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BETHEL UNIVERSITY
BETHEL SEMINARY ST. PAUL

ADVOCACY FOR A BIBLICAL AND COMMUNICATION BASED
INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCY COURSE
FOR SEMINARY EDUCATION

A THESIS PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE
IN SERVANT LEADERSHIP

BY
PHILIP H. FRAZIER
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

May 2015

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GLOSSARY

Competency Related Terms

Competence: In communication theory, interpersonal competence is the ability to appropriately participate in and sustain dialogue with another person.

Competencies: In this project, competencies are six established interpersonal communication components that characterize effective dialogue. The six competencies are hereinafter referred to as “Bochner and Kelly” competencies, are listed in designated order below. *

Empathy: To perceive and understand an issue from another person’s point of view, while understanding that one’s own point of view may differ significantly or completely.

Descriptiveness: The ability to engage appropriately in turn taking dialogue and conversation.

Owning Feelings and Thoughts: Taking responsibility for one’s emotions and thoughts. This competency is best expressed with statements beginning with “I”.

Self-disclosure: One person voluntarily telling another individual personal information that the receiver could not otherwise know. Appropriate Self-disclosure is personal information revealed in an interpersonal context based on trust and a healthy state of the relationship with another.

Behavioral Flexibility: The capacity to relate and communicate in new or diverse ways based on changing contexts. Theoretically, the other four skills of empathy, descriptiveness, owning and self-disclosure should affect one’s behavioral flexibility.

Authenticity: Awareness of dissonance between intrapersonal states and interpersonal communication. Discernment of when and where authentic expression is appropriate in a given context.

General Glossary Terms

Dialogue: Face-to-face conversation between two persons where both persons talk and listen with respect and civility.

Disconfirmation: A process or act of ignoring or refusing to acknowledge another individual or the process of dismissing or discounting what another person says.

Dyad: Interpersonal communication between two persons as opposed to three or more.

Dyadic primacy: The tendency of persons in small groups to initiate or engage in dyadic communication.

Monologue: Self-serving speech by a person who monopolizes conversation.

Rhetoric: Public speaking, preaching, or dyadic communication with intent to convince or persuade.

Relational Communication: In this project, communication that involves dyads or small groups of people gathered to talk and listen.

Social Penetration: The breadth and depth of interpersonal disclosure in a dyad. Breadth indicates the number of topics addressed; depth indicates the intensity and intimacy of personal revelation.

ABSTRACT

This project advocates for a change in communication course teaching for Baptist and independent seminaries in the United States and Canada. The researcher used a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative processes to analyze communication course offerings available to master of divinity students in 59 Baptist and independent seminaries. Statistical data revealed that persuasion based preaching and evangelism courses exponentially outnumbered all forms of relational communication courses. Seminary courses on interpersonal communication constituted less than three percent of master of divinity communication course offerings.

A focus group with Christian master of communication course graduates provided qualitative data on the continuing positive impact and efficacy of the course in their personal and professional interpersonal contexts. The qualitative data also contained unanimous recommendation from all participants for master of divinity programs to offer an advanced interpersonal communication course for all persons in professional ministry.

The literature review focused on interpersonal competence theories and theorists with an explication of the narrative paradigm analysis approach of Walter Fisher. The biblical component of the research project used six interpersonal competency skills and Fisher's narrative paradigm to analyze the Prologue, two dialogic interaction narratives of Jesus, and the final chapter from the Gospel of John.

DEDICATION

To Leta:
For our 58 year marriage sojourn together
For being my constant companion through this project

*Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
He who said "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"*

From Robert Browning: *Rabbi Ben Ezra*

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

Statement of the Problem

The problem this project addressed was to establish and meet the need for an interpersonal communication course for Master of Divinity programs in Baptist seminaries.

In response to this problem, the researcher (a) reviewed relevant academic interpersonal competency literature, (b) establish a New Testament basis for Christian dialogical engagement, (c) researched current Baptist seminary communication teaching data, (d) analyzed qualitative focus group data on the personal and professional impact and efficacy of a Master's course in Interpersonal Communication, and (e) developed a theological, competency based, interpersonal communication course prospectus for master of divinity programs.

Delimitations of the Problem

The project is limited to presentation of communication course teaching data from the original survey sample of fifty-nine seminaries. No distinction is made between accreditation requirements and levels of the seminaries from the two accrediting agencies of the American Association of Theological Schools and the Transnational Association of Christian Schools. The project did not address the theological differences of the seminaries included in the survey. The project included both qualitative and quantitative data in a mixed method research process.

Assumptions

The first assumption was that Old and New Testament Scriptures are divinely inspired, authoritative, and totally sufficient for Christian faith and practice. The second assumption was that the primary mission mandate of the Church is clear and competent communication to every person, in every context, that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord of all humankind. The third assumption was that all human communication can be taught and learned. The fourth assumption was that seminary communication course curriculum in any context is always subject to update and revision. The fifth assumption was that John the son of Zebedee is the author of the Gospel of John.

Subproblems

The first subproblem of the project was to complete a review of two components of relational communication literature. The specific fields of interpersonal communication competence literature and that of Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm were examined. The second subproblem established a New Testament basis for teaching interpersonal competence by examining dialogic interactions of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of John. The third and fourth subproblems involved collection of qualitative and quantitative data on seminary communication course offerings. Quantitative data was collected on seminary communication course curriculum from fifty-nine Baptist and independent seminaries. Qualitative data was derived from a focus group of communication master's degree students on the personal and professional impact and efficacy of a master's level interpersonal communication course. The fifth subproblem analyzed and explicated results from the quantitative and qualitative data. The sixth

subproblem developed a prospectus for an interpersonal communication course for seminary master of divinity students.

Setting of the Project

The research setting of the project was an examination and review of current seminary communication course offerings. Fifty-nine selected Baptist and independent seminary catalogues in the United States and Canada revealed five hundred sixty-nine rhetoric and persuasion communication course offerings. Only seventy-eight courses were offered from relational and interpersonal communication categories. The ratio of less than 14 percent of relational courses to rhetorical and persuasion courses revealed a severe lack of relational communication courses available in Master of Divinity seminary curriculum.

The setting for this project is centered on advocating for balance in development and teaching of relational and interpersonal communication courses for seminary education. Communication literature from academic, theological, and philosophical fields were examined as a basis for development of an interpersonal communication course for seminary Master of Divinity degree education.

The Importance of the Project

The Importance of the Project to the Researcher

This researcher, a Master of Divinity graduate, served as pastor in independent and American Baptist churches for 24 years and has since taught interpersonal communication courses at Bethel University in undergraduate and master's courses for twenty-five years. Reading and conversation with seminary students on the Master's level brought into focus a growing awareness that communication teaching in seminaries had

not changed from a primary rhetorical-persuasion based approach since the researcher's graduation 46 years ago.

Most communication education and training for this researcher, other than what was taught in seminary, was acquired in the study and teaching of interpersonal communication. This teaching, especially on a graduate level, created a conviction that master's level adult students at Bethel University in the field of communication were more equipped in the area of interpersonal communication than Master of Divinity students.

The Master of Divinity degree is a primary preparation for leadership in multiple fields of ministry. While rhetoric and persuasion are important aspects of communication, they essentially result in positional communication. The work of ministry in a local church calls for a limited number of hours of preaching in a week. In the ministry experience of this writer more time in a week was spent in interpersonal interactions. The lack of education and training in interpersonal communication competency is a seminary curriculum deficiency that needs to be addressed and changed.

The Importance of the Project to the Immediate Ministry Context

This researcher has a long history with Bethel Seminary. As a teacher in pastoral ministry courses under the leadership of Nils Friberg and Dean Millard Erickson, he developed an abiding concern and respect for the school. Added ministry experience in preaching, licensed marriage and family therapy and teaching, provide an acute awareness of the centrality of relational communication competence in any ministry setting.

Teaching communication in graduate and undergraduate courses for the past twenty-five years provides the theoretical background for relational course development on a seminary level. New awareness and learning in the Doctor of Ministry in Servant Leadership program provides additional experience suitable for development of a seminary course in interpersonal communication competence.

The Importance of the Project to the Wider Academic Community

The initial course project in the Servant Leadership program researched catalogues for communication curriculum offerings in fifty-nine Baptist and independent seminaries. The accumulated data shows an out of balance curriculum in communication courses offered in Master of Divinity programs in Baptist and independent seminaries in the United States and Canada. Rhetoric and persuasion courses far surpass the relational aspects of seminary communication teaching. In the 1960s Reuel Howe at the Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies addressed this imbalance but failed to bring about change.

Ministry leadership in a world with new communication venues creates a growing need for interpersonal skills and abilities. This researcher proposes to develop a biblically based, interpersonal communication course for seminary education in Baptist and independent schools in the United States and Canada.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review for Interpersonal Competence is divided into three major sections. The first section covers the emergence of the concept of interpersonal communication competence developed between the 1960s and the late 1980s. This first section of the literature focuses on the theorists who refined and explored the competence concept and how they developed varied and competing lists of competency components.

The second section focuses on a concentration after 1988 to a growing dyadic emphasis in interpersonal competence literature. This focus on face-to-face communication examines the philosophical underpinnings of dialogic competence. This second wave of dialogic theory is examined and integrated with the early competence writings. In this synthesis the writing of Bochner and Kelly emerges to provide a dyadic competence approach for this project.

The third section of this chapter is a literature review of the narrative paradigm textual analysis approach of Walter Fisher. Fisher contends that all communication is based on story. He perceives humans as those who make decisions on the basis of narrative rationality found in the coherence and fidelity of stories. He believes humans from every historical context have rational criteria for determining the reliability, truth and trustworthiness of narratives. Coherence is determined by whether or not a story is free of contradictions and believable. Fidelity consists of how the story relates to knowledge and experience and how it demonstrates soundness in the reasoning and values of the story. Fisher contrasts the narrative paradigm with the rational world

paradigm which depends on, training, logic, specialized knowledge, and reasoned argument.

Interpersonal Communication Competence

In their *Handbook of Interpersonal Competence Research*, Brian Spitzberg and William Cupach produced a comprehensive review of literature on Interpersonal Competence research.¹ In addressing the issue of competence, they find more questions than answers.

The disparate and fragmented writings about competence are partially the result of the sheer breadth of the competence concept. The relevant questions being addressed cover an immense territory. These include (but are not limited to) the following issues. (1) What is competence? What are its constituent components? (2) What personal characteristics, traits abilities and mental processes facilitate or impede the development and display of competence? (3) What overt behaviors and behavioral patterns are considered competent? (4) How are attributions of competence made? (5) What are the consequences of competence and incompetence? (6) What methods of training/teaching are effective in promoting competency?²

After presenting these broad questions, Spitzberg and Cupach highlight two conclusions about communication competency. First, they state that the various approaches to competence have produced a huge and fragmented literature. They cite a plethora of labels and terms used to designate the notion or concept of competency. A few of the descriptive terms are interpersonal competence, communicative competence, social competence, psychosocial competence, social skill, environmental competence, heterosocial competence, and relational competence.³ Adding to the complexity of these

¹ Brian Spitzberg and William Cupach, *Handbook of Interpersonal Competence Research*, New York: Springer-Verlag, 1989.

² Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 4.

³ Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 4.

terms, the point is made that different researchers use the same terms to represent different phenomena.⁴

Second, they agree with other authors that a single acceptable definition of competence is elusive, if not impossible:

Undaunted by the absence of specific definitions or criteria we have developed instruments that purport to select and measure people on “it”; indeed, we have treatment programs for people who do not have “it,” and still that mysterious “it” eludes specification.⁵

Trying to define competence is like trying to climb a greased pole. Every time you think you have it, it slips. For one thing “competence” is not a thing. It is an evaluation. ... In the final crunch it is an act of criticism, not science, for when we evaluate someone as “competent” it is a judgment call applied to something observed or the answer to some questions.⁶

While not offering a specific definition of competence, Spitzberg and Cupach settle on interpersonal competence as the general term that best describes the process whereby people effectively deal with each other. In the light of overall literature use of approaches to competence, Spitzberg and Cupach settle on three synonyms they see distinguishing variations subsumed under the term, interpersonal competence.

Social competence is a parallel term defined as “adequacy of behavior in interpersonal interactions...”⁷ Communicative competence, is used to imply a focus on

⁴ Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 2.

⁵ Judith Conger and Anthony Conger, “Components of Heterosocial Competence,” in *Social Skills Training*, ed. James Curran and Peter Monti. (New York: Guilford Press, 1982): 314.

⁶ Gerald Phillips, “A Competent View of Competence,” *Communication Education* 33 no. 1 (January 1984): 25.

⁷ Leonard Burns and Amerigo Farina, “Social Competence and Adjustment,” *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 1 no. 1 (March 1984): 99.

appropriate symbolic behavior manifested in social and interpersonal contexts.⁸ The third term, relational competence, refers to one's ability to establish and maintain satisfying relationships,⁹ or to appear competent in the context of a particular relationship.¹⁰ In this literature review, the general term, interpersonal competence, is accepted as the definitive term.

Spitzberg and Cupach make an important distinction in the interpersonal competence conceptualizations when they state that two primary features of competence are addressed in most of the early literature. In one view of competence, the issue of effectiveness is central. "Effectiveness derives from control and is defined as successful goal achievement or task accomplishment. In this sense, it is also closely related to satisfaction or maximizing rewards relative to costs, ... the attainment of desired outcomes."¹¹ This early literature emphasis on effectiveness and control later morphed into the concept of "interaction management." The significance of this important concept is examined later in this review.

The second feature in interpersonal competence described by Spitzberg and Cupach is the conceptualization they entitle appropriateness. "Appropriateness reflects tact or politeness and is defined as the avoidance of violating social or interpersonal

⁸ Rebecca Rubin, "Assessing Speaking and Listening Competence at the College Level: The Communication Competency Assessment Instrument," *Communication Education* 31 no. 1 (January, 1982): 19.

⁹ Duane Buhrmester, Wyndol Furhman, and Harry Reis, "Five Domains of Interpersonal Competence in Peer Relations," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 55 no. 6 (December 1988): 992.

¹⁰ Brian Spitzberg and Michael Hecht, "A Component Model of Relational Competence," *Human Communication Research* 10 no. 4 (June 1984): 576.

¹¹ Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 7.

norms, rules or expectations.”¹² In reading the two conceptions of interpersonal competence given above, there is a clear distinction in approach and style related to the difference in effectiveness and appropriateness. Effectiveness is self-focused on outcomes; appropriateness is relationally and other focused. These distinctions are foundational and are central to the theoretical approaches expressed in the literature.

In reviewing the contrast between the individual control aspect of effectiveness and the relational approach of appropriateness, Spitzberg and Cupach conclude that there are actually three overall themes that emerge in subsequent writing. These three themes are explored before the literature review moves past the early years into the present.

Early Interpersonal Competence Themes: Control

In early interpersonal competence literature, the theme of control is advocated and emphasized by many authors. The phrase, “interpersonal competence,” coined by Foote and Cottrell, insists that control is what allows an individual to be interpersonally effective.¹³ Wiemann and Kelly also asserted early that control is power:

Interpersonal competence is essentially found in relational contexts in which individuals have sufficient power over their own actions and the actions of others that they may set, pursue, and achieve the interpersonal objectives deemed necessary for a mutually satisfying exchange with their social environment.¹⁴

Spitzberg and Cupach, in summarizing the researchers and the components of control contend that in interpersonal encounters control is useful in the process of achieving goals. They clearly state that only by manipulating the responses of others can

¹² Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 7.

¹³ Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 18.

¹⁴ John Wiemann and Clifford Kelly, “Pragmatics of Interpersonal Competence,” in *Essays From the Legacy of Gregory Bateson*. Ed. Carol Wilder-Mott and John Weakland. (New York: Praeger 1982): 292.

one accomplish social and interpersonal goals. Traits listed from their research as helpful in interpersonal competence control include autonomy, creativity, empathy, health, intelligence, judgment, assertiveness, self-esteem, and even Machiavellianism.¹⁵

Spitzberg and Cupach do not perceive control as a negative aspect of interpersonal competence. They document that control is found and reflected to some degree in virtually all early conceptualizations of interpersonal competence. “Authors are usually quick to point out that there is nothing inherently pernicious or immoral about the concept of control. It is a natural and intrinsic characteristic of human interaction, and the concept of control per se is value-free.”¹⁶

Early Interpersonal Competence Themes: Collaboration

The second significant theme addressed in the emerging interpersonal competency literature is collaboration. As the literature on competence developed, the disparity between the extreme control aspect of effectiveness (Machiavellianism) and the relational approach of appropriateness became more obvious. The issue of collaboration emerged as a middle way to merge the two approaches.

As Wiemann argued, “Effectiveness in an intrapersonal sense – that is, the accomplishment of an individual’s goals – may be incompetent in an interpersonal sense if such effectiveness precludes the possibility of others accomplishing their own goals.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 19

¹⁶ Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 20.

¹⁷ John Wiemann, “Explication and Test of a Model of Communicative Competence,” *Human Communication Research* 3 no. 3 (March 1977): 196.

The amalgamation of control and relationship in the literature recognized that interpersonal competence requires communication behavior that is appropriate as well as effective. Neither aspect could function effectively alone. Spitzberg and Cupach note that being appropriate does not entail effectiveness, and being effective does not necessarily entail appropriateness.¹⁸ An example of effectiveness without appropriateness was illustrated by Berger and Bradac in the statement: “He gets what he wants but he is a #!**. ”¹⁹ [*sic*]

Weimann gives an extended, but clear, statement of the need for a collaborative stance:

That is, on the one hand the competent communicator has been visualized as either completely selfish or Machiavellian in interaction with others. (e.g. the stereotypical used car salesman). On the other hand the competent communicator is seen as selfless and chameleon-like, constantly adapting uncritically to every bit of environmental data. An appropriate definition of communication competence falls between these two extremes. The competent communicator must be concerned with personal goals and outcomes, but at the same time must take the other's needs, goals and outcomes into account. ... A further implication of this concern is that communicative competence is a *dyadic* concept— it is not enough to consider only one participant's goals and outcomes; goals and outcomes of all participants in the encounter must be taken into account in order to assess the effectiveness of any individual's performance.²⁰ [original emphasis]

Early Interpersonal Competence Themes: Adaptability

The third significant theme that emerged in the early interpersonal competency literature is adaptability. A common synonym for adaptability is behavior flexibility. Spitzberg and Cupach note that behavior flexibility is possibly the single most frequently

¹⁸ Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 21.

¹⁹ Charles Berger and James Bradac, “Language and Social Knowledge: Uncertainty in Interpersonal Relations,” *Language in Society* 13 no. 1 (London: Edward Arnold): 71.

²⁰ John Wiemann, “Needed Research and Training in Speaking and Listening Literacy,” *Communication Education* 27 no. 4 (November 1978): 315.

used characteristic associated with the socially competent person.²¹ They cite the work of Bochner and Kelly along with the writing of Moment and Zalski, Steffen and Redden, Sundberg, Snowman, and Reynolds, and Wieman. To support behavior flexibility as a highly significant theme in the literature, Spitzberg and Cupach also address significant research that associates behavior rigidity with social incompetence.

Behavioral repertoire constitutes an individual's strategic and tactical options during interaction. Flexibility implies matching one's responses to one's goals as well as tailoring responses to the constraints and exigencies of the particular situation. In essence, flexibility involves the adaptation of actions to the physical, social and relational context.²²

In a closing summary of early themes in competence literature, Spitzberg and Cupach affirm that interpersonal competence is concerned with how individuals interact effectively with one another through constructs of skill, knowledge, and motivation. They emphasize that the themes of control, collaboration, and adaptability emerge as enduring and consistent foundational themes in competence literature.²³

Between 1961 and 1988 various theorists did take on the challenge to identify the communication components involved in competent dyadic interaction. Joseph DeVito in 1995 provided a summary of the competency components identified by major theorists in *The Interpersonal Communication Book*:²⁴

In his discussion of theorists DeVito makes an important distinction between a soft approach and a hard approach to communication competence. He calls the soft

²¹ Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 22.

²² Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 22.

²³ Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 28.

²⁴ Joseph DeVito, *The Interpersonal Communication Book*, 7th ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), 102.

approach a “humanistic approach.”²⁵ The five general qualities he details are: Openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality. He characterizes this approach as one “humanists and philosophers feel define superior human relationships.”²⁶ The hard approach he calls a “Pragmatic model ”which “focuses on specific behaviors that a speaker or listener should use to gain his or her desired outcome.”²⁷ The five components of the hard approach are:” effectiveness, confidence, immediacy, interaction management, expressiveness and other-orientation.”²⁸

DeVito’s descriptions follow the two earlier distinctions by Spitzberg and Cupach. The soft approach is based on Appropriateness (collaboration). The hard approach is based on Effectiveness (control). Elements from both approaches appear in the listings of the major theorists presented by DeVito in the table below. The first three from, 1961 to 1974, represent a softer approach. The second three insist on more control, a hard approach. The main difference is the use of the term Interaction Management in the lists from 1977 to 1998. The table below summarizes the competency components listed by each of the major theorists. Italic emphasis is provided for the Interaction Management focus from 1977 to 1988.

²⁵ DeVito, 106.

²⁶ DeVito, 106.

²⁷ DeVito, 112.

²⁸ DeVito, 112.

Table 1. Communication Competency Lists 1961-1988

Gibb (1961)	Hart and Burks (1972)	Bochner and Kelly (1974)
Empathy rather than neutrality Equality rather than superiority Spontaneity rather than strategy Description rather than evaluation Provisionalism rather than superiority Problem orientation rather than control	Acceptance of personal complexity Flexibility Interaction consciousness Appreciation of the complexity of ideas Tolerance of different ways to Communicate	Empathy Descriptiveness Owning feelings and thoughts Self-disclosure Behavior flexibility
Wiemann (1977)	Spitzberg and Hecht (1984)	Rubin and Nevins (1988)
Affiliation and support Social relaxation Empathy Behavior Flexibility <i>Interaction Management skills</i>	Absence of social anxiety Immediacy Expressiveness <i>Interaction Management</i> Other-orientation	Empathy Self-disclosure Social relaxation Assertiveness <i>Interaction Management</i> Altercentrism (other orientation) Expressiveness Supportiveness Immediacy Environmental control

Jack Gibb 1961

Competency theory development by Gibb appeared in a journal article in 1961. He developed his positive competency guidelines by an examination of a defensive attitude and behavior in interpersonal interaction. His explanation focuses on the change that comes about when one person in the dyad moves away from defensiveness into behaviors that produce interpersonal competence in both attitude and communication behavior. Gibb explains:

One way to understand communication is to view it as a people process rather than a language process. If one is to make fundamental improvement in communication, one must make changes in interpersonal relationships. One possible type of alteration—and the one with which this paper is concerned—is that of reducing the degree of defensiveness. . . . Arousing defensiveness interferes with communication and thus makes it difficult—and sometimes impossible—for anyone to convey ideas clearly and to move effectively toward the solution of therapeutic, educational, or managerial problems.²⁹

Subsequent theorists expand all of Gibb's concepts. His competency components of empathy and description appear in other theorists and the general concepts of avoidance of control or superiority are clear.

Roderick Hart and Don Burks 1972

In 1972, Hart and Burks developed a set of interpersonal competencies from a rhetorical perspective.³⁰ They based interpersonal competency on rhetorically sensitive adaptation of communication in interpersonal exchanges. They contrast their conscious, rhetorically responsible speech acts approach with what they call an overly intimate approach. They characterize their rhetorical approach as antithetical to an impulsive expressivism or unrestrained spontaneous intensity. There is a hint of superiority in Hart and Burks as they critique any approach that displays what they perceive as an exaggerated a sense of responsibility for another person.³¹

²⁹ Jack Gibb, "Defensive Communication," *The Journal of Communication* 11 no. 3 (September 1961): 141-43.

³⁰ Roderick Hart and Don Burks, "Rhetorical Sensitivity and Social Interaction," *Speech Monographs* 39 no. 2 (June 1972): 76-88.

³¹ Hart and Burks, 75-6.

Hart and Burks do discuss issues of appropriate flexibility, self-disclosure, adaptability of expression and constant awareness of the complexity and tolerance needed for competent dialogue.³² These characteristics are also reflected in other theorists.

Arthur Bochner and Clifford Kelly 1974

In 1974 Bochner and Kelly developed a five-component theory of interpersonal competence. They were convinced that “communication students should not be restricted to learning public speaking but should also learn about, experience, and modify their interpersonal skills.”³³

They expressed the need for a rationale, a philosophy and a conceptual framework for teaching interpersonal competence. In light of their approach they set out to answer two questions. “What specific abilities should students have when they have mastered interpersonal communication skills? What behaviors are essential for proficiency in interpersonal Communication?”³⁴ Their conviction about the student need for interpersonal competence and the answer to the questions culminated in their component model of competency.

While no single competency listed by Bochner and Kelly is absent from the other lists in the table above, their list constitutes a unique combination of competency components that build on each other. The first four competencies empathy, descriptiveness, self-disclosure and owning feelings and thoughts are all component parts of the fifth competency of behavior flexibility. The fifth competency also addresses

³² Hart and Burks, 3-4.

³³ Arthur Bochner and Robert Kelly, “Interpersonal Competency Rationale, Philosophy, and Implementation of a Conceptual Framework,” *The Speech Teacher* 39 no. 4 (September 1974): 279.

³⁴ Bochner and Kelly, *Framework*, 279.

competent communication in diverse intercultural contexts. Overall, the Bochner and Kelly theoretical approach is strengthened by the inclusion of the instructional component absent from the work of other competence theorists.

Following the work of Gibb, Hart and Burks and Bochner and Kelly there were at least three other significant authors of competence theory. These are notable in the literature for inclusion of interaction management as a component not accepted by the first three theorists. Introduction of interaction management as a competency component implied significant change in competency descriptions.

As noted in the early discussion of communication competence theory, a significant dichotomy between effectiveness and appropriateness emerged. From these two approaches Spitzberg and Hecht modified competency research into the three significant themes of control, collaboration and adaptability. In the subsequent theory development of Gibb, Hart and Burks and Bochner and Kelly the aspect of appropriateness was accepted over that of control. From this emphasis on appropriateness came acceptance and incorporation of the relational aspects of collaboration and adaptability. The primal aspect of control was not included in the list of competencies by any of the three initial theorists.

The three later lists of competency components included in the table above revived the control aspect by inclusion of interaction management as a key competency. Wiemann, Spitzberg and Hecht, Rubin and Nevins, all insisted that interaction management was a necessary component for any list of interpersonal competencies.

John Wiemann 1977

In the literature of competence the issue of interaction management is given several interpretations. Weimann, included interaction management as one of his five dimensions of communication competency.³⁵ His approach to interaction management moves well away from the early control aspects of communication that could come close to Machiavellianism. He takes a more moderate view and connects interaction management to “other orientation” sensitivity in the interpersonal exchanges. He does not perceive competence as completely selfless or completely other orientated.

This notion of mutual satisfaction with the self/situation definition leaves open the possibility that one interactant may be able to persuade the other to accept a specific definition – such as persuasion is well within the bounds of competent communication *if* the outcome is functional for the long-term maintenance of the social relationship. ... communicative competence can be defined as the ability of an interactant to choose among available communicative behaviors in order that he may successfully accomplish his own interpersonal goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line of his fellow interactants with in the constraints of the situation.³⁶ [original emphasis]

In further characterization of the components of interaction management Wiemann agrees with Argyle that “establishing a smooth and easy pattern of interaction and the ability to maintain control of the interaction without dominating” was important.³⁷ Wiemann emphasizes interaction management behavior that prohibits interruptions, has one person talking at a time, turn-taking in talking, and avoidance of pauses by giving full attention to the encounter.³⁸ Wiemann is insistent that “interaction

³⁵ Wiemann, Explication and Test 197.

³⁶ Wiemann, Explication and Test 198.

³⁷ Michael Argyle, *Social Interaction* (London: Tavistock, 1969): 327-28.

³⁸ Wiemann, Explication and Test 199.

management is concerned with the “procedural” aspects that structure and maintain an interaction.”³⁹

These include initiation and termination of the encounter, the allocation of speaking turns, and control of topics discussed. Skillful interaction management is defined as the ability to handle these procedural matters in a manner that is mutually satisfactory to all participants. There is more evidence relating to interaction management skills to communication competence than is available for any of the previously discussed components of the model. ... Based on the evidence, interaction management is the *sine qua non* of competence.

While the first four competencies listed by Wiemann are compatible with the three earlier competency lists examined it is obvious that interaction management is central to his thinking and to his perception of both the theory and practice of communication competence. Further discussion and analysis of his viewpoint follows after examination of the next two competency theorists.

Brian Spitzberg and Michael Hecht 1984

In 1984 Spitzberg and Hecht presented a review of their components of interpersonal competence. Their presentation of the five competency components is based on a skills approach. “We believe that a skill is the successful performance of a communication behavior. The assumption is that if the behavior is performed, there must be an underlying skill that allows the person the ability to repeat such a behavior.”⁴⁰

Again, four of the Spitzberg and Hecht components are parallel with competency components found in other theorists examined in this literature review. The issue of interaction management is, again, the component that differs. In the discussion of interaction management the emphasis is on skill. “Interaction management concerns the

³⁹ Wiemann, Explication and Test 199.

⁴⁰ Spitzberg and Hecht, 577.

degree to which the conversation setting, turn-taking and episodic punctuation patterns are controlled to the satisfaction of interactants involved.”⁴¹

The initial article examined is primarily concerned with measuring issues of motivation, knowledge and skills and did little more than list and briefly describe each competency by Spitzberg and Hecht. Spitzberg does add significant insight about the tension between the relational aspects of competence and the efficiency-based component of interaction management.

The facts of composure and altercentrism [other directedness] seem to bear a certain resemblance to the autonomy/independence and intimacy/dependence dimensions of the relationship dialectics literature. Composure or self, carries with it a sense of mastery, internal locus of control, self-esteem, independence, confidence and assertiveness. Altercentrism, or other directedness is suggestive of attentiveness, empathy, concern, intimacy, and involvement. ...It is possible that this basic distinction is at the heart of what is actually intended by the notion of relational competence. That is, mastery of distinct yet complementary skills and competencies may be needed for both the autonomy and the intimacy dimensions of relational functioning.⁴²

The quote above while including altercentrism (other directedness) still insists on the primacy of the control elements of self, mastery, internal locus of control, self esteem, independence, confidence and assertiveness included in interaction management.

Rebecca Rubin and Randy Nevins 1988

The last theoretical list of interpersonal competencies examined is that of Rubin and Nevins. It is interesting to note that they have included twice as many competency components as most of the previous theorists.

⁴¹ Spitzberg and Hecht, 578.

⁴² Brian Spitzberg, “The Construct Validity of Trait-Based Measures of Interpersonal Competence,” *Communication Research Reports* 7 no. 2 (April 1990): 113.

Unlike the other academic sources, their book is a fictitious narrative of a road trip with communication students who attempt to depict real life examples of each of the competencies.⁴³ The book is interesting, but not a good theoretical source for the academic explication of the ten competencies listed by Rubin and Nevins. What is significant about the list is the fact Interaction management is included in the list.

After Rubin and Nevins, communication competence becomes a recognized aspect of interpersonal communication discussion in Interpersonal textbooks. An example is that noted above, by Joseph DeVito. His competency listing, coming after that of Rubin and Nevins, is a compendium containing fifteen competency elements. Like the last three theorists examined above, DeVito also includes interaction management in his list.

Synthesis and Discussion of Competency Theorists

Before moving into the current competence literature and a central focus on the dyadic context it is appropriate to synthesize the early literature reviewed above.

Starting with Gibb in 1961 it is obvious that his early proposal for competencies was based on avoiding defensiveness in communication. In offering alternatives he came up with aspects of interpersonal communication that were later recognized and labeled as competencies. An apt metaphor is that Gibb started down a familiar path then took a new fork in the road that lead to an intriguing new destination. Gibb opened the door to the idea of listing competencies and, interestingly enough, he listed five that are all incorporated into subsequent competency lists.

⁴³ Rebecca Rubin and Randy Nevins, *The Road Trip: An Interpersonal Adventure* (Long Grove, IL 1988).

Hart and Burks, more than a decade later had the advantage a growing body of literature on competency. The competencies listed by Hart and Burks add to those from Gibb. Their one competency that shows up in most of the following literature is that of flexibility. Their article on rhetorical sensitivity was not precisely focused on dyadic interaction and in their article abstract they state, “at the present time the principles of rhetorical sensitivity are not viewed as behavioral guidelines useful for measuring interpersonal competence.”⁴⁴

Bochner and Kelly in 1974 are the first communication theorists to develop a concrete list of five interpersonal competencies that are based on communicative dyadic behaviors. Of all competency models listed in this literature review, it is significant that Bochner and Kelly developed their competency list in a framework of interpersonal communication theory. As noted, they produced a rationale, a philosophy and a conceptual framework for teaching interpersonal competence.

Spitzberg and Cupach quote only Bochner and Kelly for an acceptable definition of competence. “In general terms, interpersonal competence is typically defined as the ability of a person to interact effectively with other people.”⁴⁵

In sorting out the multiple theorists and their list of competencies the Bochner and Kelly list contains five elements that are all covered exactly or by a synonym in all the other lists. They also work at developing a competency rationale, an overall interpersonal philosophy, and a conceptual framework for teaching competence that goes beyond the depth and breadth of the other theorists analyzed in this literature review.

⁴⁴ Hart and Burks, 75.

⁴⁵ Spitzberg and Cupach, *Handbook*, 20.

A strength of the Bochner and Kelly theoretical base is that their competency list is consistently relationally based. In going back to the issue of being either efficient or appropriate in an interaction, Bochner and Kelly come down on the side of appropriateness (relational) rather than that of efficiency (power). Based on the strengths listed above, this researcher has settled on use of the competencies of Bochner and Kelly over the lists of the other theorists. They provide relationally based theory within a teaching framework that agrees with competence theory developed by current authors.

In a comparative view of the competency lists of Wiemann, Spitzberg and Hecht, and Rubin and Nevins, one major issue dictates against their acceptance as the theoretical equal of Bochner and Kelly. They insist on including the aspect of interaction management as a component of interpersonal competency. Interaction management descends from the roots of assertiveness, control and power in interactions. The three later lists of Gibb, Hart and Burks and Bochner and Kelly all exclude the aspect of interaction management as a central competency. The distinction by Spitzberg on the aspects of autonomy/independence, (efficiency and management) and intimacy/dependence (relational dyads) still insist on the primacy of interaction management.

One can illustrate this fundamental philosophical difference with the use of this single competency. If one person in a dialogue leans heavily on the empathic aspect of the conversation, and a desire for empathy and openness and the other comes on strong with either an open or hidden agenda for interaction management, then dissonance, disconnection, or even conflict can result.

The very early insistence in this literature review that control, the ultimate basis for interaction management, is perceived by many authors to be “a natural and intrinsic characteristic of human interaction and that control per se is value-free” contrasts directly with more recent theoretical development away from control toward the relational, dyadic approach.

Dyadic Competence Theory 1988 - Present

Since Bochner and Kelly’s initial article on interpersonal competence the use of the term “dialogue” has exploded. Stewart and Zediker say it best:

Like "communication" at mid-century—and for some similar reasons—the term "dialogue" has become in the last decade a favorite of educational reformers, composition scholars, organizational theorists, psychotherapists, political theorists and activists, journalists, feminists, philosophers, and communication teachers and scholars interested in promoting sometimes fundamental changes in practice, teaching, and research. Also like "communication", "dialogue" has suffered from the tendency to be defined so generally that it becomes a synonym for almost all human contact.⁴⁶

In discussing competency in communication the emphasis on dialogue shifts the focus to investigate the area of face-to-face interaction. This shift responds to Bochner and Kelly’s call for the necessity of a dialogic rational for interpersonal competence. Stewart and Zediker develop a twofold dialogic rational found in recent literature. The first, they label as “descriptive.” In the descriptive approach dialogue becomes a synonym for “relational” or “interactional” with the goal of “characterizing the inherent dialogic character of all human life.”⁴⁷

⁴⁶ John Stewart and Karen Zediker, “Dialogue as Tensional Ethical Practice,” *Southern Communication Journal* 65 no. 2 and 3 (Winter and Spring) 2000: 224.

⁴⁷ Stewart and Zediker, 225.

These descriptive versions of dialogue urge theorists and practitioners to understand human beings as irreducibly dyadic or social. ... Dialogue is characterized in these accounts as a prominent, pervasive and consequential feature of the human condition that needs to be acknowledged, articulated and integrated in to understanding.⁴⁸

Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian philosopher, is seen by many as the most prominent descriptive dialogic theorist. In his analysis of Bakhtin, Holquist argues that “dialogism” is the appropriate term for “the interconnected set of concerns that dominates Bakhtin’s thinking. He affirms the centrality of the descriptive, relational aspect of dialogue. He avers that Bakhtin simply sees dialogue as a pervasive, social, relational, interactive character of all human life. Communication advice and proposals for change grow out of these descriptions.”⁴⁹

The single adequate form for *verbally expressing* authentic human existence is the *open-ended dialogue*. Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium”⁵⁰ (original emphasis)

A succinct and clear way of summarizing the descriptive approach to dialogue is that the theorizing is grounded in perceiving life as dialogical and relationally based reality as opposed to a more western emphasis on the individualistic, self centered, perceptions.

The second perspective on dialogue, in the rationale of Stewart and Zediker, is a “prescriptive” approach. This approach seeks to cause dialogic interactions to occur,

⁴⁸ Stewart and Zediker, 225.

⁴⁹ Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002): 15.

⁵⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* ed. and trans. by Caryl Emerson. (Minneapolis: University of Michigan Press.1984): 293. Xliii-333.

rather than acknowledging the dialogic nature of human reality. Dialogue from a prescriptive point of view is an ideal to be striven toward or a goal to be achieved.⁵¹

The progenitor of prescriptive dialogic communication is Martin Buber. In 1926 he wrote *I and Thou*, an enigmatic book that is at the same time poetic and philosophical. A reading of the book makes clear that Buber's differentiation of relational communication is based on the attitude one person in a dyad expresses toward the other person. Buber says there are two stances possible, I-Thou or I-It. In an I-Thou attitude, the dyadic partner is treated relationally as a person to be valued. With an I-It attitude, the dyadic partner is treated as an object to be used. Genuine interpersonal dialogue only occurs in dyads where the person is valued and an I-Thou approach is taken.⁵²

Ronald Arnett makes clear that Buber did not see constant dialogue and I-Thou as the normal pattern for life.

On the contrary, Buber saw monologue (self centered conversation) and technical dialogue (information-centered communication) as dominant in the majority of contemporary conversation. Both monologue and technical dialogue are natural parts of the world in which we live. Buber recognizes that we live in a twofold world of relation. The *I-It* (monologue and technical dialogue) is the world of separation, and the *I-Thou* of dialogue invites the community of relation.⁵³

While prescriptive writers advocate for initiation of dialogic interaction, they do not develop formulas or how to examples of dialogue. Unlike the clear-cut instructions given by a physician or pharmacologist about how to use prescribed medicine,

⁵¹ Stewart and Zediker, 227.

⁵² Martin Buber, *I and Thou* ed, Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970): 53-5.

⁵³ Ronald Arnett, *Communication and Community: Implications of Martin Buber's Dialogue* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press 1986): 62.

prescriptive writers on dialogue do not develop step-by-step courses in dialogic technique.

One reason that most prescriptive writers avoid presenting a list of steps or techniques is that, whatever their differences in emphases, they view dialogue as a *situated relational accomplishment*. This means that... there are many ways to "do" dialogue, and one cannot predict in advance exactly what it will take for this quality of contact to come into being.⁵⁴ [original emphasis]

Prescriptiveness in dialogue is a prescription to participate and to engage.

Prescriptiveness is not a methodology. In modern parlance, there will never be a book sold as "Prescriptive Dialogue for Dummies." Referring back to a competency discussion in the earlier literature, it is important to assert again that dialogue is based on a collaborative approach to communication competency rather than control. Arnett and Arneson assert that the actual practice of dialogue begins with the awareness that "dialogue cannot be forced, dialogue must be invited. We cannot force another person to engage in dialogue. But we can invite the communicative ingredients where dialogue might begin to flourish."⁵⁵

Stewart and Zediker agree that dialogue cannot be forced:

Dialogue is relational and takes place between persons, which means that no one party ultimately controls its occurrence. ... As a result, one party to the event can help dialogue happen and can keep it from happening, but no one partner can guarantee that a given contact even or meeting is experienced as dialogic by all participants.⁵⁶

Moving from the Bochner and Kelly's issue of a dialogic rationale to their call for a communication based philosophy of dialogic competence opens a spectrum of writing

⁵⁴ Stewart and Zediker, 230.

⁵⁵ Ronald Arnett and Pat Arneson, "Educational Assessment as Invitation for Dialogue," *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration* 2 (May 1997): 91

⁵⁶ Stewart and Zediker 230.

that has grown widely. Major philosophers and communication theorists have addressed the issue of dialogue. As referenced above, Mikhail Bakhtin wrote extensively about the centrality of dialogue to human relationships. A significant 2014 article by Joel Ward, recent communication professor at Bethel University, examines a Christian content to Bakhtin's writing.

The intentional movement of the word in aesthetic expression, for Bakhtin is not however unidirectional but always already everywhere. If the spoken word is everywhere and here at the same time, it has the power to connect us to an eternal, an infinite space while also consummating identity and position within time. The superaddressee, a third person of dialogic discourse, functions as an eternal respondent that justifies and solidifies the speakers position, even when he or she lacks the acknowledgement of an interlocutor.⁵⁷

This third person, superaddressee, present and aware of all dialogue is presented in Bakhtin as Christ-God incarnate. Ward contends that:

Bakhtin "situates meaning, personhood, and truth firmly within the scope of human interactivity, making the integration of Christ the real personification of truth and love a compelling proposition for how human personality can be both eternal and yet confirmed aesthetically in immanent interpersonal interaction."⁵⁸

In Bakhtin's own words, "God is no longer essentially the voice of my conscience, as purity of my relationship to myself... God is now the heavenly father who is *over me* and can be merciful to me and justify me... What I must be for the other, God is for me."⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Joel Ward, "The Eternal Respondent: Implications of Bakhtin's 'Superaddressee'," (*Paper presented at the annual meeting of the NCA 95th Annual Convention, Chicago, IL, November 12, 2009.*)

⁵⁸ Ward, 80.

⁵⁹ Ward, 163.

Ward, in a summation of Bakhtin's philosophy of dialogue in interpersonal relationships states: "Speech as an incarnate act locates human communication in the immediacy of interpersonal interaction."⁶⁰

Another philosophical basis for dialogue and interpersonal communication comes from Ronald Arnett who perceives the foundation of the communication discipline located in the realms of ethics and free speech. Arnett grounds communication philosophy in the Aristotelian concept of a practical philosophy.⁶¹ Arnett co-opts three aspects of a practical, ethical, framework from Aristotle. He adopts "a concern for the short and long term common good of society." He embraces "bravery, honor and justice as virtues." He limits the first two guidelines to being "worked out in particular situations, not in the abstract or *a priori*" constructs. "In short, practical philosophy is grounded in a context of concern and action for the common good."⁶²

In bringing Arnett's philosophical approach to bear on dialogic communication the issues of ethics and free speech are central. Free speech is based on presenting and listening to multiple perspectives. Dialogue demands the ability to listen to the position of the other (free speech) but reserves the right to question another's position on an issue. (Communication ethics) In a summary of his practical philosophy of communication Arnett speaks to the complex communication context of our present day.

Communication ethics and free speech as foundation of our discipline provide such a base from which we can practically pursue truth together in the midst of

⁶⁰ Ward, 101.

⁶¹ Ronald Arnett, "The Practical Philosophy of Communication Ethics and Free Speech as the Foundation for Speech Communication," *Communication Quarterly* 38 no. 3 (Summer 1990): 209.

⁶² Arnett, 211.

difficult and uneasy answers in a complex and ideologically diverse human community.⁶³

A third philosophical approach with contemporary significance for the issue of dialogic communication is that of Bernard Adeney. Adeney addresses issues of cultural dialogue from the perspective of a Christian communicator. Adeney's book was originally aimed at communication and Christian missions. The book has become highly relevant for dialogical realities in multicultural issues in the United States. An old communication adage says, "In communication context is everything." Adeney deals with the ethics of communication in dialogic situations arising in cross cultural contexts. He outlines three specific ethical approaches for Christian communication in cross cultural contexts.

On the one hand there are those who focus on the Bible as the source of absolute moral instructions or laws. Others insist that the Holy Spirit is the primary source of moral guidance for Christians. Still others point out that we do not even understand what is at stake in a cross cultural situation until we thoroughly understand the context. Therefore what is right or good must be struggled with in context.⁶⁴

Adeney advocates a combination of these approaches with a praxis approach combining biblical and theological understanding developed through experience. This praxis leads to the development of cross-cultural virtue and wisdom, based on learning that takes place through dialogue and relationship.⁶⁵ In order to become competent in dialogue and witness Adeney advocates the process of developing or finding what he calls a local guide. He advocates finding a person within the culture (in a foreign or

⁶³ Arnett, 216.

⁶⁴ Bernard Adeney, *Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multicultural World* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press 2000): 27.

⁶⁵ Adeney, 27-8.

domestic context) who is able to teach and translate cultural perspectives and issues that enable dialogue.⁶⁶

Adeney is an advocate of dialogue:

Real convictions, if accompanied by humility, make dialogue possible. Because I really believe in Christ, I can respect someone who really believes in Buddah. Convictions make dialogue desirable. ...Christian convictions impel the believer to care enough about the other to tell him the truth. Humility requires that I respect him enough to listen to his convictions and openly consider their truth claims. Christian convictions are rooted in God's self-revelation. Like all other important matters, they are subject to reasoned discussion. They are not private. They have been publicly debated defended, preserved, developed and interpreted by a continuous community for thousands of years.⁶⁷

From a communication philosophical point of view Adeney does not perceive dialogue as spiritual slippery slope. Dialogue occurs between two persons, each holding firm convictions, engaging in respectful listening and talking.

In theological support of the need for dialogic communication, David Clark affirms the context of personal dialogue when discussing Christian apologetics.

Traditional apologetics has been defined as the art of the reasoned defense of the Christian faith. This is the rational side of apologetics. To this rational dimension, dialogical apologetics adds the personal. ... Apologetics is the art of the reasoned defense of the Christian faith in the context of personal dialogue. ...Dialogical apologetics seeks to build the case for Christianity but to do so in the context of authentic relationship with another.⁶⁸

Clark's definition of dialogue fits well with the practicality of Adeney in his cross cultural approach of the need for a cultural guide and the practice of humility and respect in listening to the other in dialogue. Clark defines his concept of dialogue in a way that is

⁶⁶ Adeney. 57.

⁶⁷ Adeney. 191.

⁶⁸ David Clark, *Dialogical Apologetics: A Person Centered Approach to Christian Defense* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books 1993):114-16.

consistent with the overall academic communication approach of Arnett, Buber, Stewart and the other theorists consulted in this review.

Dialogue as I use it means something like this: apologists and dialogue partners, whether individuals or groups, come together as equals. They honestly admit their differences in world view and culture. But they display a serious desire to sharpen and broaden their understandings. They agree, at least tacitly, to listen carefully and sympathetically to each other, to explore the ground, structure, and rationale of various views, to sift what is culturally relative from what is universally applicable and to look for what deserves acceptance. ... Given this, a clear demarcation between dialogue (which seeks only mutual understanding) and apologetics, which seeks persuasion and defense) is arbitrary and unrealistic.⁶⁹

In concluding this broad look at some philosophical and theological bases of dialogic theory and practice, it is important to establish a connection between the dialogical issues of faith and those of communication scholarship. Daniel Brown makes the point that “Communication scholars are uniquely positioned and prepared to contribute to the practice of interfaith dialogue.”⁷⁰

Brown, a Christian believer and communication scholar makes four points significant for the conjunction of communication studies and cross cultural (interfaith) dialogue. He insists that there are at least four contributions communication theory can make in establishing a dialogical interface with other philosophical and theological perspectives.

Communication theorists are more curious than they are certain. It always takes at least two people...to generate meanings. This fosters an abiding sense of humility and curiosity among people who focus on messages that generate meaning.

Communication theorists are participants as well as spectators. Not all communication scholarship is hands-on but all communication scholarship by definition combines knowing with doing. ... It is praxis oriented.

⁶⁹ Clark, 117.

⁷⁰ Daniel Brown, *A Communication Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue: Living Within the Abrahamic Traditions* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books 2013): 16-17.

Communication theorists strive for authenticity. To be empathic, patient, kind, gentle and humane still demands personal integrity and authenticity of holding both self and other accountable for all thoughts and feelings.

Communication theorists explore relationships. So, in our search for Truth or justice or reality, communication scholarship takes seriously the personal experience of self and of the other. Phenomenology is respected. The message cannot be studied in isolation from its source, its receiver or the medium of its conveyance.⁷¹

In reviewing the sources above in the survey of various philosophical approaches to dialogue it is obvious that the four aspects presented by Brown are found in part or in whole in each source.

Bochner and Kelly Interpersonal Competencies

In addition to Bochner and Kelly's insistence on a rationale for interpersonal competence and a philosophy of interpersonal and dialogic competence they call for and develop a framework of interpersonal competence for teaching. The list of five competencies they give provides the central content for their teaching framework. A review of significant literature for those five competencies is in order at this point. In the view of Bochner and Kelly:

Individuals are not effective at birth, social effectiveness is learned throughout life. ... Interpersonal competence can be judged by the following three criteria. (1) ability to formulate and achieve objectives (2) ability to collaborate effectively with others, i.e., to be interdependent, and (3) ability to adapt appropriately to situational or environmental variations. ... They are not fixed attributes, or inherited personality traits. Rather, each is an observable behavior which can be learned i.e., developed, enhanced, altered, changed, or modified.⁷²

⁷¹ Brown, 116-117.

⁷² Bochner and Kelly, 288-89.

Empathic Communication

The first competency given by Bochner and Kelly is Empathic Communication. In their discussion empathy is described as the ability to take the role of the other and they insist that it is the essence of all communicative process.⁷³ In support of the centrality of empathy, Johannesen lists accurate empathic understanding as fundamental to interpersonal dialogue. “Things are seen from the other’s viewpoint. One feels an event from the side of the other as well as from one’s own side.”⁷⁴

George Herbert Mead taught that the self does not develop in isolation but through communication with others. Mead theorized that humans develop socially through interactions with others. Through this interaction language and meaning and the social self are a developmental process.⁷⁵

According to Stanley Deetz,

This view of empathy assumes that the primary goal of communication is to understand the other. Since this other is fundamentally a psychological entity separate from the self, the primary task is to build bridges or remove barriers so the self can...see the world as he sees it.”⁷⁶

No discussion of empathy can be complete without reference to Carl Rogers. Arnett describes Rogers’ approach to empathic listening as consonant with the literature of humanistic psychology. The approach has an empathic concern for accurately

⁷³ Bochner and Kelly, 289.

⁷⁴ Richard Johannesen, “The Emerging Concept of Communication as Dialogue,” *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* LVII no. 4 (December 1971): 376.

⁷⁵ Richard West and Lynn Turner, *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application* (New York: McGraw-Hill 2010): 83-84.

⁷⁶ Stanley Deetz, “Conceptualizing Human Understanding: Gadamer’s Hermeneutics and American Communication Studies,” *Communication Quarterly* 26 no.2 (Spring 1978): 16.

reflecting the internal experience of oneself and the other. There is an assumption of the innate goodness of the human being reflected in the listeners' attitude of unconditional positive regard for the other. This regard is confirmation of the other but is not necessarily considered agreement.⁷⁷ The issue of empathic listening is not unique to Rogers, but his concept of unconditional positive regard is central to his therapeutic approach. Unconditional positive regard is a non-judgmental, evaluative, therapeutic, stance designed to create self-awareness in the individual and to let the person decide on whether or what to change.

Arnett makes the point that the issue of being completely non-judgmental in accepting the innate goodness of human beings is not agreeable to all other theorists.

Buber and others contend that judgment and direct confrontation are sometimes necessary given particular historical circumstances. Such a judgmental response is actually considered inevitable by Gadamer and Heidegger, due to the impossibility of a presuppositionless perspective.⁷⁸

Perceiving, and understanding, an issue from the viewpoint of another is central to empathy. As a student and teacher of communication, the writer of this project does not accept that empathic understanding of another is a mandate for agreement. Empathic understanding is easy when the viewpoint of the other agrees with one's own viewpoint.

If, however, the convictions, and conclusions of the other are the opposite of one's own position, empathy can be a difficult and challenging process. Through careful listening, one can understand the viewpoint of another but still know that her perspective is not the same. Competence in empathy does not demand agreement or acceptance. To

⁷⁷ Ronald Arnett and Gordon Nakagawa, "The Assumptive Roots of Empathic Listening: a Critique," *Communication Education* 32 no. 4 (October 1983): 370.

⁷⁸ Arnett and Nakagawa, 374.

empathize is to listen and understand the other, but remain convinced of one's own views while carrying on respectful dialogue.

Descriptiveness

The interpersonal competency of descriptiveness presented in Bochner and Kelly, is related to feedback. In interpersonal communication models the issue of feedback is central to all models. "Feedback is the response given to the message that informs the source that the idea was transmitted successfully."⁷⁹ Formal definitions of the issue of feedback in communication are usually limited to the single aspect of a response by the receiver indicating that a message was received. The full competency of descriptiveness goes beyond single direct response to a single direct verbal interchange. Carter and Presnell address this issue:

Communication competence, therefore, is based on the degree to which the interactants share an understanding of and satisfaction with their communication encounters. ... The degree to which the interactants share a perception that their relational needs and goals are being met reflects the degree to which they consider their communication to be competent.⁸⁰

The implications of this broader perspective on competence open up the definition of descriptiveness in interpersonal exchange to include other aspects of competency. In a real sense, giving feedback or being descriptive in communication requires elements of empathy, appropriate self-disclosure and "I" language. (owning feelings and thoughts) To be descriptive in a dyadic interaction is to be able to do appropriate turn-taking, to give

⁷⁹ Lillian Beeson, *Persuasion: Theory and Application* (New York: Oxford University Press 2015): 7.

⁸⁰ Carina Sass "A Model of Interpersonal Competence," in *Interpretive Approaches to Interpersonal Communication: The Aftermath of Counterinsurgency in Guatemala* ed. Kathryn Carter and Mick Presnell (Albany, NY: Suny Press 1994): 148.

direct feedback, but also to do so with a full range of competency elements.

Descriptiveness is not just a single act of feedback to a single message.

A metaphor for descriptiveness used by this writer is that of trying to get a 15 foot long log of small diameter out of the woods and into a clearing. To lift the log by the small end is impossible. There is a lack of leverage to lift the heavier end. For one person to get the log out by lifting only the heavy end entails dragging the log by oneself. The best way is for two persons to carry the log: one person on one end, the other on the other end. This mutual cooperation gives maneuverability and ease in carrying the log.

The dialogic metaphor is that in a communication dyad one needs to carry her end of the communication log. Dialogue does not occur when only one person talks. Healthy dialogue does not involve trying to drag input or responses out of the other person. Healthy dialogue involves descriptiveness by each participant being descriptive in carrying his end of the communication log. As an interesting observation, students participating in the focus group part of this research recalled and used this metaphor as much as 10 years after the metaphor was used to teach descriptiveness.

Owning Feelings and Thoughts – Speaking for Self

The competency of owning feeling and thoughts in Bochner and Kelly is best described as using “I” language.

The person who owns his feelings or ideas makes it clear that he takes responsibility for his own feelings and actions. Owning shows a willingness to accept responsibility for oneself and commitment to others. It is the antithesis of blaming others for the way one feels. Owning requires the abilities to identify and to communicate attitudes or feelings to others.⁸¹

⁸¹ Bochner and Kelly, 290.

While Bochner and Kelly do not greatly add to their explanation of ownership of feelings and thoughts the concept is developed and expanded by other communication authors. The competency of owning feelings and thoughts was part of a recent research project testing the effects of teaching a competency based interpersonal communication course. The issue of owning feelings and thoughts was one of the specific competencies measured. The results indicated that students who had been taught the competency significantly increased their interpersonal competence.⁸²

Wackman et al., in their skills approach to communication developed a paradigm for self awareness and speaking for self that emphasizes the ability to address five zones of information that help develop competence in speaking for self. They organize this skill set into five areas of sensory input. They label these areas as sensing, thinking, feeling, wanting, and doing.⁸³ To translate each area into speaking for self, or taking responsibility for one's communication each area is relevant. In sensing one speaks about the five senses. What the "I" can see, hear, smell, taste, and can tactically feel. In thinking the "I" talks about what one cognitively perceives. In feeling, the "I" owns and talk about emotions. In wanting, the "I" expresses what one desires for self, for the other, and for any stakeholders involved in the interpersonal interaction. In doing, the "I" speaks of personal actions, in the past, present and future.⁸⁴

⁸² Cynthia Berryman-Fink and Lucille Pederson, "Testing the Effects of a Competency-Based Interpersonal Communication Course," *The Southern Speech Communication Journal* 46 no. 3 (April 2009): 251.

⁸³ Daniel Wackman, et al., *Connecting With Self and Others* (Littleton, CO: Interpersonal Communication Programs, Inc. 1992): 80.

⁸⁴ Wackman, et al, 81-105.

The opposite of owning feelings and thoughts is the use of vague, evasive or indirect language rather than the directness of personal responsibility. When asked about what one thinks or believes about an issue, instead of the use of “I “ language the answer is indirect; “well, one could say” or “some folks think” or “it is generally thought” or “I suppose one could take that position.” Competence in interpersonal communication is best served by owning feelings and thoughts, with the use of direct “I” language.

Self-Disclosure

The fourth competency presented by Bochner and Kelly is that of appropriate self-disclosure. The word appropriate is not an addition to the concept, but a clarification. One way of looking at disclosure is on a linear continuum. At one end is over disclosure, telling too much too deeply and too soon in a relationship. At the other end of the linear spectrum is under disclosure. Not being open, not reveling or disclosing enough to help the relationship progress. A competent interpersonal communicator develops a conscious awareness of when and where it is appropriate to self disclose. For purposes of this literature review and course development there are three classic authors that deal with self- disclosure, Sidney Jourard, Irwin Altman, and Dalmás Taylor. Sidney Jourard presents the issue in his preface to *The Transparent Self*. “A choice that confronts every one at every moment is this: Shall we permit our fellows to know us as we now are, or shall we remain enigmas, wishing to be seen as persons we are not.”⁸⁵

Jourard’s perspective on the interpersonal significance of self-disclosure agrees with that of Buber. “It is the empirical index of an I-Thou relationship.”⁸⁶ Jourard and

⁸⁵ Sidney Jourard, *The Transparent Self* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1971): vii.

⁸⁶ Jourard, 6.

Lasko, in 1958 “suggested that accurate portrayal of the self to others is an identifying criterion of healthy personality, while neurosis is related to inability to know one's "real self" and to make it known to others.”⁸⁷

A second major source dealing with disclosure in interpersonal relationships is the work of Altman and Taylor. In their classic book, *Social Penetration: the Development of Interpersonal Relationships*, they address three issues that impinge on the competency of self-disclosure and relationship development. The first discussion explores the dimensions of what they call breadth and depth.⁸⁸

The breadth category refers to how many different categories, and topics of conversation a person chooses to discuss with another. These categories concern areas of relationships and personality. Broad topical areas such as family, sex, religion, interests, and hobbies are given as examples. Their hypothesis is that “more and more facets of personality are mutually open and available as a relationship grows.”⁸⁹ Using the metaphor of an onion with pins stuck in the surface, they contend that, “the breadth category hypothesis involves the insertion, over time, of more and more pins into the onion. Each pin represents a broad category of personality as each person gradually unfold more of himself to the other.”⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Sidney Jourard and Paul Lasakow, “Some Factors in Self-disclosure” *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 56 no. 1 (January 1958): 91.

⁸⁸ Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor, *Social Penetration: The Development of Interpersonal Relationships* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc.1973): 29.

⁸⁹ Altman and Taylor, 29.

⁹⁰ Altman and Taylor, 29

The depth category of relationship development, using the onion-pin analogy, establishes the fact that an individual, in discussing various categories also measures how deeply they will self-disclose on a given topic or area. In essence if each pin stuck in an onion represents an area or topic of disclosure, then the depth to which the pin penetrates the layers of the onion, represents the depth of disclosure on that topic. Many pins will only penetrate in a shallow way. Other pins will go deeper, through more layers of the onion. The depth dimension of disclosure is related to key properties of the various items disclosed.

At peripheral layers are items having to do with biographical characteristics (e.g., sex age, and personal history). More intermediate layers contain attitudes and opinions about various issues, and more central layers contain fears, self-concepts, and basic values.⁹¹

The issue of trust is also an important factor in the breadth and the depth of disclosure. Altman and Taylor say shifts in central layers would be expected to have more of an impact than changes in peripheral areas, for example, change in one's basic trust in people. "The greater the depth of a characteristic, the greater the probability that it represents a vulnerable aspect of the personality."⁹² The research of Wheelless and Grotz concluded that "a higher level of trust (as opposed to lesser trust as well as distrust) was found to be associated with more consciously intended disclosure and a greater amount of disclosure."⁹³

⁹¹ Altman and Taylor, 18.

⁹² Altman and Taylor, 18.

⁹³ Lawrence Wheelless and Janis Grotz, "The Measurement of Trust and its Relationship to Self-disclosure," *Human Communication Research* 3 no. 3 (March 1977): 250.

In addition to breadth and depth, Altman and Taylor discuss the issue of costs and rewards in the development of interpersonal relationships. They contend that an entire relationship can be changed or can end based on cost and reward. Whether a forecast of cost and reward at the initial meeting results in little or no disclosure, and possibly no further contact, or whether accumulated costs over a period of time cause one or the other persons to diminish disclosure and subsequently leave the relationship, costs and rewards have a direct impact on self-disclosure.

They discuss five areas of interpersonal costs and rewards that affect the social penetration process and the fact that relational costs and rewards can impact disclosure at any stage of relationship development. Wheelless and Grotz also address the need for a positive ratio of cost and rewards in relationships. “The greater the ratio of rewards to costs, the more satisfying the relationship.”⁹⁴

Behavior Flexibility

Bochner and Kelly give a simple definition of behavior flexibility as “an individual’s capacity to relate in new ways when necessary.”⁹⁵ However simple the definition, the ability to display the competence is complex. As noted in the discussion of the descriptiveness competency, the issue of behavioral flexibility also requires constant awareness and use of all the four preceding competencies of empathy, self-disclosure, owning, and descriptiveness. The integration of competencies demands and creates the ability and skill to be flexible in communication behaviors.

⁹⁴ Altman and Taylor, 33.

⁹⁵ Bochner and Kelly, 291.

One measure of this skill is the degree to which a learner can identify and focus on specific ways of behaving differently. Competence instruction frequently involves learners in the process of working on and becoming committed to new behaviors. It also includes recognition of the behavioral choices open in a given interpersonal situation.⁹⁶

Applications of the competency of behavior flexibility range from the every day context of an individual to new and unfamiliar contexts. For an upper mid-west college student to visit a Hmong or Ethiopian neighborhood in St. Paul, Minnesota will demand behavior flexibility in communication. Travel to Mexico will demand a change in chronemic (time) expectations for what is and is not considered promptness. To travel to Jordan or other mid-east countries demands a change in the proxemics of how close one will be expected to stand in a face to face conversation. Behavior flexibility in dyadic communication demands adaptability that involves integration of use of the complete spectrum of competencies presented by Bochner and Kelly.

Authenticity

In a sense, the integrated practice of Bochner and Kelly's five competencies could be summed up as producing an authentic communicator. However, there are other dimensions to authenticity that mandate adding a separate competency to those of Bochner and Kelly. Other authors have addressed the issue of authenticity in the realm of interpersonal competence.

The term "authenticity" may spark a range of meanings and significance. Most would agree, however, that it elicits some association with a sense of genuineness. When applied to persons, one imagines a self who is true to some "essence" within or in touch with some inner truthfulness. Authentic personhood also has particular ties to the "autonomous self," who in a Kantian sense aspires toward

⁹⁶ Bochner and Kelly, 291.

self-determination and thus is obligated to take full moral responsibility for his or her actions.⁹⁷

Buber also addresses the relationship of authenticity and genuineness in interpersonal communication in his essay *Elements of the Interhuman*:

We may distinguish between two different types of human existence. The one proceeds from what one really is, the other from what one wishes to seem. In general, the two are found mixed together. ... This distinction is most powerfully at work, as its nature indicates, in the interhuman realm – that is, in men's personal dealings with one another.⁹⁸

Authenticity, when viewed as an absolute certainly has to do with genuineness, and Buber's concept of honestly presenting self accurately. There is another sense to authenticity that issues from two communication concepts related to being a competent communicator.

The first concept by Festinger talks about the issue of cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance is a situation where the way one is behaving, or communicating outwardly is not the same as what one is thinking or feeling inwardly. Intrapersonal communication is the inward process of communication with self. What one is thinking and feeling inwardly is only available to that individual. In an interpersonal dialogue cognitive dissonance is brought about when one is outwardly, verbally and non-verbally expressing one thing and inwardly thinking or feeling something different.

William Howell, communication professor at the University of Minnesota, addressed an issue he described as internal monologue. To Howell, internal monologue was intrapersonal communication that occurred mostly in unplanned or spontaneous

⁹⁷ Marcianna Nosek, "Nonviolent Communication: A Dialogical Retrieval of the Ethic of Authenticity," *Nursing Ethics* 19 no. 6 (November 2012): 829.

⁹⁸ Martin Buber, "Elements of the Interhuman," in *Martin Buber on Psychology and Psychotherapy: Essays, Letters and Dialogue* ed. Judith Agassi (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999): 75-6.

dialogues. Howell perceived this internal monologue as a state produced by unexpected interaction, surprise issues, anxiety or fear. He perceived and described internal monologue as counterproductive to the interpersonal communication process and set up communication processes to deal with the issue.⁹⁹

Leta Frazier, Bethel University professor of communication, in combining her reading of Leon Festinger with her personal study and discussion with Howell proposes an interpersonal approach to communication competency of Authenticity based on praxis. Frazier perceives that internal monologue as described by Howell is a major element in the creation of an intrapersonal state of the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance. Once an individual is aware of the cognitive dissonance the issue of Authenticity emerges. The competency consists of knowing when to be totally authentic and when to choose not to be authentic about the dissonance. Compete authenticity would demand outward disclosure of all internal monologue.

An example illustrates the principle. A professor is driving to class on a snowy morning in January. She is distracted and approaching a highway, looks both ways and seeing no traffic proceeds onto the highway without stopping. A police officer following her turns on the flashing lights in his car and stops her.

She is unaware of running the stop sign. The fear of being late to class and the irritation of having to stop for no apparent reason sets off a classic internal monologue theorized by Howell. “What is this idiot doing out here stopping hard working people on the way to work! Why isn’t he busy catching criminals?”

⁹⁹ William Howell, *The Empathic Communicator* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company 1982): 68-84.

When the officer approaches the car she rolls down the window. He pushes his face close to her and says in a loud voice, “Do you know what S T O P spells? Inwardly, the anger and fear of being late produces an internal monologue, dripping with sarcasm. She thinks “Yes officer, I do know how to spell stop. Could you spell antidisestablishmentarianism for me?”

What she actually says in her spoken reply to the officer is a respectful, controlled statement, “Yes, officer, I do know how to spell stop. What is the problem?” He informs her that she ran a stop sign. Again, the internal monologue in her mind is an outraged version of her former internal monologue. “Why is this idiot harassing me? Doesn’t he know people are just trying to get to work on time? I really don’t need this, I just want to get to school. Why isn’t he busy looking for criminals?” Very aware of the dissonance going on in her mind, she dialogically says to the officer is: “I guess I was distracted. I did not see any traffic either way, so I just pulled on to the highway.” The officer says, “Well, you really do need to be more aware. I realize there is no traffic. I am going to give you a warning ticket instead of a violation. Be more careful in the future.” The professor, with great relief says, “Thank you officer, I appreciate that. I will be more careful.”

As she drives off with the warning ticket, her internal monologue is calming: “I am so glad I did not ask him to spell that word, and that I did not call him an idiot.”

The point of the illustration is that it is not always competent communication to be completely authentic. It is not always competent communication to reveal every internal monologue. The actual competency of authenticity is to recognize the dissonance between the internal monologue and the appropriateness demanded by the dialogic

situation. This awareness of dissonance coupled with a decision not to respond or disclose inappropriate internal monologue is the appropriate use of authenticity.

In this project the six components of empathy, descriptiveness, owning feelings and thoughts, self-disclosure, behavior flexibility and authenticity are designated as Bochner and Kelly competencies.¹⁰⁰

In addition to the Bochner and Kelly competencies, this literature review proceeds to the second analysis tool for the project, that of Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm.

The Narrative Paradigm

Walter Fisher, in developing the narrative paradigm, adopts what he calls a root metaphor of *homo narrans* for humankind.¹⁰¹ In essence, humans are storytellers. He relates his metaphor to Kenneth Burke's definition of humans as the "symbol-making symbol-misusing animal."¹⁰² Fisher clearly draws a contrast with the usual rational paradigm of *homo sapiens* (Latin: "the wise person"). Fisher believes:

The idea of human beings as storytellers indicates the generic form of all symbol composition; it holds that symbols are created and communicated ultimately as stories meant to give order to human experience and to induce others to dwell in them to establish ways of living in common, in communities in which there is sanction for the story that constitutes one's life.¹⁰³

Table 2. Paradigm Contrasts

¹⁰⁰ All references in the project referring to Bochner and Kelly Competencies include the competence of Authenticity.

¹⁰¹ Walter Fisher, "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument," *Communication Monographs* 51, no.1 (March 1984): 270.

¹⁰² Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature and Method*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968): 16.

¹⁰³ Fisher, 271.

The Narrative Paradigm	The Rational Paradigm
Humans are story tellers rather than just thinking machines.	Humans are essentially rational beings.
Communication and decisions are based on “good reasons.”	Decisions are based on argumentation.
Good reasons are determined by issues of biography, culture and character. Rationality is determined by narrative coherence and fidelity.	Arguments are evaluated by soundness and logic.
Individuals determine rationality of a story by it’s consistency and truthful in light of their own experiences. No specialized training is necessary.	Rationality is based on standards of formal logic, knowledge, learned expertise, argumentative ability, and reasoning processes.
The world is a set of stories, which must be chosen among to live the good life in a process of continual re-creation. Human beings are valuing animals.	The world is a set of logical puzzles to be solved by analysis and the application of reason.

Fisher contends: “Humans as rhetorical beings are as much valuing as they are reasoning animals.”¹⁰⁴ The narrative paradigm applies to all cultures, societies or language groups in the sense that all reason and all have value systems. “The actualization of the narrative paradigm does not require a given form of society.”¹⁰⁵ Hayden White supports this assertion that the narrative paradigm is universal in application to all societies:

Far from being one code among many that a culture may utilize for endowing experience with meaning, narrative is a metacode, a human universal on the basis of which trans-cultural messages about the shared reality can be transmitted. ...The absence of narrative capacity or a refusal of narrative indicates an absence or refusal of meaning itself.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Fisher, 265.

¹⁰⁵ Fisher, 272.

¹⁰⁶ Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” *Critical Inquiry* 7 no. 1 (Autumn 1980): 6.

In contrast, a rational world paradigm focuses on humans as essentially rational beings who make decisions based on evidence and argument. Fisher insists this approach demands a particular form of society that:

shares a common language, general adherence to the values of the state, information relevant to the questions that confront the community, to be arbitrated by argument, and an understanding of argumentative issues and the various forms of reason and their appropriate assessment. Because the rational world paradigm has these requirements and because *being rational* (being competent in argument) *must be learned*¹⁰⁷ [original emphasis]

The rational approach, therefore, is a limiting paradigm that can exist alongside the narrative paradigm, but in the end it must be subsumed as being only one specific form or approach to understanding human life. Fisher presents the narrative paradigm as a master metaphor for all textual analysis. To Fisher, all communication is narrative. He defines narration as “symbolic actions – words and/or deeds – that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them.”¹⁰⁸

Em Griffin gives an expanded paraphrase of Fisher’s definition of the narrative paradigm:

Narration is communication rooted in time and space. It covers every aspect of our lives and the lives of others in regard to character, motive and action. The term also refers to every verbal or nonverbal bid for a person to believe or act in a certain way. Even when a message seems abstract – is devoid of imagery – it is narration because it is embedded in the speaker’s ongoing story that has a beginning, middle, and end, and it invites listeners to interpret its meaning and assess its value for their own lives.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Fisher, *Narration as Paradigm*, 268.

¹⁰⁸ Walter Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1987): 24.

¹⁰⁹ Em Griffin, *A First Look at Communication Theory*, 6th ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill 1991): 341.

Fisher cites the observation of Alasdair MacIntyre that “man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal. ... given this view enacted dramatic narrative is the basic and essential genre for the characterization of human actions.”¹¹⁰

For Fisher, the term “good reasons” is related to story, not just to rhetorical logic, facts, reason and persuasion. “Good reasons” have to do with values. Fisher’s approach insists that people can relate better to a good story than to purely rational arguments. In a given story, narratives that coincide with values and perspectives of what is good are persuasive.¹¹¹

Taylor supports the perspective that values are not determined by strictly rational or objective data:

Facts and reason alone do not stand a chance against a story because both depend on story for power. It is naïve to think one has arrived at one’s own views and values solely through unbiased consideration of objective data. Data are never objective because they are always gathered by story-breathing human subjects. All facts are inert and useless until they have been interpreted, into this narrative or that.¹¹²

Griffin also supports the distinction between the rational and narrative perspective:

Viewing human beings as storytellers who reason in various ways is a major conceptual shift. For example, in a logical system, values are emotional nonsense. From the narrative perspective, however, values are the “stuff” of stories. Working from a strictly logical standpoint, aesthetic proof is irrelevant, yet within

¹¹⁰ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981): 194-201.

¹¹¹ Fisher, *Narration as Paradigm*, 268.

¹¹² Daniel Taylor, *Tell Me a Story: The Life-Shaping Power of Our Stories* (Saint Paul, MN: Bog Walk Press, 2001): 80.

a narrative framework, style and beauty play a pivotal role in determining whether we get into a story.¹¹³

No matter how logically sound and well argued, narratives that go against values and good reason are not persuasive or convincing. The first key question about any story is related to Fisher's test of coherence. Does the story make sense to the hearer? Does it fit together in the mind of the hearer? Do the contents of the story resonate with the hearer's reality? If so, then the story has coherence.¹¹⁴ Griffin asserts: "Stories hang together when we're convinced that the narrator hasn't left out important details, fudged the facts or ignored other plausible interpretations. We tend to trust stories of people who show continuity of thought, motive and action."¹¹⁵

The second aspect of "good reasons" addressed by Fisher is that of fidelity. Are the values in the story congruent with the convictions and beliefs of the hearers? Do the hearers regard the story as truthful and consistent with the external world of their experiences? If a story has coherence and fidelity, then the narrative is a powerful means of persuasion based on content rather than just on rational argument.¹¹⁶ Fisher drives home this criteria by insisting:

Narrative fidelity is the quality of a story that causes the words to strike a responsive chord in the life of the listener. A story has fidelity when it rings true with the hearer's experiences; it squares with the stories they might tell about themselves.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Griffin, 343-44.

¹¹⁴ Dana McGrath and James Donachie, "Comm Theory Narrative Paradigm," Slideshare, accessed September 10, 2014, <http://www.slideshare.net/danarmcgrath/comm-theory-narrative-paradigm>

¹¹⁵ Griffin 344.

¹¹⁶ McGrath and Donachie, 1.

¹¹⁷ Fisher, *Communication as Narration*, 188.

While most communication theorists accept the narrative paradigm as a legitimate and scholarly approach to narrative communication analysis, there are those who critique Fisher.

Soon after Fisher published *Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument*, critical articles appeared in academic journals. Two articles by Robert Rowland are still perceived as the first major challenge to Fisher's paradigm. Rowland, Professor and Director of Graduate Studies at Kansas University, in his article "Narrative: Mode of Discourse or Paradigm" directly challenged Fisher's approach to narrative in three distinct ways.

First, Rowland says the paradigm is too broad in claiming to encompass nearly all forms of discourse.¹¹⁸ Second, Rowland challenges the idea that there is an independent standard of narrative rationality that is distinguishable from the "rational world paradigm;" and third, Rowland argues against the role of the storyteller as the primary expert and evaluator of narrative in the public sphere.¹¹⁹

Like many other critics, Rowland accepts the overall importance of the narrative paradigm, but he severely critiques its scope. He does not accept Fisher's the position that narrative embraces virtually all forms of discourse. Rowland sums up his position against humans as *homo narrans*:

If we define humans as the "storytelling animal" we may obscure the fact that humans are also the "theory building animal," the argument making animal," and so forth. This conclusion does not deny the importance of narrative, but it does

¹¹⁸ Robert Rowland, "Narrative: Mode of Discourse or Paradigm?" *Communication Monographs* 54 no. 3 (September 1987): 264.

¹¹⁹ Rowland, 268.

suggest a critical perspective that defines narrative too broadly may in some cases, obscure, not reveal the real importance of storytelling.¹²⁰

Over the years, since the early critique by Rowland and others, the use of the narrative paradigm has grown into a well-established and accepted approach to communication research. Application of the narrative paradigm provides an established communication methodology for examination of all the narrative forms used in the Gospel of John.

While acknowledging the value of the rational world paradigm in communication processes, Fisher insists that when narrative analysis is done, there is a more fundamental aspect than that of a strict, rational approach to narrative. He insists that a primary consideration must be given to the initial context of the narrative. Fisher leans on Goldberg to affirm his point of view.

Goldberg in discussing biblical narrative, claims:

A theologian, regardless of the propositional statements he or she may have to make about a community's convictions, must consciously strive to keep those statements in intimate contact with the narratives which give rise to those convictions, within which they gained their sense and meaning and from which they have been abstracted. The same can be said for those who would understand ordinary experience. The ground for determining meaning, validity, reason, rationality, and truth must be a narrative context: history culture biography and character.¹²¹

In approaching the Gospel of John with the narrative paradigm and the Bochner and Kelly competencies one needs to keep the text with all content and claims connected to the context that emerges from the writing. The story "as is" is the story. No attempt needs to be made to subject the story to a totally modern context or a modern rational

¹²⁰ Rowland, *Discourse or Paradigm*, 268.

¹²¹ Michael Goldberg, *Theology and Narrative: A Critical Introduction*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981): 35.

paradigm. The two chosen communication methodologies do not bring with them an innate theologically critical or expositional approach.

There are issues related to the of Fisher's narrative paradigm that can apply in analysis of Johannine scholarship. In any narrative, biblical or not, what is resisted by this method is the temptation to somehow update, modernize, or move the narrative content into a modern, rational paradigm approach.

An example of such an application is found in the introduction to Robert Fortna's a 2007 book on John's Gospel, *The Fourth Gospel and its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel*. The author explains why he chose that title:

I intended at first to entitle this work 'The Evangelist John and His Predecessor.' ... But the proposed title would not do. ... The provisional title was sexist, most obviously in the possessive pronoun "his" but also in using the traditional name "John." The feminist movement in biblical studies has convinced me that these conventions, supposedly innocent in intent and justified by the canon, must be given up. Just as we have no idea of the Evangelist's identity and name, so also of his or her gender. And like all of the gospels, that according to "John" is in fact anonymous, its apostolic attribution added roughly a century after it was written and on spurious grounds. We cannot know even the degree of likelihood that the writer was a male. So the custom of calling "him" by the traditional name "John" ought to be abandoned. ... I continue to refer to the Gospel's wording or thought as "Johannine" trusting the adjective to be understood as gender free.¹²²

The quote is used to illustrate, as Fisher discussed, that there is a temptation when approaching narrative texts from one culture and time, to arrive at conclusions and to impose on them norms and expectations derived from a modern, rational paradigm. The above quote inappropriately attempts to pull an ancient text into a modern context.

The narrative paradigm and the competencies of Bochner and Kelly, as communication theories affirm two fundamental axioms. In communication studies

¹²² Robert Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007): xi-xii.

context and audience are always primary: consider the context – know the audience. The context of the Gospel of John is the Jewish and early Christian context from the times and ministry of Jesus and the early growth of the Christian Church. The contextual early audience is primarily Jewish, Greek, and Roman, probably augmented by other cultural and language groups described in the Book of Acts (Acts 2: 9-11).

Some of the difference that comes from accepting either the rational or the narrative approach to the text of the Gospel of John has to do with what one has a capacity to believe or accept. The modern, rational paradigm rules out the acceptance of the miraculous content in the gospel. Richard Bauckham notes that the Johannine author is vivid in his selection of signs, or miracles, when compared with the synoptic gospels:

While Matthew and Luke give the impression of attempting to write of all the Jesus traditions they knew, John seems to do the opposite, rigorously selecting only what he thought of primary importance. While Mark has eighteen miracle stories, Matthew twenty and Luke eighteen, John has only eight (including Ch. 21), not at all because he thinks miracle stories unimportant, but because he selects the most impressive (e.g., the blind man had been blind *since birth* [9.1], Lazarus had been dead *four days* [11.17]) and those most develop the significance of the signs. ... There are vivid narratives, striking miracles, dramatic actions, friendly conversations and polemical dialogues, parables and riddles, discourses and prayer.¹²³ (original emphasis)

To apply a strictly modern approach to the analysis or interpretation of the Johannine text is irrational.

As Fisher affirms, a text belongs to the setting in which it is written and needs to be approached as a narrative from that context that is addressed to that particular audience. The use of rationale is not ruled out; the gospel as presented is a rational presentation, but the aspects of the narrative that conflict with the modern rational

¹²³ Richard Bauckham, "Historiographical Characteristics of the Gospel of John," *New Testament Studies* 53 no 1. (January 2007): 28. (17-36)

paradigm must be subsumed, as Fisher insists, in light of the context, the culture and the perspective of the author. In this sense, the narrative paradigm does permit one, as advocated by James Dunn, to let “John to be John”:

I found it necessary to...spend time in the preliminary task of clarifying the historical context and character of the Fourth Gospel ...the primary context of the material within the Gospels the Gospel itself. Only when we have understood it within that context will we be able to undertake any systematic study of its earlier forms. ...Since any attempt to penetrate “below the surface” is a hazardous business, with firm criteria usually lacking, we need to have as many checks and controls as possible in place before we begin, and one of the main checks and controls is a clear perspective on why and how the evangelist used the material available to him. If the evangelist has used his material to address contemporary needs and concerns, and if that usage has shaped and molded the material in any degree, we need to be aware of these needs and concerns and how they may have shaped the material.¹²⁴

Beyond this need to maintain respect for a chosen narrative in the original context, the qualifications and competence of all audiences must be considered. Griffin addresses the fact that in addition to respect for the context of a narrative, there must also be a concern for the qualifications of those who interpret:

Perhaps the biggest shift in thinking has to do with who is qualified to assess the quality of communication. Whereas the rational-world model holds that only experts are capable of presenting or discerning sound arguments, the narrative paradigm maintains that, armed with a bit of common sense, almost any of us can see the point of a good story and judge it's merits as the basis for belief and action. Fisher would say that each of us will make his or her judgment ...based upon *narrative rationality*.¹²⁵ (original emphasis)

According to Fisher, the audience for a narrative is not limited to the original context. There is significance for all future audiences in his concept of the ideal audience.

It appears that there is a permanent public

¹²⁴ James Dunn, “John and the Oral Gospel Tradition,” in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*, ed. Henry Wansborough (New York: T and T Clark International, 2004): 351.

¹²⁵ Griffin, 344.

, an actual community existing over time, that believes in the values of truth, the good, beauty, health, wisdom, courage, temperance, justice, harmony, order, communion, friendship, and oneness with the Cosmos – as variously as those values may be defined or practiced in “real” life.¹²⁶

N. T. Wright expresses the fact of an ongoing Christian audience based on ideals and enduring values:

We honor and celebrate our complexity and our simplicity by continually doing five things. We tell stories. We act our rituals. We create beauty. We work in communities. We think out beliefs. No doubt you might think of more, but that’s enough for the moment. In and through all these things run the threads of love and pain, fear and faith, worship and doubt, the quest for justice, the thirst for spirituality, and the promise and problem of human relationship. And if there’s any such thing as ‘truth’ in the absolute sense, it must relate to, and make sense of, all this and more.¹²⁷

In light of the above discussion, the elements of Fisher’s narrative paradigm are used to examine the dialogues and other narrative forms found in the gospel of John, with a focus on finding good reasons, coherence and fidelity for the original and current audiences.

¹²⁶ Fisher, *Communication as Narration*, 187-88.

¹²⁷ Norman Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006):

CHAPTER THREE

Many Johannine scholars have published an outline of the contents of the Gospel of John. Since this project expresses a view on the structural analysis of the Gospel of John, the following outline comparison is given to establish clarity as the Prologue, two narrative dialogues and the final chapter are analyzed.

Felix Just, a Roman Catholic Scholar, provides a traditional outline accepted by other scholars.¹ The main divisions of his outline are duplicated exactly by Paul Anderson from George Fox University in his *Riddles of Fourth Gospel*,² and Mark Strauss in his *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*.³

As a foundation for examination of the Gospel, the writer of this project contends for a revised outline. The narrative paradigm and the augmented Bochner and Kelly Competency formats are applied to selected narrative sections in the Gospel text. A significant issue of interpretation of the text can be based on the different outline of the text.

This revised outline does not demand any movement of the current arrangement of chapters or verses of the text elements. The change in the outline is a change in perceived structure of the book. The essence of the change is that this writer holds a

¹ Felix Just, "Structural Outlines of the Fourth Gospel," last modified March 1, 2014, Accessed September 28, 2014, <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Outlines-Gospel.htm>

² Paul Anderson, *Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011): 9.

³ Mark Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007): 298.

different view of the relationship of the Prologue (1:1-18) and the traditional section designated as Epilogue (21:1-25). Chapter 21 is not accepted as an epilogue to the ministry of Jesus, nor is it considered an extension of the resurrection experiences in Chapter 20. The final chapter fits the story form of a literary Denouement.

Table 3. A Revised Outline of the Gospel of John

Traditional Outline: Felix Just, Paul Anderson, Mark Strauss	Revised Outline: Philip Frazier
Prologue: 1:1-18 (Logos Hymn: The Word with God; Believers become Children of God; The Word becomes Flesh; The Son Reveals the Father)	Prologue: 1:1-18 (Logos Hymn: The Word with God; Believers become children of God; The Word becomes flesh; The Son reveals the Father) <u>Primary purpose to immediately establish the identity and authority of Jesus in all his interactions in the book.</u>
The Book of Signs": 1:19—12:50 "The Book of Glory": 13:1—20:31	The ministry narratives of Jesus 1:19 – 20:29. "The Book of Signs": 1:19—12:50. "The Book of Glory": 13:1—20:29.
Epilogue: 21:1-25 Another Resurrection Appearance at the Sea of Tiberius/Galilee.	Epilogue: 20:30-31 1. A specific restatement of the Prologue Identity and Authority of Jesus. 2. The Announced Purpose of the Book by John.
	Denouement: 21:1-25 A reunion meal where Jesus provides the fish, prepares and serves the meal, and models love for the disciples as in Chapter 13. Commissioning by Jesus of a shepherding, servant leadership ministry pattern for Peter and the disciples. "A fresh start for the Jesus movement." ⁴

⁴ Anderson, *Riddles* 69.

A denouement is “the climax of a chain of events, usually when something is decided or made clear.”⁵ As a literary denouement, this final gathering of the disciples, sharing another meal with Jesus, stands outside the main ministry narrative. The ending of the narrative with the last resurrection appearance in chapter 20 and the dialogue with Thomas brought a climax to the ministry narrative of Jesus and ends with his blessing on the believing disciples and the promise of the same blessing to all in the future who believe, though they have not seen him. The Denouement in chapter 21 is a launching by Jesus of the coming ministry of the disciples as shepherds and servant leaders.

In support of this outline revision, Anderson, in an analysis of the end of Chapter 20, asks a significant question in a heading entitled “The Johannine Epilogue: A Fresh Start or a Second Ending.”⁶ His question is related to authorship and timing for the writing of the last chapter. Immediately following that discussion, he adds another section heading: “The Place of John 21 as a First or Second Ending.”⁷ In this discussion, he presents a view of the last chapter as a second, later, ending to the book.

The reading of the above approach resulted in a hypothesis by the writer of this project that the original ending, John 20: 20-31, can be seen as a literary device that closes the narrative of the actual ministry of Jesus as written by John. This viewpoint sees Jesus’ ministry described by John as bracketed by the beginning Prologue and the original “Epilogue” ending given in Chapter 20: 30-31 “Jesus performed many other

⁵ Oxford University Press, The Oxford English Dictionary, accessed October 12, 2014, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/denouement

⁶ Anderson, *Riddles* 69.

⁷ Anderson, *Riddles* 69.

signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” These verses are the ending to the ministry narrative.

In support of this view, the Prologue in John 1:1-18 is presented by John as an introduction and identification of who Jesus is and the authority he possesses. The prologue, regardless of source or date, gives exactly what John, the narrator, believes about Jesus’ identity and his authority. For John, there is no mystery or question about Jesus. The Prologue provides the identity, and authority of Jesus for the ministry narratives that follow.

The epilogue (20:30-31) serves the same purpose as the Prologue and reiterates the identity and authority as the Messiah, the Son of God with power to save those who believe. It is the contention of this writer that the all the narratives between the Prologue and this two verse Epilogue constitute the ministry narratives of Jesus (John 1:19 – John 20:29). The Prologue and this brief Epilogue are literary bookends, containing the unique Johannine ministry narratives.

In a literary sense, and in support of the denouement interpretation, the Gospel of John has all the elements of a well-plotted book or narrative.⁸ There is exposition. (The prologue 1:1-19) There is rising action. (The miracles and dialogic interactions. 1:20–19:29) There is a climax. (The death and Resurrection of Jesus 19:30 – 20:14) There is the falling action. (The resurrection appearances. 20:14 – 20:29) There is the resolution (denouement). (The reunion meal and commissioning of the disciples as shepherds and

⁸ Five Elements of Plot Conflict,” New York Film Academy, accessed October 12, 2014, <http://classroom.synonym.com/five-elements-plot-conflict-4472.html>

servant leaders. “A fresh start for the Jesus Movement”⁹ 21:1-25). A full discussion of this approach is presented in the context of the Narrative Paradigm analysis of the Prologue.

Fisher’s “Good Reasons” in the Prologue

The prologue of the Gospel of John is central to understanding the dialogues that follow in the gospel. The eighteen verses of the prologue are the narrator’s technique for establishing the identity, authority, divinity, and humanity of Jesus to Jewish, Greek and all subsequent readers. John’s purpose is to have any reader know, by the end of the Prologue that whatever Jesus does, he has the authority, power, and capacity, to accomplish.

The first test of a narrative in Fisher’s paradigm is that of coherence. The two key coherence questions are relevant immediately in analyzing the opening sentence of the Prologue: “Does the story fit together in the mind of the hearer? Do the contents of the story resonate with the hearer’s reality?”¹⁰

Any Jewish person in John’s day who read or heard the first phrase of the Prologue, “In the beginning,”(John 1:1) would not fail to recognize the first three words as Jewish scripture. The connection with the book of Genesis would have been immediate: “In the beginning God” (Gen. 1:1). Fisher, in defining “good reasons” refers to the importance of how “matters of history, biography, culture and character” are

⁹ Anderson, *Riddles* 69.

¹⁰ McGrath and Donachie, 1.

central to the acceptance of any narrative.”¹¹ John, in using the Prologue, anchors the narrative to his audience immediately with the use of “In the beginning.” Those words connect past and present and guarantee a connection with any Jewish reader or hearer of the narrative. A modern teacher of writing would say any good story starts with a narrative hook, a beginning sentence that immediately resonates with a reader’s reality and background and catches attention.

Beyond the obvious first phrase connection, Barclay discusses the use of the Aramaic Targums, a translation of the Tanakh read in the synagogues in the language of the day. He notes that in one of the Targums “the phrase *word of God* occurs no fewer than three hundred twenty times.”¹² He continues to emphasize:

The fact remains that the phrase the *Word of God* became one of the commonest forms of Jewish expression. It was a phrase any devout Jew would hear and recognize because he heard it so often in the synagogue when scripture was read. Every Jew was just to speaking of the *memra*, the *Word of God*.¹³ [original emphasis]

Following the obvious initial scriptural references, and phrases that connect to a Jewish audience, John broadens reader attention and appeal to “good reasons” by the use of the Greek language term λόγος, translated “Word”. The term, logos, immediately resonated with the Greek speaking audience of the time. The narrator tells of Greeks at the festival who came to the disciple Philip asking “to see Jesus” (John 12: 20-22). To the Hellenists, the logos “was borrowed from the language of the Stoics, in which it

¹¹ Fisher, 272.

¹² William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Gospel of John: A Commentary*, Vol. 1. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press): 82-83.

¹³ Barclay, 7.

represented the divine reason, immanent in nature and in humans.”¹⁴ John was deliberate in the Prologue in establishing a well-known concept that Greeks would understand and that could open a dialogue.

The term *logos* also provided another familiar connection for the Jewish audience through Philo, the Hellenizing Jew, who used the term more than thirteen hundred times in his allegorical exposition of the Old Testament.¹⁵ The Prologue also makes reference to John the Baptizer the well-known Jewish prophetic contemporary of Jesus.

Charles Dodd notes that the dualistic terms “light” and “life” used in the Prologue, are also found in the hermetic literature of the Greeks: “The secret of immortality in fact is the knowledge that God is life and light and that we are his offspring. ...Light, especially combined with life, is the most adequate symbol of the divine being.”¹⁶

In referencing terms of light/darkness and life, John again adds coherence to the narrative so the story holds together. Both Jews and Greeks were familiar with the concepts of light and life in contrast to darkness and death. The terms played a part in Hellenistic religion and are frequently found in the Old Testament.¹⁷

Once the narrator gained the attention of the readers or hearers of the Prologue, John immediately affirms that Jesus is the, light, the life, the one and only Son of God in

¹⁴ Wilbert Howard, “The Gospel According to St. John” in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. George Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1952): 442.

¹⁵ Howard, 442.

¹⁶ Charles Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. (London: University Press, Cambridge, 1963):36.

¹⁷ Dodd, 36.

the flesh. The prologue is believable; it has coherence with the past and present of the early Jewish, Greek and Christian audience.

The prologue has narrative fidelity for modern audiences also. Fisher says, “That narrative, whether written or oral, is a feature of human nature and ... it crosses time and culture”¹⁸ Hayden White affirms this interpretation: “Far from being one code among many that a culture may utilize for endowing experience with meaning, narrative is a metacode, a human universal on the basis of which transcultural messages about the shared reality can be transmitted.”¹⁹

The Prologue has resonance as “good reason” and is recognized in both past and present time as having coherence and fidelity and truth by Christian believers. The prologue is believable in the culture of the early church and in the context of the present church. Coherence and fidelity cross the time and culture chronology.

For John, the Prologue settles the question of the identity and the authority of Jesus as God in the flesh. Turning to the revised outline and the verses that are identified as the epilogue of the narrator in John 20: 30-31, there is affirmation that the purpose of the Prologue and the first ending of the book in John 20 are part and parcel of the same message about Jesus.

Beverly Gaventa affirms the direct connection between the prologue and that of the first ending as Epilogue:

The first ending takes readers back to the Gospel’s prologue, completing the circle begun there by the appearance of the Logos. ... Thomas’ dramatic greeting of Jesus as “My Lord and my God” (20:28) and the closing identification of Jesus

¹⁸ Fisher, *Narration as Paradigm*, 272.

¹⁹ White, *Value of Narrativity*, 6.

as “the Messiah, the Son of God” (20:31) recall the prologues identification of Jesus as the one who was with God in the beginning and who is God’s “only son” (1:18) ... On the whole, however, the movement in chapter 20 complements and completes that of the prologue.²⁰

In an extensive discussion about the relationship of Chapter 20 as a possible early ending and that of the ending narrative occurring in Chapter 21, Anderson introduces authorship and literary composition issues that go beyond the present discussion. He does however, in the eyes of this writer, make a significant contribution to the continuity between the prologue and the ending of the gospel of John in chapter 20. To Anderson, a significance of the similarity between the Prologue and the verse he considers the epilogue, is the use of the same “we” language in the three epistles of John. Anderson interprets this similarity, as the ability of the overall Johannine content to reach out to both Greco-Roman and Jewish audiences as the “cosmic logos of God.”²¹ Anderson writes: “In welcoming into the *family* of God as *children* any who believe in Jesus as *the Christ*, this pivotal thrust of the Prologue matches the announced purpose of the Gospel – that hearers and readers might *believe* (20:31).” (original emphasis)

Viewing the revised outline of the Gospel Prologue and Epilogue as bookends to bracket the ministry narrative provides a strong initial purpose for the legitimacy of the Prologue. Viewed from a narrative paradigm perspective, the Prologue-Epilogue combination provides “good reasons” to accept the purpose of John in employing this literary device. In using the Prologue-Epilogue, John is able to establish a precise identity and authority for Jesus prior to relating the ministry narrative that stands between the

²⁰ Beverly Gaventa, “The Archive of Excess: John 21 and the Problem of Narrative Closure”, in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. Dwight Moody Smith, Alan Culpepper, Clifton Black (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996): 246.

²¹ Anderson, *Riddles* 68-9.

revised outline of the prologue and epilogue. With Jesus established as the “cosmic logos”²² described by Anderson, he begins his ministry with no possibility of doubt about who he is and the authority he has. This view has highly significant implications for the further analysis of selected dialogues in the narrative. The full significance of the revised outline for the Gospel and the view of Chapter 21 as a denouement will be analyzed as the appropriate ending to the gospel following the analysis of two narrative dialogues from the ministry of Jesus in the Gospel of John

Dialogue Analyses

Two dialogues in the Gospel of John are analyzed using the narrative paradigm of Fisher and the communication competencies of Bochner and Kelly. Chapter nine, the healing of the man born blind is presented as a quintessential dialogue containing the compassion, power and authority of Jesus in his ministry. The chapter also captures the enmity and hatred of the religious rulers who rejected his identity, ministry and mission. Chapter thirteen is used to display the relationship of Jesus with his disciples and as a central exposition of his demonstration and teaching on the servant leadership ministry expected from his disciples and from all believers. These two dialogues are perceived as disclosing the fullness of Jesus’ authority and his establishment of a radical and new form of relational leadership.

²² Anderson, *Riddles* 69.

Literary Issues Related to John Chapter 9

Speech Act Theory

Before addressing the multiple dialogues found in John 9:1-41 by the use of Fisher's narrative paradigm and the Bochner and Kelly communication competencies, this writer acknowledges two significant literary issues extant in the Johannine literature. There is writing and discussion on the Speech Act Theory use of Irony in the Gospel of John and specifically on this passage of scripture in chapter nine. Dodd refers to chapter 9 as being "rich in the tragic irony of which the evangelist is master."²³

Culpepper also acknowledges the fact that speech act theory could be useful in analysis of irony in the Gospel of John: "We may anticipate that work in other disciplines will continue to enrich Johannine studies. In particular, we may expect that the work being done in speech act theory will cast new light on the function of irony in John"²⁴

The Speech Act analysis of Irony contains a highly complex set of rules defining various aspects of Irony. An explanation from Kenkadze illustrates some elements of the complexity:

The main thing to bear in mind when decoding irony is to go further than what is meant in the utterance to what remains beyond it; it means that, to our mind, ironic meaning has pragmatic grounds as it is based on the relations between the speaker and the hearer because in the cases of irony the speaker "masks" his utterance and reveals a certain meaning which is mostly negative or forbidden to make public and the hearer decodes this meaning as ironic. Why does the speaker use irony in his speech? ... Each example of irony shows specific features of speaker's communicative intention to impress, criticise, protest, forbid, deny, ask, accuse, blame, reprimand, disapprove and the meaning he discloses. It should be mentioned that almost each case of irony utterance is accompanied by the

²³ Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, 357.

²⁴ Alan Culpepper, "Reading Johannine Irony," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. Alan Culpepper and Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996) 205.

speaker's different emotional state, such as being not only annoyed, furious, angry, irritated, insulted, dissatisfied, but also sympathy.²⁵

While Speech Act Theory is a valid communication approach to the text, the present analysis, acknowledging the scope and complexity of the theory, treats irony without attempting to do an in-depth speech act approach.

Johannine Literary Controversy: "The Jews"

A second literary and textual issue is the use of the designation "The Jews" in the Gospel of John and specifically in John chapter nine. To ignore the extent of this literary and theological issue would amount to academic naiveté by any author doing an analysis of John chapter nine. Notable articles by Johannine New Testament scholars from both Christian and Jewish perspectives offer interpretations, explanations and condemnations of the use of the term, "The Jews". This writer will not enter this discussion in depth. However, the issue directly relates to the immediate and extended context of this project and has direct implications for the wider task and goal of addressing dialogic issues for seminary education.

The writer of this project agrees with other scholars that the term, "The Jews," is a reference to the specific unbelieving Jewish contemporaries of Jesus during his life and ministry. From this viewpoint the term is not an expression referring to other Jewish believers or scholars of prior or later times. Paul Anderson addresses the issue directly and succinctly:

The particular problem with the Fourth Gospel is that the religious adversaries who sought to put Jesus to death and who turned him over to the Romans,

²⁵ Ilona Kenkadze, "Analysis of Irony in the View of Speech Acts," *Spekali* 8 Accessed December 18, 2014. <http://www.spekali.tsu.ge/index.php/en>

insisting that a death sentence be carried out, are called the Ioudaioi in Greek, which can be translated “Jews” but is more accurately translated “Judeans.” The inadequacy of simplistically rendering hoi Ioudaioi in John as “the Jews” instead of “the Judeans” is clear. First, everyone in the narrative is Jewish except for the Romans, the royal official and his household, and possibly the Greeks that come seeking Jesus in John 12 (although they might have been Hellenistic Jews). Everyone else in the story is Jewish, including Jesus’ disciples, their families, the Galileans, and the Judeans. Therefore, they are all Semitic. Further, most of the Semites in John believe in Jesus, which would include the Israelites, the Galileans, and the Samaritans; even some of the southern Ioudaioi believe in him (7:31; 8:30–31; 10:42; 11:45; 12:42). Therefore, to see Jewish people in general as the enemy of Jesus of Nazareth is thoroughly to misread the Fourth Gospel. This is not to excuse anti-Semitic interpretations of John; it is to say they are wrong and have always been so.²⁶

John Chapter Nine: The Man Born Blind

Culpepper, in his study of the literary design of the Gospel of John, describes chapter nine as a high point in the literary ability of the author. “John 9 with its seven scenes marks a new level of literary achievement as it ties the discourse material to the sign (miracle) and weaves the whole into a delightful ironic and dramatic unit. ...By now the evangelist is the master of his material.”²⁷

By the time the dialogues in chapter nine take place, the narrative coherence and fidelity discussed and established by John in the combined Prologue (1:1-18) and Epilogue (20:30-31 about Jesus’ identity and authority) are exhibited by Jesus in his actions and attitude. His behavior throughout the gospel narrative is a demonstration of the self-perception of being ... “the living Word, sent from God and one with God.” (John 1: 18)

Chapter nine of the Gospel of John records a healing miracle that is played out through seven dialogues involving Jesus, his disciples, the Man born blind, the man’s

²⁶ Anderson, *Riddles*, 190-91.

²⁷ Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983): 73.

neighbors and friends, his parents, and the investigating group of Pharisees. John, while recording fewer miracles than any of the other three synoptic gospel writers, distinguished himself by dwelling on extraordinary miracles.²⁸ This healing in John chapter nine is notable because there is no other example of healing a person “born blind” in the Old or New Testament.

Dialogue 1: The healing of the man born blind

The setting for the first dialogue in chapter nine, between Jesus and his disciples, lacks any clear definition of the time or location. The story begins simply, “As they went along.” (9:1) From a narrative point of view, this is a perfect introduction to a story. The opening phrase is not technical, exact, or overly descriptive. The implication is that Jesus, the peripatetic teacher and Lord, was out walking through Jerusalem with his disciples, and they happened upon a man known by the disciples to have been blind from birth. Since no details about the man are given in this brief opening narrative, the fact that he had been born blind had to be either common knowledge or specifically known by the disciples.

In this story, Jesus does not initiate attention to the man. Somewhat uncharacteristically, the disciples notice the man and call attention to him. Dodd makes the point that usually the disciples are not the ones who call attention to people with needs but that often their attitude was unhelpful. In Matthew (15:23) “they urged their Master to dismiss the ‘Canaanite mother’ who was calling after them in the street, and

²⁸ Bauckham, 28.

according to Mark 10:13 they scolded the fathers who wished to bring their children to him.”²⁹

In this first brief interchange in the story the disciples show their familiarity with this man whom Dodd presumes “was accustomed to sit and beg ...at the entrance of the temple.”³⁰ Instead of showing any special concern for the man, they precipitate a dialogue with Jesus by asking a theologically loaded question: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (9:2) Barclay discusses the fact that in Jesus’ day “the Jews connected suffering and sin. They worked on the assumption that wherever there was suffering, somewhere there was sin.”³¹ Dodd confirms that the consensus of the time was to “tacitly assume the principle that suffering, under the dispensation of just Providence, must be retribution for sin.”³²

There is narrative poignancy in this beginning. Harrison fully captures the mood and establishes the reality of the situation:

It happened in Jerusalem. We are not told just where, but it may have been in the neighborhood of the temple that the blind beggar took up his station, for his hope of receiving alms would naturally be greater there than in any other spot. Cf. Acts 3:2. The affliction of blindness brought with it a helplessness which readily pushed him into the ranks of the beggars, even though his parents were still living. He was doubly to be pitied. Shut out of the world of sense with its beauty and fascination, he was shut up to the chance kindness of passers-by. And he had

²⁹ Charles Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 182.

³⁰ Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 185.

³¹ William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Gospel of John: A Commentary*, Vol. 2. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press): 39.

³² Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 187.

never known anything else, for he was blind from birth. He had neither memory nor hope of better things.³³

From the viewpoint of Bochner and Kelly's communication competency the disciples showed a remarkable lack of Empathy. They had more interest in the theology of the situation than a concern for the man before them. Martin Buber would have characterized their behavior as an I-It approach that treated the man as an object, an interesting theological question rather than a person in need.

Jesus, however, immediately answered their question by denying any sin by the man or his parents. He displayed Empathy, and concern for the man by asserting that "this man's affliction came to him to give an opportunity of showing what God can do."³⁴ Barclay goes on to say that in John's gospel "the miracles are always a sign of the glory and power of God" and that... "At its heart is the supreme truth that the glory of God lies in his compassion, and that he never so full reveals his glory as when he reveals his pity."³⁵

Jesus immediately affirms his mission by stating to the disciples that there is urgency in doing the works of God now and that there will not always be opportunity. He says Night is coming, but that at this point he is still the light of the world. (9:3-5) To prove his concern and power and to reveal the glory of the Father Jesus spits on the ground, makes mud, plasters the man's eyes and sends him off to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam, to regain his sight.

³³ William Harrison, "The Son of God Among the Sons of Men," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 102 no. 405 (Jan-Mar 1945): 49.

³⁴ Barclay, Vol. 2. 239.

³⁵ Barclay, Vol. 2. 239.

This scene begins an amazing story where Jesus is present only at the beginning and end, yet remains the central focus throughout, a story where a blind man has his physical and spiritual eyes opened and becomes, through a harrowing inquisition by the Pharisees, a vocal, convinced and convincing disciple.

In addition to the introductory dialogue between Jesus and the disciples, and the anointing of the eyes and the instructions to the blind man, there are fast shifting scenes. Neighbors and friends are involved. The man's parents are cross-examined by the Pharisees. The man is repeatedly questioned and verbally abused. The process brings about startling changes in the man, and ends with an ironic pronouncement about a different kind of blindness Jesus cannot cure. The entire story, from the point of view of the Narrative Paradigm, is full of "good reasons" brought about by coherence and fidelity.

The coherence and fidelity of Fisher's Narrative Paradigm emerge in this story in the brief statement, "so the man went and washed and came home seeing." (9:7b) The narrative does not explicitly fill in any details about how the man got from the gate of the temple to the pool of Siloam. Two important facts emerge. He obviously understood that something good would happen if he did what Jesus told him to do, and he summoned enough gumption and personal determination to get to the pool by himself and wash his eyes. The effort on the man's part, the determination he displayed and the healing that took place make the story hang together as believable. Dodd, at this point asserts:

In our present passage, ...the patient is bidden, 'Go and wash in the pool of Siloam.' He goes, carries out his instructions, and emerges with the power of sight. This gives a different aspect to the story: the cooperation of the patient is demanded. His readiness to obey the command of Jesus is an essential element in the cure, and is in fact a measure of his faith, though John does not use the term. The fact that he goes to Siloam unaccompanied (it would appear) by Jesus,

supported only by his own faith and determination, makes the contribution of the patient to his own recovery more marked in contrast to the blind man and the deaf-mute in Mark, who are passive throughout.³⁶

Dialogue 2: The Neighbors of the man born blind

Details are not always revealed early in a good story. There is no expansive narrative about his trip, his washing or his shock and amazement about suddenly being able to immediately see everything around him. From a literary point of view, part of what creates “good reasons” in a story is the pace of the story. There is no waiting in this narrative, he goes, he washes, he sees and immediately after, the story transitions to the man’s own neighborhood where his appearance is met with both skepticism and belief by his neighbors!

Abrams, in an online Commentary, makes a valid point that the healing had an impact on the man’s appearance:

His "neighbors" meaning fellow Jews who knew of his blindness now saw him walking around and that he now could see. It seems in astonishment they said to one another "Isn't this the man who was blind and sat and begged?" His healing could have changed his appearance and therefore brought into question if this was the once blind beggar. Many blind people have deformed or discolored eyes. However, the man’s healing was complete and he was made whole totally cured and was not immediately recognized. Some said this was the man and other were not so sure. However, the man who had sat and begged for such a long time spoke and emphatically declared, "I am he."³⁷

The neighborhood interaction helps the story to hang together. By going beyond the actual healing process and bringing the man back to his neighborhood, the story makes two important points. His neighbors, who had known the man all his life, after normal doubt and suspicion, authenticated him as genuine. There was genuine human

³⁶ Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 183.

³⁷ Cooper Abrams, “John 9:1-51: Jesus Heals the Blind Man,” Accessed October 26, 2014, <http://bible-truth.org/JohnChapter9.html>

interaction that moved through a normal process, from doubt and incredulity to genuine acceptance when the man emphatically used the competence of Speaking for Self, and insisted, “I am the man.” (9:9)

Once his identity was established, more coherence and fidelity emerge in the story when the human curiosity of the neighbors immediately insists on knowing how the event happened and who did the healing. The explanation by the healed man comes across with a straight, simple eloquence: “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.” (9:11)

The above statement contains the Bochner and Kelly components of Descriptive competence in the compact sentence with the details about the healing process. Jesus is named, the mud process is clear, the trip to Siloam is made known, and the result now stands before them. There is a combination of Self-disclosure, and Owning – use of “I” language and Speaking for Self in this example of Descriptive communication.

As important and poignant as the humanity portrayed in the scene, is the establishment of a community of undeniable witnesses to the fact that a man born blind now can see. The facts have been established beyond the word of the man himself. Now his neighbors and friends are convinced of the healing, and they want to know where Jesus is. The man bluntly replies: “I don’t know.”

Dialogue 3: The Pharisees first interview of the man born blind

No motive is given for why the group escorted the man to the Pharisees. Their decision may be explained by the fact that it was a Sabbath day, and they had heard of the controversy with the Pharisees in chapter eight, and their attempt to stone Jesus. It is also

possible, they were aware of how Jesus shamed the Pharisees in their entrapment attempt with the woman supposedly taken in adultery. These two incidents could have provoked the neighborhood to stay on the side of caution against offending the Pharisees.

Cook seems to support this as a primary reason because of their focus on the vividness of the actions described by this neighbor:

"The man they *call* Jesus *made* some mud and put it on my eyes. He *told* me *to go* to Siloam and *wash*. So I *went* and *washed*, and then I *could see*. This verb filled explanation is graphic and descriptive. These are the words of a simple human being, unaccustomed to speculation, whose life is measured in terms of actions and their consequences. Yet, though his neighbours saw the evidence of a changed life before them, not all of them believed, perhaps because their faculties were blinded by their religious presuppositions. The presence of a once blind person in their midst has become a matter of judgment, of crisis. Nonetheless, their action is inconclusive because of their fear of the religious authorities, to whom they will now turn over their neighbour.³⁸ [original emphasis]

While not noted in the literature encountered by this writer, one could legitimately speculate that common humanity, always present in critical situations, emerged, and that, in addition to caution, they just wanted to see another big confrontation between the Pharisees and Jesus. People do like a public fight. In any event, they dutifully delivered the man to the next stage in the story, the inquisition of the Pharisees.

To give the Pharisees due respect, their behavior in examining this man and questioning his experience was not out of line. For someone to aver that an authentic miracle has happened was certainly a serious spiritual and public issue. After the initial questioning of the man as to how he had received his sight and hearing the repetitious,

³⁸ Guillermo Cook, "Seeing, Judging and Acting: Evangelism in Jesus' Way," *International Review of Mission* 87 no. 346 (July 1988) 391.

unadorned answer this simple man gave, “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.” (9:15) the Pharisees were divided.

Some seized on the legality and prohibition of healing work on the Sabbath, and contended that Jesus was not from God. Others, aware of the miraculous, contended that a sinner could not perform such signs. Cook again provides some challenging analysis of this division:

The Pharisees were divided into two groups. One faction, probably the majority, judged the healing of the "man blind from his birth" on the basis of their religious traditions and condemned Jesus. What was probably a minority group, judging from the final outcome, judged the event on the basis of the deed itself, from its *praxis*, and refused to be rushed into making a negative verdict. ... The "top down" (or deductive) approach is to take refuge in the safety of doctrinal propositions. On the other hand, working "from the bottom up", one must begin from a concrete situation and work inductively towards what may turn out to be a risky and potentially controversial conclusion... The division is false, because theory and practice are inseparable and should always be in dynamic tension.³⁹

The majority group turned again to the man born blind and, amazingly, asked his opinion. “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” (9:17) Such a straight question did not intimidate or deter the man from his established blunt answers. The man replied, “He is a prophet.” (9:17b) Here again, the story deepens. The man does not cringe, quail, or hesitate with his answer. He has made a decision. He believes no ordinary person could have healed him, so he knowingly or unknowingly does a dangerous thing with this group of theologians. He states a conviction.

At this point, he is not challenged or rebuked openly but is ignored in a contemptuous way. He is put aside. In a further attempt to prove him wrong, and to

³⁹ Cook, 388.

establish that he really had not received his sight, the Pharisees abandon him to question his mother and father.

From a narrative paradigm point of view, there is a foreshadowing found in his assertion that Jesus is a Prophet. Karris, perceives the blind man's statement that Jesus is a Prophet as part of a growing, changing inward progression and evaluation of Jesus by the man born blind. "In the profound irony of (9:1-41) the blind beggar, who is ignorant of the law, has his eyes opened ever more deeply into the meaning of Jesus. Note the progress of the blind beggar's evaluation of Jesus: "the man called Jesus" (9:11) "He is a prophet."⁴⁰ (9:17) This emerging insight gives Narrative Coherence to the story by bringing the man born blind forward as a more active participant in the process of the story. While the Pharisees regress more and more into a determined attitude of skepticism and look for proof of their *a priori* point of view that there was no miracle involved, the blind man is developing a growing awareness that it would take more than an ordinary man to give him the miracle of sight and in his characteristic bluntness, decides Jesus is a Prophet. While still marginalized as an inferior by the Pharisees, the man is moving ahead in belief and convictions. He is gaining more than eyesight; he is beginning to express insight. This is a "good reason" according to Fisher, to see the story as hanging together and developing on more than one level.

Dialogue 4: The Pharisees and the parents

In turning to the interaction of the Pharisees and the parents of the man born blind, the Pharisees run up against passive resistance. It is obvious from the text that the

⁴⁰ Robert Karris, *Jesus and the Marginalized in John's Gospel*. ed. Mary Ann Getty (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 48.

parents only provided two brief statements about the son. “We know he is our son,” the parents answered, “and we know he was born blind.” This statement, of course, was a devastation to the Pharisees. Now the miracle has been established, by the man himself, by the neighbors who recognized him as the one born blind, and by a third set of witnesses, the parents. This statement fulfilled the law given in Deuteronomy 19:15. “One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

As a couple, they may have been simply telling the truth when they refused to go beyond those two statements. One does not know what their son had revealed to them. They may not have known the details of how their son had received his sight.

They wisely took refuge in the law. “But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.” The narrator explains their fear of being put out of the Synagogue if they in any way acknowledged or defended Jesus. Some commentators see the parents as abandoning or refusing to defend their son, but from the point of view of the story, John exonerates them by showing the Pharisees to already be vindictive enough to cast out of the worship and the community any who accepted, defended or believed in Jesus.

While there is no official “age of Majority” designated in scripture, there are indications in several Old Testament passages that the age of 20 was a significant point.

While the age of majority is not designated as such in biblical literature, the age of 20 seems to be the standard for purposes both of taxation (e.g., Exodus 30:14) and conscription (e.g., Numbers 1:3, 24). This age seems to apply equally to males and to females (see Leviticus 27:4-7), albeit only for taxation. The age for moral responsibility seems to be the same. In Numbers, God distinguishes those of age 20 and above, guilty of mutinous, faithless complaints, from “your little ones” and

"your children," who alone will arrive in the Land of Israel as promised (Numbers 14:26-35). So the age of 20 marked the transition to adulthood in the biblical period, but no rite marking the transition is recorded there.⁴¹

The narrative "good reasons" exposed in this interaction show coherence and believability of the story by revealing the Pharisees as threatening and intimidating by their very presence in the home of the parents. The parents are portrayed as brave enough to stand up and claim their son and to tell the truth about his being blind from birth. To go any further would have made them victims in the story, thus John portrays them as staying out of the immediate inquisition and still able to worship in the Synagogue.

Bochner and Kelly would say the parents used the combined interpersonal skills of Authenticity and Self-disclosure, though they never heard the terms. They disclosed only what was safe to disclose about the son. They were not Authentic in their communication to the point that they would reveal in spoken dialogue, what they really thought or believed inwardly about the healing.

There are times when interpersonal wisdom leans on a prime rule approach of self-disclosure developed by this writer. "Self-disclosure belongs to you. It is your right and your responsibility. No one has a right to demand that you interpersonally self disclose." Since the son had reached the age of majority, there was no requirement for them to go beyond what they disclosed about the son's birth and blindness. Anything else was inimical to their well being. The parents showed practical wisdom in limiting their

⁴¹ The Age Requirement for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, http://www.myjewishlearning.com/life/Life_Events/BarBat_Mitzvah/About_BarBat_Mitzvah/Age_Requirement.shtml Accessed October 20, 2014.

personal thoughts by not practicing the complete authenticity of Bochner and Kelly and in also opting for limited self-disclosure with their inquisitors.

They did not lie. One form of lying is withholding something the other party has a right to know. Refusing to self disclose is an appropriate communication choice. In present society, this behavior is called the right to refuse to self incriminate or the right to remain silent on issues. Sometimes in communication contexts fraught with threat or danger, less is both wise and better. This story holds together as believable and as having good reasons for the way the parents responded to the Pharisees.

Dialogue Five: The Pharisees second interview of the man born blind

In the previous interaction, the last words of the parents to the Pharisees are “He is of age, ask him.” (9:21) In the following interaction between the man born blind and the Pharisees, the first statement they make is not a question. It is a demand and an insult. One issue they failed to perceive is the growing strength of personality and conviction of the man they are harassing.

Here is a man who was born blind. He is at least 20 years old, because he has reached the age of majority. He is a street person who has established a place at the temple that makes him visible and known to neighbors and friends, and doubtless to many others on a daily basis. He was blind, but not helpless. The fact that he negotiated his way from the temple, downhill on a busy street with uneven steps, to wash in the pool, showed initiative and determination.

At this point in the story, he has had enough sight to know the incredible change from darkness to light, from blind dependence on others to being made whole. He can now see, and he has a future ahead of him. He has become a man with growing self-

esteem, a person capable of being insulted and irritated with this group of theologians who call him a liar and demand that he turn against the best benefactor he ever had.

He has also progressed in his own spiritual thinking and convictions and is now convinced, because of the miracle of sight, that the man Jesus is a prophet. He reasons inwardly that no ordinary man could have given him immediate eyesight when he washed that mud off his eyes.

The Pharisees begin this second inquisition of the man with an attitude of superiority and condescension. They have ignored their own law given in Moses writing in Deuteronomy 15:7: “If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them.” Jesus echoed a condemnation of this attitude in Matthew 23:23: “Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.”

Karris expresses their superior attitude well:

In 9:23-34 we find the Pharisees, who claim to be disciples of Moses and the beggar born blind ... the religious leaders are superior to those who are ignorant of the law ... the Pharisees treat the beggar as an inferior and marginalize him. He belongs to the “people of the land.” The crowd has believed in Jesus because they, too, are ignorant of the law... This marginalized person, instead of being accepted back into society after he has received his sight, is interrogated by the religious leaders.⁴²

From the point of view of communication Competence, the man born blind perceived this attitude of superiority in the opening demand of the Pharisees: “Give glory to God by telling the truth,” they said. “We know this man is a sinner.” (John 9:24) The

⁴² Karris, 49.

man recognized that they still perceived and treated him as a liar and a sinner. In reality, they now face a resolute individual who is tired of the denial of these persons he sees sitting before him. He is fed up with their attitude and their refusal to acknowledge his healing.

When hearing the accusation that Jesus is a sinner, the man refuses to be drawn into any theological assessment beyond his knowledge, but insists on sticking with the fact that he was blind, but now he can see. With this unsophisticated, but penetrating bluntness, he brings the issue back to center. He can now see.

Sanders interprets their question “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” (9:26) as another attempt at subterfuge:

The man, however, refuses to commit himself to an opinion on the merits of Jesus’ action, and allows them no escape from their dilemma by reminding them of the facts which conflict with their preconceived ideas. So they ask him to go over the facts again, hoping perhaps that he will contradict himself and so enable them to discredit him.⁴³

At this point, the man born blind rebukes the Pharisees with an exasperated answer using Meta-communication, (talking about the way they have talked to him). He answered, “I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?” (9:27) The interpersonal communication basis of this answer is a combination of three Bochner and Kelly Competencies. First, there is a direct Owning of Feelings and Thoughts by Speaking for Self. Second, there is a refusal to Self Disclose again what he has already told them. Third, the above two competencies are combined and become a blunt, concise,

⁴³ Joseph Sanders, *A Commentary on the Gospel of St. John* ed. Brian Mastin (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1968), 242-43.

competency of Descriptiveness. The man born blind is holding up his end of the conversation as an equal.

This communication behavior is highly competent. There is no obsequiousness, backing down, or relenting. In his reply, the man expresses a new self-esteem and confidence when he combines an accusation followed by a taunt. The accusation points out a central communication fact. “I have told you already and you did not listen.” (9:27) The statement, “you did not listen,” goes to the heart of the communication issue. Not to listen to someone is Disconfirmation, a communication term describing an interaction when one is ignored to the point that what they have said is discounted by treating them as if they had not spoken. The centrality of this issue from the point of view of the man born blind is, “you did not listen”.

Em Griffin in dealing with the issue of persuasion discusses how pressing someone to abandon a point of view or change a conviction succeeds only in convincing him or her to become firmer in what is believed. Griffin’s axiom applies to the pressure by the Pharisees to convince the man that there was no miracle in his seeing and in his changed life:

True conversion affects not only our “religious” responses, but other attitudes as well. ... As long as we seek to impress others that we are right and they are wrong, we will merely drive them away. ... Paradoxically, we have the most influence on people when we are the least manipulative. ... We can be humanly competent as we seek to persuade, or we can butcher the job.⁴⁴

The Pharisees butchered the job in trying to pressure and manipulate this changed man.

⁴⁴ Em Griffin, 5-6.

The last interchange between the Pharisees and the man born blind turns from an inquisition to a reversal of roles. The Pharisees resort to a well known communication process, that of an *ad homonym* accusation about the man born blind and about Jesus. With a total loss of dignity as scholars of the law, they turn to a reaction of anger and sarcasm: “Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.” (9:28)

Köstenberger, in commenting on this point of the interaction summarizes the frustration of the Pharisees:

After giving their investigation an air of objectivity (9:13-27) the Pharisees’ prejudice now erupts in full force cf.(9:34). Employing sarcasm was a common way of dealing with people of perceived lower status, which conveyed the notion that they were unworthy of receiving a direct answer. ...In other words, Moses is a proven quality; Jesus is unproven, a Galilean upstart.⁴⁵

In an interesting turn of events, the man born blind responds with irony, and use of his own sarcasm. In the longest statement in this dialogic interchange, he becomes assertive and dominant in his answers:

“The man answered, Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. (9:30-33)

Köstenberger comments:

Now the man born blind becomes the teacher, reasoning with the Jewish authorities on their own terms. His tenacity contrasts with the timidity of both his

⁴⁵ Andreas Köstenberger, *John*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. ed. Robert Yarbrough and Robert Stein (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2004): 290-91.

parents. ... Unable to refute the man's logic, the authorities resort to personal attack. They cannot bear the truth he represents.⁴⁶

The Pharisees respond with a final insult and an exercise of power. "To this they replied, 'you were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!' And they threw him out." In their own eyes, they had won. They threw the man out of the inquisition and back on to the street where he had been a blind beggar. Schnackenberg sums up the final interaction and the justification that the Pharisees felt:

These Jews...are thinking of the particular state of this man who was born blind. They trace his misfortune back to the sins of his parents (cf. v. 2) and describe him as particularly rejected in the sight of God. How dare he teach them, who explore the scriptures and faithfully observe the Law! It is the blindness of people who insist on their own cleverness and authority. When arguments fail, force takes over. "They cast him out". There is no evidence that this expression was used for excommunication from the synagogue, but... being put out of the meeting room is also a symbol for expulsion from the Jewish religious community.⁴⁷

In the interaction between the man born blind and the Pharisees, the longest interaction in the story, narrative "good reasons" of Fisher come together to show coherence and fidelity. By the time this interaction takes place, the roles of antagonist and protagonist in the story are firmly in place. The Pharisees are the aggressors, and the man born blind is the present protagonist. What makes his role important is not just his struggle to authenticate his healing experience, but also the fact that he is defending the real protagonist of the story, Jesus. The fact that Jesus is not mentioned in the story except in the first and last scenes does not mean he is absent. Dodd characterizes the passage as central to the story:

⁴⁶ Köstenberger, 291.

⁴⁷ Rudloff Schnackenberg, *The Gospel According to St John* Vol. 2, (New York: The Seabury Press 2011): 252.

As sheer drama, this trial scene is one of the most brilliant in the gospel, rich in the tragic irony of which the evangelist is master. The one-time beggar stands before his betters, to be badgered into denying the one thing of which he is certain. But the defendant proper is Jesus Himself, judged *in absentia*.⁴⁸

There is narrative rationality in the man's certainty about his healing and how it happened. Fidelity is added to the story because there is a defense of what is good and compassionate and true. Gaining eyesight changed this man's perspective on life. In this interaction, he is the defender of what is good and clear and undeniable. He resists the intimidation, the lack of faith and the aggressiveness of the Pharisees.

The story has coherence in the outcome. The Pharisees seem to win. They have what they believe is the last word: "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us! And they threw him out." (9:34) Köstenberger points out a final irony displayed in this statement:

By alleging that the man was "steeped in sin at birth" (cf. 9:2-3) the Pharisees now tacitly acknowledge that the man had indeed been blind from birth. ...given the absolute connections that they found between sin and suffering... Thus, the Pharisees are unduly self righteous in linking the man's sinfulness from birth with this physical defect of blindness while failing to include themselves under the rubric "sinful from birth."⁴⁹

The coherence and fidelity in this ending are found in the consistent willfulness of the Pharisees. Just as the man is adamant in holding to his healing and a growing understanding about Jesus, the Pharisees are portrayed as holding on to their status and pride. This interaction ends with the irony of the seeming victory of the Pharisees. In a literary sense, it is a peak in the rising action that leaves them confident in their decision and judgment of the man.

⁴⁸ Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, 357.

⁴⁹ Köstenberger, 293.

Dialogue Six: Jesus and the man born blind

“Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” (9:35) Turner and Mantey, in an over-dramatic, story-like, paragraph set the scene for the final interaction between the man born blind and Jesus:

Jesus found him. This is one of the most touching scenes in the New Testament. We see Jesus, the divine Lord of Light and Life, looking up an ordinary beggar, a person at the bottom rung of humanity's ladder, who had just been excluded from membership in his synagogue. ...It was... the Lord of life who sought until he found the courageous witness.⁵⁰

Bultmann, in a more Germanic bluntness, simply says: “Jesus now finds the healed man and puts to him the decisive question, “Do you believe in the Son of Man.”⁵¹ (9:35) Bultmann, in his discussion makes the point that the man does not recognize Jesus as “the eschatological bringer of salvation:” but that he does know it refers to Jesus:

The indirectness of the dialogue – due to the fact that Jesus does not ask straight out, “Do you believe in me?” – is designed to show the difference between the man's previous recognition of Jesus and the confession which is now required of him. The healed man has recognized Jesus as a prophet (v 17), as authorized by God, (v 33) and has thus come as far as he can within the Jewish sphere. ...The immediate cause of the confession is neither a theophany, nor a straightforward demand that he should believe, compliance with which would be no more than an arbitrary act of will.⁵²

The man responds to Jesus question in the direct way he has communicated throughout this story. “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.” (9:36) He gets a clear, unmistakable answer from Jesus. “You have now seen him;

⁵⁰ George Turner and Julius Mantey, *The Gospel of John*, The Evangelical Commentary Vol. 4. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964): 208.

⁵¹ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. George Beasley-Murray (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966): 338.

⁵² Bultmann, *John*, 338-39.

in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” (9:37) The man’s response is immediate. His perception of Jesus has progressed in stages through the story. “The man they call Jesus,” (9:11) “He is a Prophet,” (9:17) “If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” (9:33) Now, when Jesus reveals who he is, the man immediately moves into faith; Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. (9:38)

In the story, these are the last words of the man born blind. He received his sight from Jesus. As he was forced to defend the miracle by the Pharisees, he became more and more convinced that Jesus was from God; and when given the complete truth by Jesus, his spiritual growth is complete. The story ends with a man who has moved out of darkness with physical eyesight and into life with ultimate spiritual insight.

Sanders, commenting on the final interaction between Jesus and the man, says that the title Son of Man did not deter the man from complete acceptance of Jesus as Lord:

By word and action the man shows that he acknowledges Jesus’ claim. But it is not clear what he exactly understood by it. He again addresses as κύριε, but this need not mean more than ‘sir’, as in verse 36. Equally Worshipped, (προσεκύνησεν) could mean only a rather extravagant gesture of respect, ...But John most probably means us to take κύριε as the divine title Lord, and Worshipped in the full sense which it has in every other case in which it is used in the Fourth Gospel, ... in all of which God is the expressed or implied object of the verb.⁵³ [original emphasis]

This ending has Jesus and the man both using the Bochner and Kelly competencies of direct Self-disclosure, Speaking for Self, Descriptiveness, and Authenticity. There is nothing complicated or obscure about the interaction. Jesus identifies himself as divine, and the man addresses him as Lord and worships him.

⁵³ Sanders, 245.

Dialogue Seven: Jesus and the Pharisees

The final scene in the story brings a conclusion that leaves no doubt about justice and judgment for the Pharisees. Any good story ends with what is evil or unjust being put right. Fisher's concept of Narrative Rationality, Coherence and Fidelity demands that ethical and civil behaviors are at the heart of a good story. He believes that where there is disagreement on an issue, the best argumentation texts insist:

Be honest, fair, responsible, civil, respectful, rational, ... do not belittle, degrade, demean or de-humanize others. ... The form of life that is life itself is the realm of the universal. It is the container of ordinary forms of life and all sorts of practices. It's constitutive values are the core tenets of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: mercy, compassion, justice, humility and love.⁵⁴

The final resolution of this story comes when the Pharisees hear Jesus say, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." 9:39 They immediately react. "What? Are we blind too?"

Köstenberger sums up the ending to this story with the "Good Reasons" coherence and fidelity of justice being served:

The Pharisees, for their part, in yet another instance of Johannine irony, are completely unaware of their own spiritual blindness (v. 40) The formerly blind man walks home not only with his physical sight, but also a spiritually changed man – a believer and worshiper of Jesus (v. 38) ... Jesus has the last word in a scathing pronouncement that leaves the Pharisees speechless and entirely exposed for their spiritual blindness. More than a mere miracle, this Johannine sign turns out to be the highly symbolic display of Jesus' ability to cure spiritual blindness. Conversely, as the present story makes clear, the only thing against which there is no remedy is spiritual pride that claims to see while being in fact blind.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Walter Fisher, "The Ethics of Argument and Practical Wisdom," (Keynote address, Summer Conference of the National Communication Association/American Forensic Association, (Alta, Utah, Summer 1999). 6.

⁵⁵ Andreas Köstenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1999), 121.

The ultimate irony in this story is that while the story begins with a unique miracle of Jesus restoring sight, the story ends with a willful, blind clinging to spiritual pride and rejection by the Pharisees. They display an unbelief that even Jesus cannot cure.

John 13: The Servant Leadership Lesson

The Betrayal of Judas

The thirteenth chapter of John has two fairly distinct narratives woven together, yet bearing on separate issues. To preserve the coherence and fidelity of the central story of the servant leadership action and the servant leadership teaching of Jesus these two narratives are considered separately. First, the separate paradoxical servant lesson that emerges from the betrayal narrative about Judas.

At two places in the first seventeen verses of John 13, there is a foreshadowing of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot. In the second verse, the first mention is made of the devil putting into Judas' heart the betrayal of Jesus. In 13:18-30 of the chapter there is the extended narrative about the betrayal of Judas.

The only element of the issue about Judas that fits into the servant narrative is a paradoxical awareness that could only follow after the supper and the servant leadership demonstration and teaching was over. Jesus in washing the feet of the disciples also washed the feet of Judas. This embedded truth, of course, could not be realized until after the betrayal and arrest and the crucifixion; however, the act is implicit in the narrative as another element showing the consistency of Jesus' love. That fact shows narrative paradigm "good reasons" in demonstrating that the love of Jesus is not limited. The consistency of his servant-hood and love even for the one who betrayed him rings true

with early church readers as well as modern readers. Jesus, unlike other leaders, would not exclude even Judas from his concern.

The Servant Leadership Narrative

The best application of the narrative paradigm of Fisher to John chapter 13 relates to the plain sense of the main narrative. John presents Jesus as interrupting the normal meal with an unexpected, action. As far as hierarchy is concerned, there was no lower position in society than a Gentile slave who washed the feet of household guests. Carson insists that, ironically, the disciples would not wash each other's feet. He reveals that foot washing was an act reserved for slaves, and was so menial, that with some Jews, only a Gentile slave washed feet. Even Jewish slaves were exempt from this humiliating task.⁵⁶

As the Lord of the disciples, Jesus takes on the role of the lowest form of a servant known to that day and begins to wash their feet. The impact on the disciples was astounding. The only disciple who could overcome the shock was, characteristically, Simon Peter. His protest to Jesus expressed the depth of the scandal that had paralyzed the room.

In Peter's dialogue with Jesus, more of Fisher's "good reasons" emerge from the story. The incongruity of a leader of any group taking the lowest form of service introduces the narrative device of paradox. Paradox functions to introduce both irony and enjoyment for a reader. The immediate result of the foot washing is the reader's awareness of irony. This is not a job for Jesus! The second result is some mental headshaking at how Peter, by being outspoken puts his foot in his mouth again.

⁵⁶ Donald Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991): 462.

For John to use the paradox in Jesus' actions is much more effective in driving home the point of what Jesus expected from his disciples. They have seen his Lordship proven in miracles. They know the power to furnish wine for a wedding, heal the son of a Gentile, forgive a woman taken in adultery, heal a man born blind, and raise Lazarus from the dead. There is no one Jesus will not serve. They also have watched him cleanse the temple, stand up to the Pharisees and assert his divinity. Now he paradoxically serves them in a humiliating and embarrassing action. In doing so he can again address their ideas of competition over power and position as disciples.

Jesus demonstrates what the disciples are to do: love and serve. His action shows narrative fidelity. Readers can identify with the values of the story. Jesus does the unexpected. There is narrative coherence in the story. The way Jesus gets his point across makes sense; the action is easy to follow. The reaction of Peter, in particular, is believable and in character with his previous and subsequent behavior recorded in Gospel of John.

An earlier account recorded by Mark and Luke of dispute and resentment among the disciples about power and position presents a subtle irony in this story. The servant behavior and teaching of Jesus is a repetition of his previous rebuke of the hierarchy and power based leadership ambitions of the disciples. In this story there is the moral inducement of the narrative paradigm that moves the disciples a step closer to understanding their roles in the service of one another and others.

Use of the literary devices of paradox and irony make these first seventeen verses of chapter thirteen and the ensuing passion narrative believable. This pericope serves as a

dramatic narrative beginning to the teachings of Jesus for his disciples from this point forward to the end of chapter seventeen.

Bultmann, in discussing chapter thirteen of John, contrasts the events as recorded by John and the writers of the Synoptic gospels. He makes the point that during this time, the events are similar:

“Jesus is alone with his disciples after the end of his public activity and before the event of the passion. ... There too, the disciples are taught about the future... there is a meal by night, and with it the prophecy of the disciples’ fate. ... and like John, they include a prayer of Jesus. ... But in the synoptics the account is broken down into separate scenes, which are spread over the space of several days. ... In John, on the other hand, everything that immediately precedes the passion and lead up to it is compressed into the conversations and discourses of a single night.”⁵⁷

Köstenberger divides the first seventeen verses of John thirteen into three sections. The setting, (3:1-5), Jesus washes his disciples’ feet, (13:6-11), the object lesson, (verbal explanation) (13:12-17).⁵⁸ This threefold division gives a structure to the dialogic analysis of the passage by the use of Fisher’s narrative paradigm.

The setting for the lesson

At the wedding of Cana in Galilee where he performed his first miracle, Jesus said to Mary, his mother, “My hour has not yet come.” In that context he did not disclose the full meaning of the statement. He chose not to self disclose. In this final dinner with his disciples, Jesus has come to the beginning of this final “hour” in this time with his gathered disciples. The setting for the story is found in verse one: “It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.”

⁵⁷Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 457.

⁵⁸Köstenberger Commentary, 400.

(13:1) This introduction, comes at the conclusion of what most Johannine scholars call the “Book of Signs ” (1:19—12:50) and the beginning of “The Book of Glory” (13:1—20:31). The central sentence setting up the following literary narrative is “Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.” Just as the prologue to the gospel affirmed the oneness of Jesus as “the logos”, and as being “in the beginning with God and he was God” and “the Word made flesh”, so John echoes his identity and authority again at the beginning of this episode with the disciples. The assertion that he would rejoin the Father is a re-establishment of identity that lends narrative cohesion and fidelity to the following story. Jesus the leader shares a meal, a visual message and verbal teaching to his disciples on servant leadership. This passage is the beginning of his preparation and support for his followers of what he knows will come.

Jesus’ dialogue and actions in the first seventeen verses of chapter thirteen establish a strong message about leadership among his disciples and a message about hierarchy and position. In Luke’s rendition of the last meal, there is a single verse that introduces an unsettled issue about position and authority among the disciples: “A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.” Luke 22:24

In Mark’s gospel, there was a request by James and John for high position in Jesus’ kingdom to sit on his right and left. (See also Matthew 20:20-24 for a parallel passage of this request with slightly different details.) This request provoked resentment among the disciples. At each of those earlier times, Jesus gave a strong message, foreshadowing the interaction in this passage in John. The passage in Mark is one rendition of Jesus’ pronouncement:

You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead,

whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:35-41)

Prior to the last supper Jesus made explicit the teaching that hierarchy, authority and prestige were not his hallmarks of discipleship. John's story of the last supper does not include the dispute recorded in Mark's gospel, but as a last act of making servant leadership a continuing principle for his disciples, Jesus first demonstrates then speaks. Actions, in this passage, speak louder than words. The dialogue is not complex. (12:7-10a)

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered,

"Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean.

Carson sets the scene for the beginning of the dialogue in the passage when he discusses the first reaction of Peter:

Doubtless all the disciples were extremely embarrassed by these proceedings. For most of them their embarrassment bred beleaguered silence; for Peter, it meant he had to object. ... The Greek construction of his question suggests indignant emphasis 'Are *you* going to wash *my* feet'. ... '*No you shall never wash my feet.*' [original emphasis]

Jesus responds with firmness. "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Carson, 463.

Carson again gives a possible context for the statement:

The notion of ‘having a part (meros) in’ something is regularly used with respect to inheritance, and, in Jewish thought, can refer to participation in eschatological blessings. ...Perhaps Peter understood an eschatological reference in this verse; he certainly understood that he wanted to be linked with Jesus.⁶⁰

With Petrine impulsiveness and exuberance established at other places in the New Testament, (prior to and after this example) he replied. “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!” (13:9) Without going into the extended reply of Jesus and the implications about Judas, or the multiple interpretations of Johannine expositors, Jesus’ first sentence settles the issue. Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean.

In the narrative Jesus puts on his clothes again and states the key question. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” (12:12a)

Bultmann gives support for the centrality of the foot washing as demonstration of service in his comment on verses 12:6-8 where he critiques other interpreters:

They have fully developed only one aspect of the paradox presented by the picture of the Master washing his disciples’ feet: the disciple is to accept such service. The other side comes into its own in vv. 12-20: the disciple for his part, is to render this kind of service to his fellow disciple. ...Jesus’ action is an example binding on his disciples.⁶¹

The central commentary on the purpose of the foot washing is made by Jesus in his final comment on the demonstration:

“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for

⁶⁰ Carson, 464.

⁶¹ Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 474-75.

you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. (12:13-17).

The last supper of Jesus was a capstone teaching on the role the disciples were to take in the future. Servant leadership is demonstrated in washing the feet of the disciples and then confirmed by verbal teaching. In asserting that he is their Teacher and Lord he shows the Bochner and Kelly competency of self-disclosure, and that of owning – speaking for self. There is authority and ownership of who he is and of his right to set firm expectations of them as disciples. There is also the competency of descriptiveness in his statement “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. (13:15) His behavior was that of a servant, his demonstration and teaching was that of a leader.

Summary of the narratives

The narratives and dialogues of the healing of the man born blind, and the demonstration of servant leadership at the last supper, each provide a platform for examination of different aspects of Jesus’ interpersonal communication.

With the miraculous healing of the man born blind Jesus solidifies the antagonism of the dominant group of unbelieving Pharisees by an act of compassion and miraculous healing. In the object lesson of the foot washing with his disciples, he reinforces his previous teaching about their primary roles as servants and leads them to the cusp of the passion and resurrection narratives.

The analysis of the Johannine Prologue-Epilogue sections of the book, along with two dialogic interactions with Jesus serve to demonstrate two key communication processes evident in the Johannine dialogues and the narrative structure of the Gospel.

The use of dialogic story is established as a valid and important paradigm for conveying truth. The narrative paradigm and the Interpersonal Competencies of Bochner and Kelly are established as a legitimate alternative to the strictly rational, western paradigm vehicle for exploring and understanding scripture. The power of story is illustrated and legitimized as an important tool for scriptural understanding by both trained theologians and ordinary Christian believers. The narrative paradigm, concepts of “good reasons”, coherence and fidelity give legitimate options for a Christian literary approach to story and dialogue. The dialogic analysis of the last supper narrative provides a Servant Leadership approach to ministry.

The key fact that Jesus did not hesitate to carry on a dialogue with individuals, from any level of society is obvious in the Gospel of John as well as in the Synoptic gospels. Whether a blind beggar in the street or Pontius Pilate in the seat of Roman power, dialogue is central to the servant ministry of Jesus. The culmination of the story from the gospel of John in chapter 21 is a final commissioning of the disciples to continue the ministry of Jesus and a reaffirmation of their role to be servant leaders.

The Denouement: Chapter 21

Chapter 21, as a denouement, and follow up to the servant demonstration and teaching of Jesus at the last supper begins with a collegial reunion of the disciples with each other. Thomas, Nathaniel, James and John and two other disciples, at Peter’s invitation, come together and go fishing with him. After a night of fishing with no success, Jesus, unrecognized at first, appears on the beach and has them throw the net on the other side of the boat. The miraculous catch opens the eyes of the beloved disciple,

John. At his statement, “It is the Lord” Peter jumps out of the boat, and the other disciples follow dragging the boat to shore.

Brevard Child perceives the following interactions between Jesus and the disciples as “not another attempt to create faith in the resurrected Christ, but rather with the issue of how Christ’s disciples were to minister to the world in the light of the resurrection.”⁶² Beverly Gaventa supports this approach of chapter 21 as reestablishing the commission of ministry of the disciples for the times ahead:

The appearance of the risen Jesus on the beach overthrows the disciples assumption enacted in their fishing trip, that the cross was the end of Jesus’ story. The conversation with Peter (21: 15-19) and the conversation about the Beloved Disciple (21:20-23) provide the commission necessary to move from the ministry of Jesus to that of the disciples.⁶³

Jesus provides bread, cooks the fish, and the result is a reunion meal on the beach with Jesus taking the servant role, preparing the meal and serving the disciples just as he did at the last supper. In the behavior at the supper and again in the his action on the beach Jesus made plain the lesson that the ministry relationship of the disciples was to be based on love and service not hierarchy and power.

Here, in the following dialogue with Peter, the previous denier is reminded that he is to be a shepherd who will give his life for the flock. This dialogue is consistent with Jesus’ metaphor in John 10 describing the good shepherd who gives his life for the sheep. Peter is not only called upon to see himself as the shepherd, but in 20:19, Jesus indicated that Peter, like Jesus, the good shepherd, would in giving his life glorify God.

⁶² Brevard Child, *The New Testament Canon: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984): 142.

⁶³ Gaventa, 245-46.

Ironically, once this relationship is made clear, with Jesus emphasizing the coming task as a shepherd to “follow me,” Peter abruptly asks a question about John, “Lord, what about him?” The response of Jesus to the question about John is only to draw Peter back to the focus of a shepherd, repeating, “You must follow me.” (21:22b) John, the narrator, ends the denouement, affirming his authorship and again asserting the multiplicity of untold stories about Jesus, so many that the world could not contain all the books that could be written.

This final twenty-first chapter serves as a concluding literary denouement to the full ministry narrative and dialogues that occur between the prologue of chapter one and the epilogue in Chapter 20. In this account the relationship with Jesus and his disciples is reestablished on the familiar ground of the seashore. In this final context, Anderson suggests that, among other views, one way of viewing the entire encounter is to “reflect a fresh start for the Jesus movement.”⁶⁴

While the focus of this chapter is to reestablish the ministry of the disciples, the human factors of relationships also emerge. From a narrative paradigm point of view, the behavior and communication of Peter, brings back the persistent humanity of the disciples. Personalities and human memories tend to linger, and this ending pericope in John 21: 20-24 indicates some tension still exists between Peter and John. When Peter noticed that John was following his conversation with Jesus, he impulsively reacted with a blunt question to Jesus, “Lord, what about him?”

Two possibilities about the narrative occur to this writer. The first is that Peter felt some sensitivity at being followed and having John hear the dialogue with Jesus where

⁶⁴ Anderson, *Riddles* 69.

his love was repeatedly questioned. The second possibility is that in this commissioning to be a shepherd, Peter, much aware of John's presence, remembered an old issue with John and James.

James and John requested, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." (Mark 10:37) The response of the other ten disciples recorded by Mark was: "When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John." (Mark 10:41) In response, at that earlier time, Jesus made two things clear. The first established that those places of honor would not be for James and John, and that the metaphorical cup they would drink and the baptism they would experience would be far different than what they expected.

Jesus also made very explicit to James and John and to the other ten disciples that position, with authority and power were not included in their calling. "Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:43-45). This message on servant hood was also summed up at the last supper. "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ... This is my command: Love each other. (John 15:13,17)

Whatever the cause for Peter's sudden and blunt question, Jesus gave an equally blunt reply, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." (21:22) Other disciples may have also heard the full interaction, but it can be averred that out of this tension, settled by Jesus, a very human rumor was loosed about John not dying. In this denouement John, who lived longer than any of the other disciples, set the record straight about what Jesus actually said. The significance of this

intense human interaction in the end of the book makes a point that the earlier ambition of the disciples could still arise as an issue. From the point of view of the narrative paradigm, this aspect of the story becomes more believable and hangs together with coherence and fidelity.

Readers or hearers are able to identify in this denouement of the Gospel of John, with the humanity of the disciples. They still have rough edges, sensitivities, rumors, misunderstandings, and memories of past interpersonal conflicts that Jesus had to confront and correct. Peter in this conclusion of the gospel is still at times impulsive, sensitive and blunt. John is then and later the writer, narrator and recorder of “what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:20, I John 1:3)

The next time John and Peter are recorded as being together is found in the book of the Acts Chapters 3 and 4. Luke presents them as primary leaders in the very early days of the church. They are together in the witnessing, and a healing miracle very similar to the one in John 9. They are jailed together by the same Sanhedrin authorities that refused to believe Jesus. When these authorities finally released Peter and John and the other disciples and forbade them to speak further of Jesus the response in Acts 4:20 is given in the same Johannine language used in John 21. “As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” Peter and John, are here seen together again carrying out the ministry commission assigned to them by Jesus on the beach by the Sea of Galilee.

CHAPTER FOUR: PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND RESEARCH METHODS

Research Methodology

From the beginning, this research project proposed a transformational goal for seminary communication courses. The research was designed to establish and meet the need for an interpersonal communication course for master of divinity programs in Baptist and independent seminaries. This stated agenda was accomplished by a transformational research process incorporating quantitative and qualitative data.

In discussing the criteria for a research design, Creswell states that “worldviews, strategies and methods” end up being the determinative factors in the specific approach developed for a study.¹ Since the research methods used for this project are quantitative and qualitative, a mixed method approach is recommended by Creswell for the project. Creswell defines a mixed method approach to research based on philosophical assumptions that brings together qualitative and quantitative approaches.

In further discussion of an integrated research design, Creswell indicates that the approach involves more than just the use of qualitative and quantitative research method. He describes optional scenarios that could include “pragmatic knowledge worldview claims, with sequential and transformative strategies of inquiry.” He advocates that a

¹ John Creswell, *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Method Approaches* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc., 2009), 16.

researcher achieve “integration of the quantitative and qualitative information at different stages of the inquiry.”²

In light of the stated transformational intention of this research project, the advice found in Sweetman, Badiie and Creswell is adopted as part of the overall research design. These authors recommended that a project establish the transformative approach early in the research process.

A transformational process for mixed method research has traditionally focused on underrepresented populations or social issues to the degree that the stance limits acceptable areas of inquiry or research application. Creswell addresses and gives a description of how this limitation is reflected the criteria of Mertens who insisted on including only a category of people considered as under represented, oppressed, or marginalized

While the bulk of studies using the transformational approach fit the criteria described by Mertens, Sweetman and colleagues leave room for a broad use of the approach. They adapt the category to include a wider array of topics where advocacy is needed.

In light of this broader perspective on advocacy projects using a transformational goal, the insistence of this project for specific change in seminary communication teaching qualifies as an appropriate issue. The study meets Mertens’ insistence on a

² Creswell, 16-17.

“community of concern”. The study is also justified by Sweetman and associates when they state that: “many more mixed methods studies exist that might use this lens.”³

Cresswell agrees with Sweetman that a researcher’s awareness, training and expertise is adequate justification for a transformational advocacy on an issue.

As early as 1963 Reuel Howe, a Protestant Episcopal Minister, founder of Institute of Pastoral Studies, addressed the need for dialogue in ministry. “It is imperative, then, that a Christian be a dialogical person through whom the Word that gives life is spoken.”⁴ In his book, *The Miracle of Dialogue*, he wrote: “Young ministers are so disillusioned about the effectiveness of preaching and suspect that ‘telling’ is not a sure means of communication, but because they know of no alternative they are caught in the one-way street of monologue.”⁵ In his discussion of dialogue, as opposed to monologue, he condemned the lack of dialogic training for ministers:

Any process of education or training that sends men [women] to the task of communication without some rudimentary understanding of it [dialogue] or with false expectations for it is cruel and irresponsible and only serves to condemn them to being disillusioned and disheartened later.⁶ [emphasis mine]

As an M Div. graduate, a pastor for 17 years, and a communication teacher for the past 25 years, this researcher has developed awareness that, as Howe advocated, competent interpersonal communication skills are needed for all forms of professional Christian ministry. The axiom that all communication is learned especially applies to

³ David Sweetman, Nanijeh Badiie and John Creswell, “Transformative Framework in Mixed Method Studies,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 16, no. 6 (June 2010): 446.

⁴ Reuel Howe, *The Miracle of Dialogue* (New York: Seabury Press 1963), 85.

⁵ Howe, 32.

⁶ Howe, 24.

interpersonal dialogue. Face to face communication is the most complex of all communication forms, yet of all forms it is the least taught in seminary education.

Seminaries teach Greek, Hebrew and other complex languages. Preaching demands rhetorical training. Persuasion is the basic skill taught for Evangelism. Competent dialogic communication teaching still is lacking. M Div. seminary students in Baptist and independent settings are a population that has experienced significant marginalization in the dialogic communication training offered by seminary programs.

Active ministry in the pastorate or other fields of Christian service requires complex and varied individual communication interaction more than sermons or other forms of public speaking. Preaching, teaching and evangelism communication approaches are necessary and appropriate, but are incomplete communication preparation for a well-balanced ministry. The lack of an interpersonal competency component in seminary curriculum is the personal and experiential reasoning for the advocating, transformative approach for this project.

A final rationale for an advocating, transformational method for this project is the discussion by Creswell on how by mixed method researchers often adopt a pragmatic approach:

Individual researchers have a freedom of choice. In this way, researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes. ...The pragmatic researchers look to the *what* and *how* to research based on the intended consequences—where they want to go with it.⁷

Feilzer also gives strong support for a pragmatic approach in mixed method research. She incorporates insights with Hanson in stating:

⁷Creswell, 11.

Ultimately, pragmatism brushes aside the quantitative/qualitative divide and ends the paradigm war by suggesting that the most important question is whether the research has helped “to find out what [the researcher] want[s] to know”.⁸ [original emphasis]

The problem statement of this project is clearly pragmatic in intent. The primary quantitative question for the research is: What categories of communication courses for M Div. students are available in the course listing for 59 selected Baptist and independent seminaries? The primary qualitative data sought in a focus group of Communication Master’s graduates was to examine the impact and influence of a graduate interpersonal communication course on family and friends and the influence and impact of the course on professional life.

The transformational intent for the research is to analyze the communication course content discovered in the quantitative survey, apply the qualitative insights from the focus group, and devise an interpersonal communication course to remedy any deficiency in seminary communication training that emerges from the mixed method research.

The overall strategy for the mixed method study is a Sequential Explanatory Strategy developed by Creswell. The sequential process is illustrated in the table below.⁹

Table 4. Creswell’s Mixed Method Sequential Research Process

⁸ Martina Feilzer, “Doing Mixed Methods Research Pragmatically: Implications for the Rediscovery of Pragmatism as a Research Paradigm,” *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 4 no. 1 (December 2009): 13.

⁹ Creswell, 209.

Quantitative	Quantitative	Qualitative	Qualitative	Interpretation and Integration of Entire Analysis
Data Collection _____	Data Analysis _____>	Data Collection _____	Data Analysis _____>	
>		>		

Quantitative survey data was collected in a first phase of research. The quantitative data was recorded and analyzed. Qualitative focus group data was collected recorded and analyzed. A final combined analysis and interpretation of the combined qualitative and quantitative data was completed. Primary weight was given to the survey information acquired in the quantitative survey data and used as a basis of information to inform the separate qualitative data from the focus group. The separate qualitative data from the focus group was used to explore the value and resulting implications of the quantitative results.

Quantitative Survey Process

When the major focus of this project was determined to be a survey of Communication based courses in Baptist and select independent seminaries, the question of information sources became central. An initial online search, beginning with Bethel Theological Seminary, revealed that school catalogs were available online. Bethel's catalog was examined; and based on the available information; the writer started wider search for sources of course listings for seminary M Div. programs

The first resource discovered was the web page of the Association of Theological Schools, The Commission on Accrediting. (ATS) On the first page was a link to a Denominational list of member schools. The Denominational listing for Baptist provided list of ATS Baptist seminaries. As research continued, Baptist programs were discovered at non-Baptist denominational schools. These programs were added to the final ATS

listing. Some independent seminary sources were taken from the ATS listing of Inter/Multiple Denominational schools.

In addition to the ATS listings, a search for other accrediting agencies discovered The Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) and the Transnational Association of Christian Schools. (TRACS) When the membership lists for these two agencies were examined, it became apparent that many schools were cross-listed in membership. An arbitrary decision was made to use the TRACS listing, since most of the ABHE listings were of Bible Colleges, rather than seminaries.

The ATS and TRACS information in this project was used to develop a list of schools offering the M Div. degree in the United States and Canada. ATS, with a membership of over 270 graduate schools of theology, and TRACS, with a listing of 65 member schools, yielded the names of 59 accessible Baptist related and independent, schools offering the M Div. Degree. It is possible there are other Baptist related or independent schools that would fit the established selection criteria. No claim is made that the final list of 59 schools is exhaustive for Baptist and independent Evangelical seminaries for the United States and Canada.

No selected school was without a web presence. Most schools posted their catalogs online, and many catalogs could be downloaded as .pdf files. Required courses for M Div. tracks were usually listed in the catalog followed by a listing of course descriptions. Occasionally, course descriptions for all graduate programs offered by a school were combined. In those listings the M Div. courses had to be sorted out by course numbers and matched by name with the course descriptions. This work was especially challenging in large seminaries and those related to large universities.

Once a final list of M Div. granting institutions was established, a process of information gathering about each school followed. To provide consistence and convenience of examination of data recorded, a Microsoft Word document was established for each individual school. The name of the school, the main address, and a contact phone number were given at the top of the document. Following this information, facts derived from the school web pages were printed to give school origins, history, and information about the M Div. degree(s) offered by each school.

In addition to the introductory information, a summary listing of each categories of communication based courses found was given. The summary categories were followed by the exact course descriptions for the courses found under each of the categories. The listing order of the communication categories always started with Preaching and Evangelism, since these were the two traditional and most prevalent courses listed in the study. After these two categories, any other communication related course fields were included. No attempt was made to evaluate course content beyond designating the courses as communication related. The researcher exercised personal knowledge and discretion about which courses qualified as communication related. The basis for selection is the writer's expertise developed from teaching in the field of communication studies for the past twenty-five years.

The amount of information from schools varied greatly. The information from some schools filled only one page. Larger schools filled multiple pages with the course descriptions in the chosen communication categories.

Qualitative Survey Process

The qualitative research for the project consisted of a focus group with graduates of a Masters course in Communication from Bethel University, St. Paul Minnesota. The research process was determined to be Level 2 research according to the Bethel University research guidelines¹⁰ and was approved by Michael Dreher, Director of the Graduate Program for the Department of Communication for Bethel University. Ten graduates of the program were invited by a pre-survey/interview disclosure cover letter to participate in the focus group. Each participant, prior to participating in the focus group, signed a consent form for focus group research.

Nine participants responded and participated in the focus group experience on August 27, 2014. The group consisted of seven male and two female participants ranging in age from late 20s to mid 60s. All were professing Christian believers from a variety of denomination backgrounds. Six of the participants were graduates of the Master of Communication program from Bethel University. Two participants were in the final year of degree completion from the program. Along with the pre-survey/interview disclosure cover letter, each participant received a single sheet of review of the six interpersonal competencies from Bochner and Kelly taught in the course.

A light meal and social time was provided prior to initiation of the focus group process. After a brief welcome and introduction, the focus group was conducted using five questions. The focus group was audio recorded and professionally transcribed. The transcription was used for analysis of the Qualitative data for this project. Responses in

¹⁰ "Levels of Review," Bethel University Institutional Review Board, Accessed July 21, 2014. <https://www.bethel.edu/academics/irb/guidelines/levels-of-review>

the project are used in such a manner that the participants cannot be identified directly or indirectly through identifiers linked to any individual.

Question one in the focus group asked: How do you perceive any impact and influence of the COMM605 course on your communication with family and friends? Could you give examples? The primary data sought from this question was the perceived interpersonal and relational impact and influence the Interpersonal Communication Course had with family members and friends.

Question two sought the same information about the workplace and professional relationships for each participant. Question three sought feedback on the textbook, teaching methods and teaching materials used in the course and asked for advice on the course content and structure. Six of the participants presently teach communication courses in Colleges and Universities in Minnesota.

Question four was preceded by a brief presentation of the quantitative results on seminary communication courses by use of a single sheet bar chart. The chart depicted the statistics on the number of courses taught in six communication course categories: Preaching, Evangelism, Interpersonal, Intercultural, Group-Teams, Conflict and Emotional Intelligence. Question four asked: In light of the research done about seminary communication courses, what is your personal opinion and advice about interpersonal communication and seminary graduate education?

Question five asked: Is there anything else you would like to say or add? The response to this question did not add to information for any of the previous questions.

The qualitative data provided in the focus group was designed to gain information from adult students who have completed a Masters level course in Advanced

Interpersonal Communication in a Christian University. All participants invited were chosen as high achievement graduates and current students who could give insight and feedback on the impact of the Interpersonal course on personal and professional relationships. The feedback on course text books, structure and content was enhanced by the fact that six of the participants have taught courses in Interpersonal communication in colleges and universities.

Creswell's sequential explanatory strategy provides a mixed method approach appropriate for this research. The Quantitative data gathered from the 59 seminaries present the information needed to assess the current status of communication courses now taught in the selected sample. The Qualitative data from the Christian focus group participants provide needed practical information on the relational impact of a Masters course on personal and professional relationships. Feedback on course content, materials and teaching methods by participants who are now experienced Interpersonal teachers add a teaching component to the data.

Creswell advocates the sequential mixed method process used in this project because: "The straightforward nature of this design is one of its main strengths. It is easy to implement because the steps fall into clear, separate stages. In addition, this design makes it easy to describe and to report."¹¹ The design also lends itself to the transformational aspect of this project in that the quantitative data documents what actually exists in seminary communication training. The qualitative data brings experiential Christian voices authenticating the personal and professional value of a Masters course in interpersonal communication for seminary students.

¹¹ Creswell, 211.

CHAPTER FIVE – ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Quantitative Data

When the major focus of this project was determined to be a survey of Interpersonal and Communication based courses in Baptist and select independent Seminaries, the question of how to acquire information became prominent. An initial online search, beginning with Bethel Theological Seminary, revealed that school catalogs were available online. Bethel's catalog was examined; and based on the information available, the writer searched for sources of course listings for Seminaries

The first resource discovered was the web page of the Association of Theological Schools, The Commission on Accrediting. (ATS) On the first page was a link leading to a Denominational list of member schools. When this list was activated, there was no single list of all Baptist seminaries. Baptist seminaries came under eighteen different denominational headings. Some headings contained one school; some contained multiple schools. Available seminary names were copied, and a working list of ATS schools was compiled.

As research continued with the ATS database, specific Baptist programs were discovered at non-Baptist denominational schools and universities. These programs were added to the final research listing of Baptist Schools. Some of the selected independent schools came from the ATS listing under the heading, Inter/Multiple Denominational. The only schools included were those well known to the writer from the ATS and

TRACS listings of Inter/Multidenominational schools. This decision limited the number of independent schools surveyed. The issue of research on unfamiliar schools from this ATS list was determined to be outside the primary focus of this research project. This arbitrary decision was based on time boundaries for the project. The writer is aware that there may be other independent school data sources than ATS and TRACS that could provide opportunity for further research on the independent seminary category.

In addition to the ATS listings, a search was done for other accrediting agencies. Two Christian agencies were discovered: The Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) and the Transnational Association of Christian Schools. (TRACS) When the membership lists for these two agencies were examined, many schools were cross-listed in membership. An arbitrary decision was made to use the TRACS listing, since most of the ABHE listings were of Bible Colleges, rather than seminaries.

According to the home web page of TRACS, the agency was established by the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as a national accrediting body for Christian institutions in 1969. TRACS provides accrediting for Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries. Association with TRACS is voluntary. Accreditation is earned by meeting the TRACS standards.

The use of ATS and TRACS information in this project was used to develop a list of schools offering the M Div. degree in the United States and Canada. ATS, with a membership of over 270 graduate schools of theology, and TRACS, with 65 member schools, yielded the names of 59 Baptist related and selected independent seminaries offering the M Div. Degree. Both sources were valuable in the search to include as many Baptist related and selected independent Seminaries. Only one overlap of a school was

discovered between the lists. Shepherds Theological Seminary of Carey, North Carolina, was listed as a member school by ATS, but online information from the school only listed TRACS approval. This writer acknowledges that there may be other seminaries outside those chosen for this sample from the ATS and TRACS listings that fit the selection criteria for this project and this information could be a limiting factor to having complete data on Baptist and other independent seminaries.

Once a final list of M Div. granting institutions was established, a process of information gathering about each school followed. As noted, graduate school catalogs are almost universally available online. Every school investigated in the study had an online presence with detailed information. With only two exceptions, schools provided a catalog with full course descriptions and a current listing of class schedules with the number and titles of courses offered. In the two instances where no full course description was available, course numbers and titles from the class schedules were used for listing available courses.

To provide consistence and convenience of examination of data recorded, a Microsoft Word document was established for each individual school. The name of the school, the main address, and a contact phone number are given at the top of the document. Following name and location information, facts directly quoted from the web pages of the school were printed to give origins, history, and some information about the M Div. degree(s) offered by each school.

After this introductory information, a summary listing of the categories of communication related courses found was given. The summary categories were followed by the exact course descriptions for the courses found in each of the categories. Course

listings were copied, where possible, and included in the Microsoft Word document for the school.

The listing order of the communication categories always begins with Preaching and Evangelism, since these are the two traditional and most prevalent courses listed in this study. After these two categories, any other communication related course fields, were included. No attempt was made to evaluate complete course content beyond designating the courses as communication related. The writer has exercised personal knowledge and discretion about which courses qualified as communication related. The basis for selection is the writer's expertise developed from teaching in the field of communications Studies for the past twenty-five years.

Course Selection Process

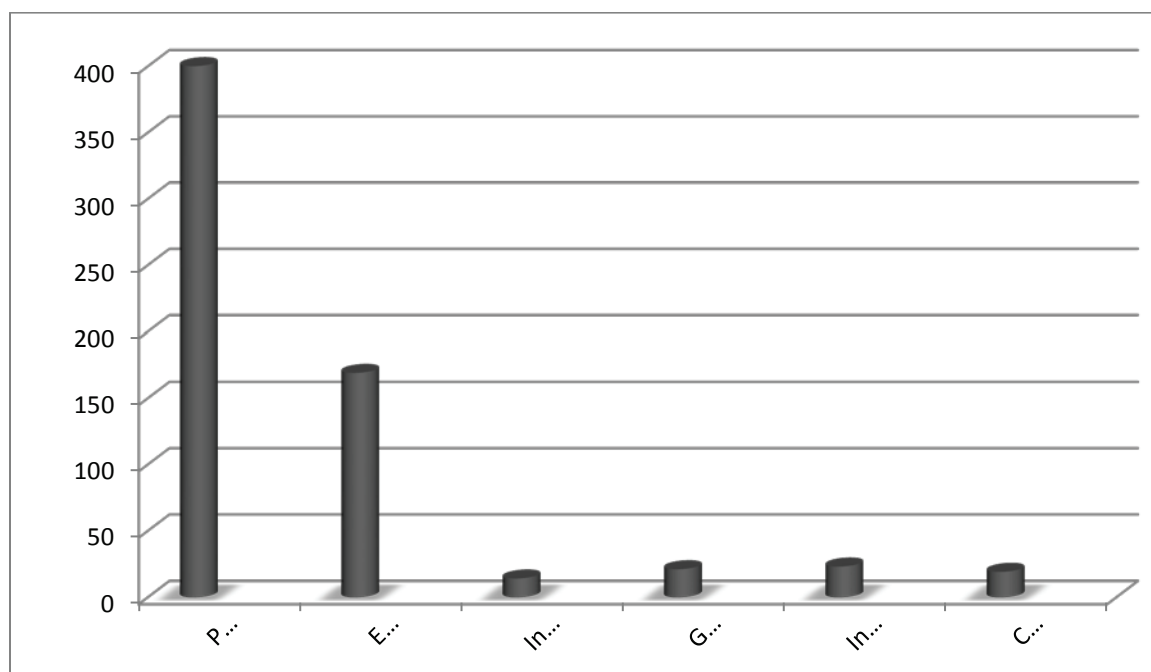
Some clarification is needed about the selection process for the various communication categories listed for each school. In the Preaching category, any course description listed under Homiletics or Preaching was copied and presented. Occasionally, a course was selected that did not have one of these titles but was clearly a course for the category, without depending on a specific title or label. The title, Preaching, was chosen as the category heading because this common term is used in the church by both laity and clergy.

Other than Preaching, the Evangelism category occurs more often in course descriptions than any other. Interestingly, while clearly second in frequency of course offerings, there were some schools that do not offer an Evangelism course. Many schools offered only one basic Evangelism course; others offered a variety of Evangelism courses applying to different constituencies or approaches. One such school offered 33

Evangelism Courses. In general, communication courses related to Missions were examined and categorized either as Evangelism or as Intercultural course offerings. The statistics for the Intercultural category also included all courses designated as Multicultural or Cross-Cultural. The categorization of communication courses in the statistical chart below is arbitrary, based on knowledge of the field of Communication Studies by this writer.

The data information from each school was saved as a separate Microsoft Word document. When these documents were printed and spiral bound the bound document contained over 100 pages of data. The quantitative course information from the individual schools was analyzed and a total number of courses for each communication category of course developed. The chart below provides a visual summary for the number of courses discovered for each course category from the 59 schools surveyed.

Table 5. Seminary Communication Course Totals



Preaching 400

Evangelism 169

Interpersonal 14

Group - Teams 21

Intercultural 23

Conflict Resolution 19

Intercultural includes Multicultural and Cross Cultural

Emotional Intelligence is not reflected on the chart.

The chart demonstrates that Preaching and Evangelism courses dominate the communication teaching in the 59 seminaries surveyed in this project. Both of these categories have classical communication roots in the field of persuasion. These data illustrate clearly that seminary communication teaching is focused on the rhetorical emphasis of persuasion found in Preaching and Evangelism. A comparative view of seminary communication education reveals very low numbers of course offerings in all the relational aspects of interpersonal, small group, intercultural, conflict, and emotional intelligence.

Qualitative Data

Focus Group Project Report

This project used a mixed method approach to the study of Interpersonal Competence in Communication. The qualitative aspect of the study is a focus group report from graduates of the Master of Communication program from Bethel University, St. Paul, Minnesota. Inclusion of the focus group voices in this research brings an experiential qualitative dimension to the project. A group of Masters degree educated students and graduates came together in a focus group setting to reflect how their interpersonal communication knowledge is integrated and expressed in the personal and professional aspects of their daily experiences.

The course content under consideration was a required Masters degree course, COMM605 Advanced Interpersonal Communication. The graduate course was a three semester graduate class with 24 contact classroom hours. The required course was the second course taught in a Master of Communication degree from the Graduate School of Bethel University, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Courses were taught by the faculty of the Department of Communication Studies of Bethel University. Class units were cohort based, and classes met one night a week or on Saturdays. The COMM605 course was taught in two primary timeframes. Most cohort groups met once a week for six weeks from 6 to 10 p.m. in face-to-face classes with the professor. Occasional cohorts met as face-to-face classes on three Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Class requirements included weekly assigned reading and written response papers, group research presentations, lectures, discussion, and a twenty-page final analysis paper of a dyadic, interpersonal film clip.

Nine volunteers from the MA program participated in a 90-minute focus group session answering five questions about their perceptions of the impact of the COMM605 Advanced Interpersonal Communication course on their personal and professional interpersonal communication competencies.

Participants ranged in age from 28 to 60+ years. Professional contexts represented were from corporate retail management, academic higher education teaching, student resident directing, health care management, entertainment management, newspaper professional writing, and government management. Marital status included married and single persons. All participants have a Christian affiliation. Six different denominational groups were represented. Eight individuals were graduates of the program, and two individuals are completing the program in the current year.

The recruitment process for the focus group included a letter of invitation with a brief explanation of the proposed thesis research project at the seminary. A brief listing and description of the six Bochner and Kelly communication competencies used in the class was provided along with documentation of the required textbooks and readings used in the course. A participation consent form with required information from the Bethel University Institutional Review Board on Research with Human Subjects was presented and subsequently signed by each participant. Focus group questions were not available prior to the actual group meeting.

The recorded portion of the focus group meeting was professionally transcribed into a 33 page double spaced, verbatim, Microsoft Word document used in this analysis. No names or gender references to participants are used in the analysis and care has been exercised to preserve the identity and confidentiality of participants.

Focus Group Dynamics

Group dynamics are important in analyzing any focus group interaction. Prior to participating in the focus group process, a light dinner was provided with a social time where introductions were made and previous acquaintances were reestablished by the faculty and participants. Following this social time, the focus group was begun. Another familiar teacher and trained communication colleague was present for the evening and participated in the dinner and social time but was silent as an observer of the group dynamics and did not participate in the focus group.

According to the observer report on group dynamics for the meeting, little primary tension occurred in the group interaction. Both social and task cohesion were established early in the process. The fact that all participants had completed the COMM605 course created a norm of equality. The interpersonal communication competency of each participant became evident to all within the first ten minutes. There were no silent members, no awkward pauses in the discussion, and there was easy dialogue back and forth among the participants as the discussion progressed.

There was no vying for leadership or dominance. As the previous teacher of all participants and the moderator of the meeting, this writer's leadership was accepted and all members participated in appropriate turn taking in the conversation and responses. Listening by members was intense and respectful and contributed to the ease and relaxation evident in the discussion. The Social and Task cohesion developed in the group led to an unusual depth of self-disclosure and discussion.

Transcript Use in The Focus Group Analysis

Transcription of this recorded focus group is an effort to convert a recorded stream of flowing spoken speech from a moderator and nine individuals into a literary document. All such transcriptions result in a document that many times sounds awkward and broken in syntax and difficult to read. Every person who speaks in a dialogic or group setting has her own voice variety, tone, cadence, and vocabulary. Seldom in recording ordinary conversation streams is any formal semblance of sentence structure, or punctuation completely observed by the speaker. Verbatim conversation is a shifting, dynamic exchange that often defies the best attempts to convert the exchange into a well-ordered, written document.

Thoughts are completed and understood but not rendered in complete sentences. Once a person perceives that the intended meaning is verbally out there he/she may shift into a continuation or a new thought or direction. Interruptions happen in dialogue. Words that end up on paper lose the changes in pitch, tone, inflection, and accompanying nonverbal activity and become awkward and flat when read. Much of what helps to make spoken language clearly understandable cannot be captured in a verbatim, typed transcription.

For that reason most of the focus group analysis does not present all the raw data of the direct transcript. Occasional direct quotes are included, but the primary analysis involves capturing and translating themes that emerge from the responses to the questions asked. Quotes are included where they provide support for the theme that has emerged from the transcription.

Terminology and Concept Retention

Before considering response examples to the focus group questions consideration is given to significant interpersonal language content found in the transcript. The first two questions in the focus group asked participants about the impact and influence of the course on interpersonal communication interactions with family and friends and in work and professional contexts. The interpersonal competency terms used in the responses are documented in table 6 below.

There are two lists included in the table. The first list in the table below gives proof that each of the six specific terms of the competencies of Bochner and Kelly taught in the course appeared in the transcript. These terms occurred naturally in the discussion and were not directly prompted by, or asked about, by the moderator. The dyadic terms listed below the first six, are from the transcript and were all used in the responses to the questions about interpersonal impact and influence. The use of these terms, scattered throughout the transcript, represents significant continuing familiarity with the content of the COMM605 class. As with any field of study, ease and use of technical language and common terminology demonstrates continuing knowledge and familiarity with the communication concepts taught in the course. In the use of the listed dyad related terms, the participants confirmed their continuing abilities to recall and discuss dyadic interpersonal issues.

The third question asked in the focus group related to recollection and memory of course content, materials, assignments and teaching methods used in the course. The vocabulary listed in the table below under Course Content Terms shows memory and awareness of the course content requirements and methods. Significant retention and

discussion of specific course material by the participants demonstrates continuing impact and influence of course content. Texts, authors, metaphors, course methods and assignments were remembered and recalled from specific instances in the teaching process and incorporated into the focus group responses and discussion.

Table 6. Focus Group Competency and Course Content terms used

Interpersonal Competency Terms	Course Content Terms
* Empathy, Empathic	Assignment, Assignments
*Self-disclosure	Paper, Papers
*Owning Feelings and thoughts	Buber
*Descriptiveness [the log metaphor]	Jourard
*Behavior Flexibility, Adapt	Rogers
*Authenticity Authentic	Log (metaphor for descriptiveness)
The Other, Others	Lecture
Communication	Story, Stories
Listen, Listening	Present, Presentation
Relationship(s)	Read, Reading
Competence, Competency	Analysis
Help, Helpful	Depth and Breadth
Family	Diagram
Create, Creating	I-It, I-Thou
Interaction, Interactions	Pragmatics of Human Communication
Boundary, Boundaries	Empathy Paper
Appropriate	
Context	
Transparency ¹	

¹ *Indicates direct Bochner and Kelly competency terms

Transcript Question Theme Analysis

The analysis now turns from the details on focus group organization, group dynamics, course terminology, and classroom content retention to the focus group responses to specific questions asked. The transcript for the focus group qualitative data content contained thirty-three pages of double spaced responses. As noted in the table above, all the Bochner and Kelly competencies were referred to and discussed in the course of the question and discussion of the evening. In addition to those six fundamental competencies, there were other significant interpersonal communication themes that emerged.

Analysis of dialogue to focus on some of the specific themes listed above is possible, but must be done with the realization that interpersonal competence is usually not composed of discrete and separate molecules of isolated language. Competencies are not sequentially and individually expressed. They put in random appearances as conversation moves forward.

The six Bochner and Kelly competencies can be identified individually, but use of the competencies occurs much of the time as unpremeditated parts of dialogue or discussion. The communication discipline, like the medical field, identifies components of a living, functional system, and labels the components for teaching purposes. A ninety-minute dialogue, such as the focus group, is a moving, pausing, flexible, give and take process. Just as the process is unique in expression, the analysis must contend with a dynamism that cannot be totally or exactly examined in retrospect.

To search out and examine every aspect of competency in the relatively flat written transcript would demand a document far beyond the scope of this chapter.

However, the table 7 below lists examples of significant interpersonal themes that emerged in answer to questions one and two.

Table 7. Focus Group Discussion Themes

Personal Change, Listening, Trust, Time and Energy, Compassion, Risk, Struggle, Courage, Stories, Attitude, Affirmation, Confrontation, Advocacy
--

Questions one and two analysis

Question 1. How do you perceive any impact and influence of the COMM605 course on your communication with family and friends? Could you give examples?

Question 2. How do you perceive any impact and influence of the COMM605 course on your professional life? Could you give examples?

The following are direct quotes from various members of the focus group that expressed the theme of personal change in their communication. Examples come from both the contexts of family and friends and of professional life. At times, the change effort is conscious, at other times a growing awareness.

I don't think I'm necessarily a naturally empathetic person, and so it's something that I work on consciously, and that has been since I took that class.

I had been functioning [before the class] within a religious system that demanded the evaluation, that demanded the judgment, that demanded the comment [and] if I didn't agree, that demanded the confrontation. [After the class] to lay everything down and to just try to understand, try to hear, try to say it's okay, to just connect, without any of me rising up, to just let it organically happen, it was freeing.

Every time I talk to somebody, [I am conscious of] am I listening, am I taking enough time, am I phrasing things back to that person, and when I, you know — and ask yourself those things, and I found I got more out of conversations, I got

more out of relationships with people, whether it was people that I work with or personal people in my life.

I have never forgotten what a woman said after we got through with the empathy papers and everything. She said, “Well, I guess I’m going to have to change the way I do things.” And I said, “What do you mean?” She said, “Well, all of my life when my daughter has come to me with a problem, I have said to her, ‘Build a bridge and get over it.’ I’ve got to change that now.” I’ve just never — I have never forgotten that, because I think that captured — that really captures the essence of it.

A second theme that emerged from the first two questions was that of how important the skill of listening became as a result of being in the class.

I taught for four years over at -----, and I just made a comment one day during class, and then I really stopped to think and listen to what I had just said, and I said, “You know, there’s all kinds of classes out there called public speaking, but I think there should be one called public listening.” And it had to have been something from this class that kind of turned a light bulb on inside of me, because ever since I made that comment, I’ve found myself trying not to interrupt, trying to listen to what the other person is saying,

You know, you know, I came in [to the class]², it was about me, how am I going to get better, and when I left, it was like, well, it’s not about me. It’s about listening to other people, putting yourself in their shoes.

I’ve found myself maybe interrupting or not listening all the way through. What I learned to do here,[in the class] as much as anything, was to listen better.

And there is a difference, you know, listening and hearing someone. I’ve been a little abusive with this all these years, not allowing people to finish their thought, and to them it was very important, you know, as you were just saying. Yeah. So, yeah, listening was a great piece for me.

I think that there is — it’s very easy for me — if someone is going into something in detail, what will go on in my head, my intrapersonal communication sometimes, is, you know, ‘come on, just cut to the chase. I don’t need all this detail.’ Seriously. So now there are times when I just have to very consciously tell myself listen, listen, listen, listen. That’s an important point, very important.

² [Bracketed] material added for clarification. No attempt is made to change meaning.

A third theme discussed was struggles that arise when effort is made to be competent in communication situations. The struggle related below was about the issue of when to be completely authentic and when to choose to respond in a different way. A participant related this story of an interaction at work with a colleague who is homosexual.

So the other day one of the men at work comes to me and says, “I just got married to my partner of 12 years,” and the first things out of my mouth was, “Congratulations. Good for you.” Now, no matter how you believe, I have my faith belief, and in that, [response] I felt like I stepped over the line. In fact, I talked to my pastor shortly thereafter, and I said, “I struggle with this sometimes,” and he says, “I think we all do.” I said, “I don't think I was authentic at all. I didn't know what to say. I knew what this person wanted right then. They wanted a friend, an acquaintance, someone they had worked with for 15 years to say, “I'm happy for you.” That's what he wanted to hear. I said that. He walked away happy. I walked away just kind of going, okay, I'm okay, because he still knows — because I have to say that he still knows, because [he said] he was going to approach me two months before and ask me to officiate, and [then instead,] he came to me and said, “I thought that — I thought better than to ask you and put you in that position.”

Another participant talked about the struggle in a high pressure work context to maintain the interpersonal competencies learned in the course.

I work at -----, in store operations and it's very, very easy within cross-functional team projects to look around the room at the different individuals representing the different areas and [say to yourself] ‘this guy doesn't know what he's doing, what are they doing over there, like how do they get anything done’ And I happened to be matched up very shortly after this class with a new manager and she has this outlook of — she says, “You know, -----, you always have to assume positive intent with individuals,” I found that really kind of a nice parallel with this class, and it was kind of another slap in the face that I needed, because I felt myself just so easily going back to that normal business, [snaps fingers], boom, boom, boom, boom, rather than keeping that mentality of always assume positive intent.

The above listed competency themes of courage, advocacy and confrontation can occur in a single interaction. The first example below shows courage and confrontation.

I think this is where it's had the biggest impact for me. I'm a nurse manager in a cardiac catheterization lab, and I work with a lot of strong personalities, in particular cardiologists, and it's given me the courage to say, "Hey, you know what? That's not okay." For instance, we had a young couple just the other day who got a very difficult diagnosis, and the physician described the condition to this young couple, black and white, matter of fact, and, I mean, these two people's lives were turned upside down at that moment, and basically [he] ended the conversation with, "Okay, let's get started." And I said, "No. No. These people's lives have been turned upside down, and they need to have a discussion before." So the whole empathy piece has been huge for me professionally, and it's given me some backbone. Well, we had a lovely conversation with the family.

Carl Rogers — I can't remember. Was Carl Rogers in our textbook? We didn't read —

Yes, we talked about Rogers. [moderator]

But Rogers is a man that stood out to me. But empathy in the medical professional needs some upgrade.

This second, later response, illustrates competency in taking communication imitative for patient advocacy in spite of personal job risk.

— a lot of times it's much easier to be in a good light with the physician rather than to step up for the patient. For all you know, I mean, it could affect your job, your standing with the physician, but — and I manage a group of 20 people, too, and being able to describe Buber, Jourard, in a work setting, like I said, it's just given me material that we're here for a purpose and the whole I/thou is [for] our relationship with the patient.

All the examples above give credence to the fact that participation by the focus group members shows present use in both personal and professional contexts of the interpersonal competencies and concepts taught in the COMM605 class. This qualitative data from adult students, men and women, from diverse contexts and training provides examples of Fisher's "good reasons" for developing an interpersonal communication course for use in seminary M Div. classes.

Focus Group Participant Responses to the Quantitative Data

A final question for the focus group participants moved beyond the first three questions about course material and the contexts of competence with family and friends and professional life. Question four asked: In light of the research done about seminary communication courses, what is your personal opinion and advice about interpersonal communication and seminary graduate education?

Focus group members were shown the chart produced from the Quantitative data demonstrating the number of courses for each of the categories discovered in the survey of the 59 schools. The responses below represent the opinions they expressed in response to the data.

You know, for my thesis, I'm going down the same road, and you and I have talked about instead of seminary, it's going to be nursing. There's no interpersonal communication education in nursing, and the same reason. And you always used to say in class, "You know, the world is a tough place." The world's a tough place, and what are we lacking? We're lacking competency and interpersonal communications, and when I have a problem, who am I going to go to if I can't go to my family? I'm going to go to my pastor. Well, if I go to my pastor and they're not competent in interpersonal communications, I've hit a dead end.

As a pastor, when you're not on the pulpit preaching, the rest of the time when you are with your congregation, you are within levels of interpersonal communication. So you are a pastor, so how much of your time is spent on the pulpit preaching and how much is spent, you know — so preparing you for all of those instances of every day, all the time — and not just your congregation. When you're out in the community, people know that you're from this church, and people that are just within the community, maybe even non-Christian people, different kinds of people that you're going to be ministering to on some level, all of these things that we learned in class are, I think —huge. Gigantic. So very important.

Well, if you think about what is a pastor's heart, a pastor heart is to communicate truth. So they have to be a good communicator, and these are the things that make a good communicator, and if they don't have these things, how can you bring forth truth if you're judging, how can you bring forth truth if you're not listening, how can you bring forth truth if you're not allowing somebody to be part of the

conversation, if you're not owning your feelings or allowing somebody else to own their feelings? You know, we get so good at thinking we're right and we know the answers, and so we just speak the — we don't communicate, we monologue, and anybody who I allow into my life to change me in those areas that the Lord changes, they do things different. And so if you hand the pastor a congregation, they had better know how to do these things or they're not going to speak the truth or it's not going to be received.

Well, and I think to focus on Evangelicals a little bit, I think Evangelicals' overemphasis on the Great Commission has really locked ministers into just straight proselytizing and not really — I mean, for me as a kid, growing up in the city, I can't tell you how many people we had come to our neighborhood or how many people — and they don't — you know, nobody really actually — there wasn't ever a conversation to be had. It was like, "I've got something for you. I'm going to dish it up here, and when I leave, I'm going to feel better about myself. And it doesn't really matter what actually happens here, and maybe if it goes really well, you're going to say a prayer with me. I'm probably never going to see you again, but that's okay, because you said that magic prayer," and there's just no exchange there. So that's what we Evangelicals — we're pretty good at doing that.

The four examples above were expressed with vocal tones of concern rather than verbal or nonverbal criticism. There was an overall expression of incredulity that there was not more specific interpersonal seminary training. The responses, as can be noted, referenced the role of pastor more than other ministry roles. While the question asked does not mention the word pastor, most of the experience of ministry by group members is from pastors rather than having experienced some of the broader spectrum of ministry undertaken by M Div. graduates. The responses, without, undue stretching, do represent clear support for an interpersonal communication course in seminary teaching.

The qualitative data from this focus group, when combined with the statistical data from the quantitative survey, provides combined data impetus for adding interpersonal communication courses to seminary course curriculum.

CHAPTER SIX: EVALUATION AND DISCUSSION

Integration of Findings and Conclusions

Quantitative Data Findings

The quantitative data findings give strong support to the advocacy position of the project that there is a significant disparity between the rhetorically based communication courses in seminaries and that of interpersonal communication. Preaching and Evangelism are essentially position based teaching. Persuasion is a primary content of these two categories. The five other categories, of Interpersonal, Group/Teams, Intercultural, Conflict and Emotional Intelligence are part of relationally based communication approaches.

Numeric analysis of the data shows the combined number of Preaching and Evangelism courses offered in the selected schools to be 569 courses. The combined number of the five categories of relationally based courses is 78. The relational courses consist of only 13.71 percent of courses in comparison to the number of rhetorical courses. This data argues clearly that communication teaching in the seminary sample is overwhelmingly biased in favor of rhetorical, positional based communication teaching.

In looking beyond Baptist and independent seminaries, Mark Hyde, in his 2002 Communication Master's thesis, surveyed 27 AATS member seminaries from 10

different denominational groups.¹ His research also revealed a pattern of the prevalence of preaching classes in communication.² Baptist and independent seminaries are not alone in teaching Rhetoric rather than Relational communication courses.

If one considers only the number of interpersonal course offerings, 14, and compares those only to the preaching course total of 400, then the percentage of interpersonal course offerings is 4.25 percent. On the basis of the statistical data alone the interpersonal communication aspects of ministry are almost completely ignored in seminary communication teaching. However the calculation is done, the data aspect of this project comes down hard on this disparity in seminary communication course curriculum.

In addition to the numerical data above, an analysis of the quantitative data did reveal five course areas of relational communication now found in seminary course offerings. It is worthwhile to analyze reasons why these relational course categories are beginning to be developed in seminary curriculum.

The largest number of relational based courses found is entitled Intercultural communication. In this project, the term, Intercultural also includes courses entitled Multicultural or Cross Cultural. Next to personal evangelism, the area of missions has usually been a respected focus for Baptist and independent seminaries. Intercultural communication courses offered may result from continuation of a Missions emphasis. The growing influx of other major world religious groups in North America and the

¹ Mark Hyde, "A Study of American Seminaries' Communication Classes and their Relationship to the Relational and Rhetorical Communication Strategies of the Church." (master's thesis, Bethel University, 2000), iii.

² Hyde, 112.

growth of non-Christian places of worship may also have an impact on development of courses in this category of seminary training.

The course category of Groups/Teams is the second largest group of relational based courses in the data with 21 courses found. Two possibilities exist for inclusion of the group communication category in seminary training. The rise of mega church congregations has in many places resulted in a focus on small group ministry development as a part of increasing local church congregational participation. A growing emphasis of team based structure in business and commercial fields may also have an impact on church use of small groups.

The fact that 19 conflict resolution courses were discovered in seminary curriculum is not unusual. Some Christian denominations and institutions rely on trained conflict resolution counselors to deal with conflict issues. This process has been used at Bethel University, and this writer is aware of conflict resolution efforts in American Baptist churches. Again, it is also possible that a growing emphasis in business culture on mediation rather than litigation is having influence in the use of conflict resolution by church organizations.

Only 14 Interpersonal Communication courses were found in the 59 surveyed schools. No overall attempt was made to determine the reasons for inclusion of Interpersonal communication courses in the schools. Examination of a single interpersonal communication course at New Orleans Baptist Seminary revealed that two of the professors initiated, developed materials and taught the course. Based on the few courses discovered, the inclusion of interpersonal communication courses in seminary curriculum does not seem based on church growth trends or perceived needs as in the

categories of Groups-Teams, Multicultural or Conflict Resolution. A growing emphasis in business and commercial fields on interpersonal workplace issues and literature is not reflected in seminary training.

Qualitative Data Findings

The focus group transcript of Qualitative responses from adult students and graduates of the Masters level Advanced Interpersonal Communication course at Bethel University produced significant data about the impact of interpersonal communication training. The nine participants responded to questions about the impact and influence of the course content on their personal and professional lives.

The significance of the data can be summarized under three categories. The first is how the Interpersonal competency training was reflected in the responses. The transcript revealed that all six of the Bochner and Kelly competencies were initiated, discussed and woven into the responses to the questions. This aspect of the findings demonstrated that course content was an active part of the continuing communication in both personal and professional aspects of life. Course content retention was high considering the fact that some participants graduated 12 years previously. The transcript revealed continuing impact of the course training..

A second aspect emerging from the Qualitative data was evidence of personal communication themes related to dealing with life issues and incidents and change resulting from the course. Participants talked of differences in dealing with Personal Change, Listening, Trust, Time and Energy, Compassion, Risk, Struggle, Courage, Stories, Attitude, Affirmation, Confrontation, Advocacy. The overall aspect was how the course content was applied in the practical arenas of daily communication contexts.

The third body of data was the opinions expressed about the statistical data revealing the imbalance of Preaching and Evangelism rhetorical courses and the relational based courses in seminary curriculum. Overall, there were two kinds of responses. One response was encouragement and advocacy for an Interpersonal communication course to become a part of normal seminary course curriculum. The other was an attitude of concern for pastors that interpersonal knowledge and training was needed because of the variety, intensity and demand of the interpersonal aspects of ministry. The participants strongly advocated inclusion of Interpersonal teaching for seminary students.

Biblical/Theological Findings

The application of the Narrative Paradigm of Fisher and that of the Bochner and Kelly Interpersonal Competencies to the Johannine narrative dialogues of Jesus resulted in a dual focus on how John portrayed the ministry of Jesus. A strong picture emerged of the wide variety of individuals Jesus encountered in his ministry.

Jesus is presented as available and interactive with persons from a varied spectrum of society. He is portrayed as a competent communicator in compassion and conversation with family, with the rich, the poor, the sick, women, and the marginalized persons of his culture. His ministry is characterized by communication that portrays confidence in his divine identity and authority. He is seen as forceful and competent in situations of conflict and debate. He acts with sensitivity and concerned in the presence of human need. His patience and love for his disciples and his determination to endure a death on the cross to provide redemption are all portrayed as part of his intense divinity and humanity.

The focus in the Biblical analysis provides a clear relational communication approach in his life and in his teaching. If the question is asked: “What did Jesus teach about communication theory?” One can answer: “He taught that relationships are to be based on love and service.” He modeled both these teaching in his life and ministry and he illustrated love and service in the actions and verbal teaching in chapter thirteen and the closing chapter twenty-one by the sea of Galilee.

To integrate the Biblical data with the Quantitative and Qualitative research is not difficult. Interpersonal communication competence is clearly demonstrated in the Johannine ministry of Jesus. Interpersonal communication teaching and training is demonstrated as effective in the lives of the focus group Master’s students. Interpersonal communication competency is needed in carrying out Christian ministry in the world of today. Christian ministry still demands love and servant ministry and balanced communication teaching is needed in seminaries graduating men and women for Christian service. The biblical data, the Quantitative data and the Qualitative data merge well into advocating the need for a course in interpersonal communication for all seminary M Div. graduates.

Structure Change and Elements of Weakness

In an evaluation of the mixed method research process, the qualitative aspect would be strengthened by designing and conducting a Qualtrix survey of graduates of the Master of Arts in Communication program from Bethel University. The focus group data from nine graduates provided significant depth and breadth about the sustained personal impact and influence of an Advanced Interpersonal course. To add data from a survey

distributed to fifty or more additional graduates of the same program would add credibility to the Qualitative aspect of the research.

The Quantitative research process of school selection from ATS and TRACS accrediting agencies inclusion in the survey was strong in identification of Baptist seminaries in the United States and Canada. The weakness of the seminary selection process was that of a limited number of schools from the category of independent seminaries. The writer depended only on personal knowledge of the selected seminaries in deciding on school inclusion. A more specific and consistent selection criterion was needed for inclusion of schools considered to be independent. If this category of school inclusion was researched in more detail, other seminaries could be added to the survey list.

In the Biblical/Theological foundations for the project, an application of the present day use of dialogical narratives from the scripture could be strengthened by integrating an oral approach to story and narrative in the Jesus literature by James Dunn and Kenneth Bailey. This body of literature led the writer to recent discovery of the International Orality Network. This current multi-denominational organization uses memorization, recitation and telling of biblical stories in ministry to oral based communities and societies.

This literature interfaces with the well-known work of communication media theorist, Marshal McLuhan, and that of biblical scholar, Viggo Sogaard, senior professor of communication from Fuller Graduate School. McLuhan's famous emphasis that "the medium (the story) is the message" takes on new significance. Sogaard emphasizes the importance of understanding audience preferences and the present use of oral

transmission of biblical story in missions³ Inclusion of this current use of narrative and story could add to the communication basis for the Biblical/Theological chapter of the project.

Project Strengths

Strength in the project is found in the extensive literature review combining competence literature and the Narrative Paradigm literature of Walter Fisher. The literature review on competence covers both the early and later theorists on the components of competency and settles on the approach of Bochner and Kelly and their emphasis on the relationship aspects of competence as opposed to those of interaction management and control. The literature review moves beyond the competency component era, and examines the more recent rise of dialogic elements in communication competency.

The examination of current dialogical approaches contains the philosophical views of current dialogic writings by Arnett, Bakhtin, Ward, Buber, and Adeney, making a distinction between the different approaches of descriptive and prescriptive dialogue. The contributions of Howe, Clark, and Brown, move the review into current Christian aspects of dialogue and apologetics.

A second strength of the project is the use of Fisher's Narrative Paradigm and the Competencies of Bochner and Kelly to authenticate the interpersonal communication competency of Jesus. The extensive examination of John's use of dialogue in the stories builds a connection between the biblical narratives and the current dialogic aspects of interpersonal communication theory. The demonstrated interpersonal competency of

³ http://www.oralcity.net/how_we_began

Jesus and the narrative coherence and fidelity revealed in the stories argues for seminary teaching of interpersonal competency.

Another strength of the project is the restructuring of the outline of the gospel. Analysis of the parallel emphasis on servant leadership demonstrated and taught by Jesus in chapter thirteen and in chapter twenty-one is a significant interpretive element in the Biblical analysis. Both chapters focus on a relational basis of love and service for the apostolic mission of the disciples and the coming mission of the church. The inappropriateness of a power and positional approach to Christian leadership is made clear. The mission of the disciples is to be based on relationship and responsibility.

The combination of Jesus' interpersonal dialogic competency and his insistence on servant leadership in ministry lends credence to the advocacy in this project of teaching interpersonal competence as a component of servant leadership in seminary communication courses today.

CHAPTER SEVEN: REFLECTION

After teaching in the undergraduate Communication and two Masters programs at Bethel University, the Bethel Seminary doctoral program in Servant Leadership was a refreshing change from teaching to one of intensive learning. The rigor of the program has stretched my mental and spiritual capacity and opened up new horizons for my future. The cohort group in Servant Leadership brought mature Christian fellowship with a diverse and supportive group of fellow believers. Being in the context of the seminary courses brought back a level of ministry focus and fellowship reminiscent of my years at Northern Baptist seminary in Illinois and 27 years of pastoral ministry.

The program courses were challenging and refreshing both at the St. Paul and the San Diego campuses. The course at San Diego widened the fellowship with other cohorts and introduced me to Christian brothers and sisters engaged in ministry locations from Alaska and California to the New England states, Tennessee and India. Worship times together with other students and faculty at St. Paul and San Diego have been encouraging times of personal growth. Seminary chapel services and meal sharing with students from every program are reminiscent of the determination and spiritual intensity I experienced long ago in my early seminary days.

I value the fact that the Doctoral program in Servant Leadership models the kind of leadership taught in the program. I have found the course work intense with clearly defined requirements and expectations of quality. At the same time, the personal support and concern of the director, faculty members, administrative, and library staff make it

virtually impossible for any student not to successfully complete the program. There is a unique balance in the academic professionalism and the interpersonal communication and support through every aspect of the program.

The Biblical/Theological research requirement for the thesis project has been invigorating and acute. Combining interpersonal communication theory and practice with an analysis of the dialogic narratives in the Gospel of John opened up the current field of Johannine literature in a thought provoking process of reading and study. Catching up on the diversity of views in Johannine studies last visited in my M Div. days at Northern Seminary in the 1960's, was both refreshing and appalling. The argumentative spectrum of Johannine theological diversity is alive and well. Valuable help and guidance in the literature came from Michael Holmes of the Bethel University Bible Department. He was instrumental in opening a door of correspondence and reading suggestions from Paul Anderson, Johannine scholar and author, from George Fox University, Newberg, Oregon. I also experienced encouragement and support from my colleagues in the Department of Communication at Bethel University. Michael Dreher served well as my On Site Evaluator, providing a valuable connection between the communication and the theological fields of study.

A significant personal challenge to project completion occurred on August 23, 2014. My spouse, Leta Frazier, fell and broke the large bone (humerus) in her upper left arm. She was put in a plastic brace and sling that immobilized her arm for over 20 weeks. I became the primary caretaker at home for a process that culminated in March 2015 with major surgery to the arm. The process of completing a thesis project while the two of us taught a full semester load of courses at Bethel University in the undergraduate

communication program has demanded a great amount of physical, mental and emotional stamina, and strength for both of us.

The delightful irony in this situation is that our work together through the thesis project has given a positive and strong focus to the two of us in a practical, academic and deeply spiritual way. We have learned in our 57th year of marriage to depend on and support each other. Our faith has grown through the Johannine sharing and study. Our determination to keep working and to finish this thesis project on time has deepened our togetherness. We are both better persons in spite of the intensity of it all. The encouragement, understanding and support we received at the seminary helped to sustain us in the whole process. If we had to do this over again, we would prefer not! But it is what it is and we are a tougher team for doing the ordeal together.

Continuing Research

In the Biblical/Theological aspect of the research, several new directions have opened up for further research. The focus on dialogue in the Gospel of John was approached in this project from a literary analysis of the written narratives. As mentioned in Chapter Six, in the late days of writing, new sources were discovered about the current use of Biblical stories in ministry to people still living in oral cultures. The discovery of the Orality Project and the multi-denominational use of storytelling for evangelism adds a new dimension to the current importance of Fisher's "good reasons" of coherence and fidelity found in the use of the narrative paradigm for analysis of Johannine stories. The Orality study of theologians Kenneth Bailey, James Dunn, and Viggo Sogaard, combined with the communication insights and theory of Marshal McLuhan, provides a new avenue to explore the use of Johannine and other biblical stories.

Another avenue of research for combining the interpersonal communication focus of the current project with Biblical/Theological focus is the area of interfaith dialogue processes using the Bochner and Kelly Competencies and the dialogic approaches of Martin Buber, Mikhail Bakhtin, Terry Muck, Ronald Arnett, John Stewart, David Clark, and Donald McGavran. In the past, the term “Interfaith Dialogue” historically brought division between Evangelical mission advocates and many World Council of Churches scholars. A new group of Evangelical biblical scholars has emerged that advocates a need for dialogic engagement with other religions, while maintaining one’s own theological point of view. The dialogic literature from the current project would contribute much to exploring this emerging field of Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue.

The Future

From the beginning, the motivation for the research and the Biblical/Theological work in this project was based on an advocacy for inclusion of an Advanced Interpersonal Communication course for master of divinity seminary programs in the United States and Canada. This advocacy has deepened through completion of the Servant Leadership course work and this thesis project.

This advocacy is now based on four deep convictions. First: The biblical analysis of Johannine narratives developed in this project portrays Jesus as a servant ministry model for competent dialogic communication. Second: Twenty-seven years of pastoral ministry, with an additional forty years in contexts of denominational administration, marriage and family counseling, seminary and college teaching, convinces this writer that competent interpersonal communication is central to every ministry context. Third: In addition to his theological education, fifteen years teaching an Advanced Interpersonal

Communication course in the Bethel University Graduate Master of Communication program qualifies the writer to develop the necessary theoretical and biblical resources for a seminary course. Fourth: The Quantitative and Qualitative data from this research establish the need for such a course.

Recognizing that inclusion of a syllabus is not appropriate in the chapter design of this project, Appendix A of this project is presented as a Prospectus for a seminary course in Advanced Interpersonal Communication. The prospectus content in Appendix A is designed to provide 24 hours of class content adaptable for face-to-face, hybrid, or online contexts. A full syllabus for any of these class formats could be provided with a preparation time of one month.

In the first paper written in the first Servant Leadership course for this doctoral program, this writer shared the following conviction that has grown more resolute through the research and writing of this thesis project.

“Most people have difficulty, if asked, recalling the last time another person gave them complete attention and listened deeply to what they wanted to say. The message of grace is often lost in the approach of the positional and impersonal. A gentle, personal sharing of the gospel is called for. God's woman or man in any ministry role needs to be a complex combination of listener, relater, person, and presence. She needs to be a friend, an authentic ear and the confident voice of Jesus in a chaotic world. He needs to be an interpersonally competent listener and messenger in an impersonal, busy, world. Every seminary needs a course offering in Advanced Interpersonal Communication to meet these needs.”

APPENDIX A
INTERPERSONAL COURSE PROSPECTUS

Course Outcomes

The course outcomes are designed to integrate interpersonal communication competence theory and practice with New Testament theological study in the Gospel of John. The focus in John is on the dialogical interactions of Jesus. The following outcomes are established for students working with the professor.

- (1) To develop a broad understanding of interpersonal communication theory concepts
- (2) To comprehend the complexity of dyadic interaction theory and practice
- (3) To memorize and integrate the personal practice of six specific dyadic competence skills
- (4) To understand and demonstrate the process of intensive dyadic listening in ministry contexts
- (5) To evaluate interpersonal competency practice from dialogic interactions of Jesus in the Gospel of John
- (6) To recognize and evaluate interpersonal competencies from a dyadic film clip interaction for the final class paper

Texts and Resources

Books

The New Testament. The Gospel of John and I John, any translation.

Anderson, Paul. *Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011.

Buber, Martin. (1970). *I and Thou*. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons. (Kauffman edition only)

Required Readings

The chapters listed below are taken from three out of print, classic communication texts. These required readings are all available on Moodle as .pdf files or by URL links. You may download and print one copy of each document for your own personal use. Please have all appropriate copies available for use during any class

sessions. Other required reading articles for specific assignments are also available through Moodle .pdf files or URL links.

Altman, Irwin, & Taylor, D. (1973). *Social Penetration: The Development of Interpersonal Relationships*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. Chapters 1 and 3. Posted on Moodle. Used by permission.

Jourard, S. M. (1971). Readings from *The Transparent Self*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold. Chapters 1 and 2 Posted on Moodle. Used by permission.

Watzlawick, P., Bavelas, J. B. & Jackson, D. (1967). Reading from The Pragmatics of Human Communication. New York: W.W. Part 1 and Part 2. Out of Print. Posted on Moodle. Used by permission.

Films:

Your personal selection of a dyadic film clip of up to 4 minutes for the Interactional Analysis final paper is to be approved in consultation with the professor. Sample film clips will be shown and sample papers will be available on Moodle.

Sample Assignment 1

Buber Lecture and Discussion Seminar on Dialogue

Pre-Assignment: Prepare to participate in the dialogue of the seminar.

Read the entire Buber Text, Kauffmann Translation The prologue, written by Kaufmann is the first part of the book, up to page 51. Page 51 – 185 is the text of *I and Thou* by Martin Buber.

Make sure you are aware of the distinction that Kaufman's writing is his interpretation of Buber

The best preparation for this Seminar is to read and make notes on the Kaufmann introduction then to read the complete *I – Thou* text by Buber. DO NOT ATTEMPT THIS IN ONE SITTING! Read Kaufmann as an important introduction and as his own point of view on the writings of Buber. You will be exposed to other viewpoints in the lecture.

As you read Buber's writing mark a minimum of five key passages in Buber that you understand and like and be ready to share excerpts in class during the seminar. Also mark at least two passages you do not understand, but would like to discuss for clarification. A central focus for this reading is the understanding of the Buber dialogic concepts of I-Thou and I-It.

Print and read the following articles on Dialogue in preparation for your participation in the seminar discussion.

Arnett, Ronald, and Gordon Nakagawa. "The Assumptive Roots of Empathic Listening: A Critique." *Communication Education* 32, no. 4 (October 1983): 368-78. .pdf link posted on Moodle.

Johannesen, Richard. "The Emerging Concept of Communication as Dialogue." *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 57, no. 4 (December 1971): 373-82. .pdf link posted on Moodle.

Kramer, Kenneth. "Rehearing Buber's Jesus Deepens Jewish-Christian Dialogue." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44 no. 4. (Fall 2009): 617-41. pdf link posted on Moodle.

Sample Assignment 2

Seminar lecture and discussion of Dialogic Analysis of John Chapter Nine

Before class time complete the initial course assignment of three complete readings of the Gospel of John for overall perspective on the book. After completion of this reading, read and focus on Chapter 9 for this assignment.

Identify and list the seven individual dialogues that occur in the chapter, with the participants for each dialogue.

Using the six interpersonal competencies from the previous lecture discussion, analyze each of the seven dialogues in the chapter to delineate any use of the six competencies by any person or group. Identify, where appropriate, the lack of use of appropriate competency. Not all competencies are found in every dialogue. Let the text reveal competency use.

Prepare a minimum five-page paper, with bibliography, of your analysis for use in the seminar discussion. To be handed in at the end of class.

Print and Read the following articles on Interpersonal Competency.

Bochner, Arthur, and Robert Kelly. "Interpersonal Competency Rationale, Philosophy, and Implementation of a Conceptual Framework." *The Speech Teacher* 23, no. 4 (September 1974): 279-301.

Frazier, Philip. "Bochner and Kelly Interpersonal Competencies" from D Min Thesis, Advocacy for a Biblical and Communication Based Interpersonal Competency Course for Seminary Education. © May, 2015. All rights reserved. .pdf posted on Moodle.

Sample Reading Bibliography for assigned collateral reading

Books and Articles on Library Reserve

- Anderson, Paul. *Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011.
- Arnett, Ronald. *Communication and Community: Implications of Martin Buber's Dialogue*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986.
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- Phillips, Gerald. "A Competent View of Competence." *Communication Education* 33, no. 1 (January 1984): 25-36.

Course Delivery Methods

The original content of this Masters course was designed and taught as a 3 credit, 24 contact hour course, taught as six 4-hour sessions, one evening a week.

The course has also been taught on three consecutive Saturday's 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with morning and afternoon sessions.

The course has been presented as a 6-session hybrid online course with first and last sessions as classroom sessions with the 4 intervening sessions online.

With significant technical and video planning the course could be adapted for delivery as a fully online course.

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