ties together, supports and strengthens the four essential components of the “*Shalom* Model of Inclusion”. The four components are: (1) shared curricular experience, (2) shared strengths and needs, (3) reflective and differentiated pedagogy, and (4) community and collaborative praxis. Below is a brief explanation of each component.

Shared Curricular Experience

An inclusive special education environment is where all students are learners and are provided with fairness instead of identicalness, through being educated together in high-quality, age-appropriate, general education classrooms in their neighborhood schools (Salend, 2016; Gargiulo, 2015). Such inclusivity is essential for a *shalom*-based educational environment. Before the enactment of the federal legislation, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, people with disabilities in the USA faced all kinds of barriers (Nworie, 2013; Yell, 2016), including access to school, access to basic services, inclusion in regular classrooms, and so forth.

In his ministry, Jesus exemplified this aspect of *shalom* in various ways. He gave His hearers the shared curricular experience by teaching the different ability groups together, by teaching his disciples and answering their questions together, by teaching the people publicly in the synagogue, by openly teaching while answering the questions of his Jewish opponents, and while associating with several classes of people (e.g., Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 -7; Luke 4: 14-30; Mark 6: 2; Matthew 13: 54, etc.). Jesus also exemplified the shared curricular experience component of *shalom* when he took his disciples with him and taught them while

he ate with and spent time talking with those who were despised. Keller (2010) put it most eloquently this way: “He ate with and spoke to tax collectors, the wealthiest people in society, yet the most hated, since they acquired their gains through collaborating with the Roman forces of occupation (Keller, 2010, p 45). Jesus welcomed all into His presence, without being a respecter of persons, and provided simultaneous lessons for people of all different walks of life (Matthew 26: 6-13; Mark 14: 3-9; Luke 5: 27-32; Luke 7: 44-46; Luke 19: 1-10).

Shared Strengths and Needs

A *shalom*-based, inclusive special education calls for a community where *all students* are valued as worthwhile individuals who have strengths and needs, are capable of learning and contributing to society. It is a situation where *all students* are taught to appreciate diversity and to value and learn from each other’s similarities and differences.

This *shalom*-based, inclusive special education model, where all students are taught to love, value and learn from the similarities and differences of their peers, can best be illustrated by the worldviews and way of life of the L’Arche communities. L’Arche was founded in 1964 by Jean Vanier and Father Thomas Philippe based on Jesus’ teaching that the person who is poor in what the world commonly values is, actually, blessed and endowed with deep gifts to offer. The L’Arche communities are “an international network of inclusive communities within which people with developmental disabilities live together with people who do not have such disabilities” (Swinton, 2003 p. 68).

There is a radically new system of valuing in L’Arche. It is a place where disabilities exist, but they do not really matter. In other words, within L’Arche, disability has a totally different meaning from the cultural norm. The worldview and theology of L’Arche is such that “disabilities are not viewed as problems to be solved, but rather as particular ways of being human which need to be understood, valued, and supported” (Swinton, 2003, p. 68). According to Swinton (2003), the emphasis is on “discovering ways of loving and living together that recognize the naturalness and beauty of difference and the theological significance of weakness and vulnerability” (p. 68).

The act of loving, welcoming and accepting has such a central place at L’Arche that “within the L’Arche communities people with developmental disabilities are accepted and welcomed not for what they can or cannot do, but simply for what they are” (p. 68). At L’Arche all people are welcomed with thankfulness and love as “*gifts* which have divine dignity, meaning and purpose... not for what (the *gift*) might become or for what it is not” (pp 68-69). Swinton (2003) further adds “offering care and support to people with profound developmental disabilities is thus not an act of charity, but rather it is an act of faithfulness within which people respond in love to those whom God has given to them” (p. 69). This practice of offering care and support to people with special needs as an act of faithful, loving response that is experienced at L’Arche foreshadows what the “*Shalom Model of Inclusion*” portends inside of the classroom.

As we have just discussed, in the L'Arche community, all people are welcomed with thankfulness and love as divine gifts that have marvelous dignity, meaning and purpose. One person is not valued above another; all persons are valued for their personhood, their *Imago Dei*. All persons have strengths to contribute to the community and all persons have needs that can be met by others in the community. This is the type of shalom-based inclusiveness that embraces each member with agape love and demonstrates the incarnational capacity of loving the different other.

This quality of love carries with it the kind of compassion that Jesus profusely demonstrated in the course of his earthly ministry (Luke 7:13; Matthew 8:3, 16-17; 9:36; 14:14; 15:32). As Berkowicz and Myers (2014) have rightly stressed, for effective learning, compassion is indispensable. They have also very correctly pointed out that schools with compassionate leaders increase their students' potential for academic success. It is not an overstatement that compassionate learning environments, by helping decrease stress levels, do lower students' cortisol levels thereby increasing their ability to learn (Berkowicz & Myers, 2014; Nworie, 2006).

Reflective and Differentiated Pedagogy

In the *Shalom* inclusive practices environment, there is instructional integrity and integration. According to Friend and Bursuck (2015), instructional integration which has integrity is practiced by "adjusting how teaching and learning are designed, (delivered) and measured" (p. 18). Instructional integration is also ensuring all students are afforded the services and the accommodations needed to succeed. That is, individualized education and differentiated instruction for *all students* is extended in terms of assessment techniques, general education curriculum accessibility, teaching strategies, technology, universal and physical design, accommodations, modifications, classroom management techniques, and a wide array of resources and related services based on their needs (Friend & Bursuck, 2015; Salend, 2011). In his ministry, Jesus exemplified this aspect of the "*Shalom* Model of Inclusion" as he utilized various pedagogical skills and techniques. For example, he utilized questioning, storytelling, miracles, and parables at different times in his teaching ministry, depending on the needs of the listeners.

Disabilities can present real handicapping conditions for special education students. Consequently, effective inclusive practices require that students with special needs be provided with appropriate aids, supports and services that can help level the playing field for them and enable these students to transition to independence, to flourishing, and to *shalom*. Some of the necessary aids, supports and services include occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language therapy, audiology services, psychological services, assistive technology, medical and school health services, and others. Without the provision of these needed supports and services, the academic and occupational outcomes for most of these students will continue to lag behind those of their peers without disabilities (Friend & Bursuck,

2015; Gargiulo, 2015; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2015).

The good news is that with advances today in modern science and technology, it is very possible to live a full and satisfying life with a disability. The sad commentary, however, is that for a number of reasons, many students with special needs are not getting the aids, supports and services (including assistive technology and the kinds of instructional services) that they actually need. According to Scruggs and Mastropieri (2015), “the reason for this is not known, but perhaps has to do with limited time, training, or support for general education teachers; or because of teacher reluctance to implement strategies perceived to be of particular utility for only a small number of students in the class.” (p. 31).

Community and Collaborative Praxis

The *shalom* inclusive practices environment needs and invites parents, pupils, school personnel, other professionals and service providers to pull together as partners for best outcomes. Generally, parents prefer that their children be educated in the general education classrooms along with their peers in those settings (Friend & Bursuck, 2015). This kind of preference by parents is based on the perception that their children perform better academically in inclusive settings. Overall, more positive academic outcomes have been found in inclusive schools. For example, as correctly reported by Friend and Bursuck (2015), research findings from a statewide study showed that students with disabilities who spent more time in general education had a higher passing rate in the eight-grade state test than similar students with disabilities who were educated in special education settings. Friend and Bursuck (2015) also reported other research findings which demonstrate that inclusive practices make positive impacts on students’ achievement in math, problem solving skills, and discipline referrals. When parents participate in collaborative decision-making regarding the educational services of their children, those parents tend to be more positive (Friend & Bursuck, 2015). Such positive partnerships and social integration between parents, teachers, other professionals, students with disabilities and their peers, contribute to *shalom* experience and flourishing for students. *Shalom* inclusion thrives in collaborative, supportive, and nurturing learning environments (Friend & Bursuck, 2015; Salend, 2016).

Pupils who are involved and participate actively in their schooling enjoy the benefits of inclusion, and show more positive learning outcomes (Greenwood, 2015; Salend, 2016). All students should be encouraged to attend their IEP meetings (if they are able to attend). Students in 9th grade or who are 14 years should always be invited to their IEP, and should be encouraged to show full school participation, and fully attend their other school meetings such as the parent-teacher meetings if they possibly can.

Inclusion is more effective when schools and school districts intentionally plan for it. For example, by providing professional development, program-enhancing or restructuring resources and materials, administrative, financial and other needed support, which enable

school personnel, other professionals, service providers and other stake holders to work collaboratively and reflectively in addressing students' strengths and challenges (Salend, 2016).

The ministry of Jesus portrayed real community and collaborative engagement. He reached out to and involved a cross section of his community. For example, Jesus ministry was inclusive of the Samaritans (a hated and despised group by the Jews). He collaborated with a Samaritan woman in witnessing (John 4). One of his most profound teachings was about a "Good Samaritan." As Keller (2010) noted, "the first witnesses to Jesus's birth were shepherds, a despised group considered unreliable, yet God revealed the birth of his Son first to them. The first witnesses of Jesus's resurrection were women, another class of people so marginalized that their testimony was not admissible evidence in court. Yet Jesus revealed himself to them first" (Keller, 2010, p. 45). Hence, Jesus modeled and included members of the community from all classes and walks in life. These *shalom* inclusive practices by Jesus enhanced his teaching and evangelistic ministry and ensured *shalom*. Such inclusiveness, peace, harmony, love and justice define full *shalom* (Fowler & Pacino, 2012; McColl & Ascough, 2009).

Conclusion

The proposed "*Shalom* Model of Inclusion" for special education, which combines best practices of finest human ideology, knowledge, and skills, with the biblically based principles of love and justice, is an ideal approach to ensure flourishing students, successful practitioners, and thriving communities with positive educational outcomes, and transformational benefits characteristic of *shalom*. At the core of the "*Shalom* Model of Inclusion" is the concept that humankind is created in the image of God, with the full capacity to live incarnationally, to love with agape love. Surrounding this concept of *Imago Dei* are the four important domains of shared curriculum experience, shared strengths and needs, reflective and differentiated pedagogy, as well as community and collaborative praxis. The successful combination of these components, in concert with loving service and justice, results in communities characterized by wholesome inclusiveness (or *shalom*).

The experience of the L'Arche community where care and support are offered to people with special needs, not as an act of benevolence, but as an act of faithful, loving response was portrayed as concrete evidence that the "*Shalom* Model of Inclusion" can be actualized in the school setting. The importance of compassion, which pervaded Jesus' earthly ministry, is highlighted in connection with the experience of the L'Arche communities where love and compassion go together resulting in *shalom*. It was, pointed out in the paper that compassion is indispensable for lowering student stress, and improving school success outcomes.

There are negative consequences of the disregard of this biblically based incarnational model of inclusion, a model which unites the best of Christian virtues and ethical norms with the best of educational principles and practices. The failure of special education professionals and other stakeholders to abide by the bedrock ethical principles of justice and inclusion, as well as

incarnationality, and the foundational moral virtue of love (*agape*), has the potential to lead to a continued decline in the quality of educational performance, rise in litigations, rise in teacher attrition, lack of student flourishing, and lack of teacher thriving which is not in the best interest of the future of society.

Conversely, infusing best practices with the “*Shalom* Model of Inclusion” which includes the biblical and ethical principles of justice, inclusion, incarnationality, compassion, and love (*agape*) through the work of the Spirit, creates the *shalom* community that portends the flourishing of students with disabilities, and the thriving of practitioners, while affirming the value and contribution of every child and teacher, all who have been created with *Imago Dei* capacities.

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PROPHETIC LAMENT: A CALL FOR JUSTICE IN TROUBLED TIMES (SOONG-CHAN RAH)
BY GLEN KINOSHITA

Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times by Soong-Chan Rah is a commentary on the book of Lamentations and is a recent publication in the Resonate series, a series of publications which seeks to address the need to bring the biblical message to Christ-followers in a culturally relevant manner.

The fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. paints the backdrop for the content of the book of Lamentations. The Israelites, once prosperous in their land, are now captive to the Babylonians. This causes many questions to arise in the minds of the Israelites. Where is God at a time such as this? Is there hope for our future?

Lament is the proper response to such a crisis. In the opening chapter, Rah addresses genres found in the Old Testament, one being poetry: “Old Testament scholar Claus Westermann situates the Hebrew poetic material into two broad categories: praise and lament. Westermann asserts that ‘as the two poles, they determine the nature of all speaking to God.’ Psalms that express worship for the good things that God has done are categorized as praise hymns. Laments are prayers of petition arising out of need” (p. 21). Lament is thus found throughout the Psalms as well as much of the Old Testament. By writing this commentary on Lamentations, Rah seeks to make lament a visible and prominent theme to the reader.

Prophetic Lament is also a commentary on contemporary culture as it relates to the Church and challenges the Church to confront its deficiencies. After making the point that lament is a significant theme throughout the Bible and Hebrew literature, Rah emphasizes that churches in the United States typically do not emphasize or engage in lament. Currently, a culture of triumphalism and exceptionalism permeates the church. In addressing this imbalance, Rah writes, “American Christians that flourish under the existing system seek to maintain the existing dynamics of inequality and remain in the theology of celebration over and against the theology of suffering. Promoting one perspective over the other, however, diminishes our theological discourse” (p. 23). By neglecting lament, we lose a gospel that is holistic and in turn embrace the culture around us that maintains injustice and oppression. Lament requires us to face the reality of injustice and thus causes us to turn to God for hope.

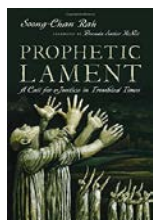
Rah highlights racial injustice in our nation throughout the book as a prime example of how lament should be applied. In particular, many in the African American community have been rendered invisible because they do not fit into the dominant narrative in the West. After some background on the events leading up to racial unrest in our nation (i.e. the deaths of Mike Brown, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner and the

uprising in Ferguson in response to court cases involving the use of force by police officers), several points are offered as to how the events suffered by Jerusalem in Lamentations applies to this recent situation. The non-indictments in the court cases make it essential that we make a priority of hearing from those in the African American community, especially those of African American women who have lost their sons at the hands of police brutality. Rah makes the case that in Lamentations we hear a wide variety of voices, particularly the “voices of those in our society who often bear the greatest burden of suffering” (p. 207). The relevance of applying *Prophetic Lament* to racial injustice is as timely as ever.

Throughout the book, the theme of “shalom” (Hebrew for well-being) arises and its connection to lament. In summing up the many aspects of suffering in lament, Rah writes, “True reconciliation, justice, and shalom require a remembering of suffering, an unearthing of a shameful history and a willingness to enter into lament. Lament calls for an authentic encounter with the truth and challenges privilege, because privilege would hide the truth that creates discomfort” (p. 58). In another section of the book Rah comments, “Trust in God’s sovereignty leads to a hope in new life and transformation ordained by God. This new life is characterized by the shalom of God” (p. 105). Hope is tied to the concept of shalom. The significance here is that lament is not an end in itself but a path to a fuller experience with God and faith community: “Shalom requires lament” (p. 21).

Despite the relevance of the content in *Prophetic Lament*, much of the application Rah focuses on is a ministry context. Educators who read this book must frame the content of *Prophetic Lament* into their vocational context. Whether in the classroom, constructing assignments, or dealing with students face to face, the practice of biblical lament can be utilized in the context of education. The classroom must become a safe space for brave conversations. Rah focuses on application to the Church in the West; however, the issue of triumphalism is found in churches around the world, not just in the West. One example of triumphalism is the prosperity gospel, which can also be found in many Christian circles, not just in the U.S. but also around the globe. The message of *Prophetic Lament* is thus applicable beyond a western domestic context. Readers can therefore contextualize these timely principles to a global context.

Rah does a commendable job providing biblical background and making connections with regard to the fall of Jerusalem from its original historical context to contemporary events, thereby connecting the reader to both worlds: the biblical world and the world we currently live in. A major benefit of *Prophetic Lament* is its overarching challenge to consider how our biblical frame of reference may be in need of being expanded. Paradigm shifts and engaging in critical thought can lead to growth and spiritual formation that is truly transformative. Thus *Prophetic Lament* invites the reader to enter a journey of deep reflection and change.



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Soong-Chan Rah

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