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**TITLE
TOWARDS A CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT CATECHETICAL MODEL FOR
SOUTH AFRICAN CHURCHES: A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF JOHN H.
WESTERHOFF III'S MODEL OF CATECHESIS.**

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ABSTRACT

The educational process within the Christian church is particularly important because it forms the basis of Christian ethical and value formation, as well as community living.

John Westerhoff III (1983:48-49) shed some light on the importance of catechesis by explaining that: “Catechesis is a ministry of the Word in which the faith is proclaimed and interpreted in verbal and nonverbal ways for the formation and transformation of persons who are to be understood as communal beings in a lifelong quest to live in a love relationship with God and neighbor.”

According to Taylor (1984:35) catechesis within Protestantism has been revitalised by Westerhoff. Hence my interest in the work of Westerhoff. This mini-thesis is a literary study on the role of religious education and models of catechesis, and particularly an evaluation of the work of Westerhoff as set out in his book *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*.

This necessarily includes an investigation of the work of other authors, especially their viewpoints on catechesis and the works of Westerhoff. With this study, the writer hopes to develop greater insight into an understanding of the debates around religious education and models of catechesis, hoping also to draw some conclusions that will help with the

development of an appropriate model of catechesis that would be relevant, especially for the context of the Coloured and Black communities of the Western Cape.

1.1 10 KEY WORDS:

- **Catechesis**
- **Education**
- **Church**
- **Leaders**
- **Values**
- **Ethics**
- **Community**
- **Context**
- **Westerhoff**
- **South Africa**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND CATECHESIS AS A BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT CATECHETICAL MODEL

1.1 CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE

1.1.1 RATIONALE: THE NEED FOR A NEW MODEL OF CATECHESIS

1.1.2 REFLECTING ON THE LOCAL CONTEXT

1.1.3 THE NEED FOR A TRANSFORMATIVE CATECHETICAL MODEL FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM



1.2.1 WESTERHOFF – A SYNOPSIS OF KEY IDEAS FROM HIS MODEL OF CATECHESIS

1.2.2 DELIMITATION OF STUDY AREA

1.2.3 HYPOTHESIS

1.3 AN OUTLINE OF THE PROCEDURE

CHAPTER 2: SITUATING WESTERHOFF WITHIN THE DISCIPLINE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

2.1 AN OVERVIEW OF CATECHESIS AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

2.1.1 THE USE OF THE TERMS “CATECHESIS”, “CHRISTIAN EDUCATION” AND “RELIGIOUS EDUCATION”

2.1.2 HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.2 KEY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LEADING SCHOLARS IN THE FIELD OF CATECHESIS AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

2.3 DEFINITION OF CATECHESIS

2.4 VARIOUS APPROACHES TO CATECHESIS FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN.



2.5 CATECHETICAL FOCUS WITHIN CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2.5.1 THE PRACTICAL THEOLOGY/ PASTORAL APPROACH

2.5.2 THE EDUCATIONAL APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2.6 DIFFERENT MODELS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2.6.1 RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION MODEL

2.6.2 SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL

2.6.3 LIBERATION MODEL

2.6.4 RESOURCE INTERPRETATION MODEL

2.6.5 FAITH COMMUNITY MODEL

2.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF WESTERHOFF WITHIN THE DISCOURSE ON MODELS OF CATECHESIS.

CHAPTER 3: WESTERHOFF'S MODEL OF CATECHESIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION OF WESTERHOFF'S MODEL OF CATECHESIS

3.2 WESTERHOFF'S DEFINITION AND AIMS OF CATECHESIS

3.3 WESTERHOFF'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EVANGELISM, BAPTISM AND CATECHESIS

3.4 WESTERHOFF'S UNDERSTANDING OF CATECHESIS IN RELATION TO ENCULTURATION/ SOCIALIZATION, LITURGY AND LIBERATION THEOLOGY



3.4.1 WESTERHOFF'S APPROACH TO CATECHESIS AND ENCULTURATION/ SOCIALIZATION

3.4.2 WESTERHOFF'S APPROACH TO CATECHESIS AND LITURGY

3.4.3 WESTERHOFF'S APPROACH TO CATECHESIS AND LIBERATION THEOLOGY

3.5 SUMMARY: KEY POINTS IN WESTERHOFF'S UNDERSTANDING OF CATECHESIS

CHAPTER 4: RELEVANCE OF WESTERHOFF'S CATECHESIS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

4.1 POSSIBLE WEAKNESSES IN WESTERHOFF'S APPROACH

4.2 WESTERHOFF'S RELEVANCE FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH AND DENOMINATION

4.2.1 BAPTISM, EVANGELISM, CONVERSION AND NURTURE

4.2.2 LITURGY AND LIBERATION

4.2.3 CHILDREN AND LITURGY

4.2.4 LITURGY AS STORY

4.3 GUIDELINES FOR A MODEL OF CATECHESIS FOR THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

4.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

BIBLIOGRAPHY



CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND CATECHESIS AS A BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT CATECHETICAL MODEL

1.1 CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE

1.1.1 RATIONALE: THE NEED FOR A NEW MODEL OF CATECHESIS

The socio-political developments after 1994 had a significant impact on all spheres of South African society, including the area of Christian religious education. Of particular importance in this regard was the constitutional secularisation of the state that would change the status of the country from a nominally “Christian” state or government to a secular one. It is obvious that this would have serious implications for the status of Christian religious education in public schools.

One of the important changes was that the former Bible teaching curriculum was replaced with a broader curriculum of religious education to accommodate all the different religions in the country. In the previous dispensation the church was supported by the state in providing Christian religious education. This has changed dramatically and it will have serious consequences for the way churches will approach their educational inputs and programs in future.

Another important factor in this study is the perception that church membership internationally is on the decline with a significant decrease in church attendance, especially amongst the younger generation. This perception may also be maintained within the South African context.

According to Annes Nel (2003:18), research indicated a radical decline in church membership the world over, and in Southern Africa in particular, where there was a

membership decline of 150 000 members in a large “White Afrikaans” church during the period from 1985 to 1993.¹ The above scenario requires concerned church leaders to seriously re-think the role of religious education within the context of the local congregation.

1.1.2 REFLECTING ON THE LOCAL CONTEXT

My interest in the subject of Christian Religious Education arises from currently pastoring a reasonably small and young congregation of approximately 55 adults and 70 youths and young children in the Blue Downs area.

This church is called the Logos Assemblies of God and falls within the ecclesial tradition of Pentecostal churches. Although the local assembly remains stable in its membership, there has been a rapid decline of more than 400 members during the period from 1984 to 1995 within the greater mother body of the Logos Assemblies of God Church. This is a point of concern to me, impelling me to obtain a thorough understanding of the various factors that influence church membership, and how educational development of members may contribute to the stability and growth of the local church.

It is especially our approaches towards working with the youth and young children that need attention. In addition, not much educational development has occurred in the area of youth and children (Sunday school) within the denomination where I serve, hence my

¹ A weakness of Nel’s book is that he does not provide sufficient bibliographical evidence stating the origin of these statistics, hence the validity thereof could be questioned. But this does not mean that we should not take such statements seriously as there may well be elements of truth in it. Nel supports his claims with references to the market research done by Market Research Africa for *Business Today*, a newspaper article in the “Burger” of 18 February 1998, as well as the *Insig* journal of March 1995 - all of which state a significant decline in church attendance. The concerns regarding church attendance were also the key points for a discussion on the “Radio Sonder Grense” (RSG) programme “Kollig op die Kerk” of 16 March 2003. During this programme an interview was also conducted with Annes Nel, who listed educational concerns among the reasons for people’s alleged exit from the church.

serious interest in this specialised area. A wide range of catechetical and educational ministries in our church focus on the spiritual and educational development of believers. This periodically includes topical studies that cover life issues such as family life, prayer and worship, pastoral counselling, etc.

The standardized program that has been followed to date includes the following:

- Home cell groups, focussing on spiritual growth and caring for each other.
- Wednesday evening Prayer Meetings, Sunday morning teaching service and Sunday evening evangelistic services.
- Bible Study for the whole congregation on a weekly basis.
- Junior and senior youth ministries.
- Sunday school ministry.
- Mothers' ministry.



It will be important to note that although there may not be a formal programme of catechesis in the local congregation, the above mentioned programme could facilitate the process of spiritual nurture and growth in the same way as a catechetical process. However, we may need a more structured model of catechesis to facilitate the assimilation of children and youth into the local congregation. One can therefore conclude that there exists a definite need for a more formal approach to catechesis within our local church, and hopefully this study will assist me to define such an approach more clearly. I further believe this will help to develop the ministry of our local congregation, as well as broaden my perspectives on educational development within the larger Christian community.

Informal discussions with the youth in the local congregation have brought to light the following:

- There is a general feeling amongst the young people that the church only accommodates the needs of older people, and that there are no structures in place to address the needs of young people.
- Young people feel that the older people (and especially those in leadership) do not understand their needs in terms of their unique language, culture and music.
- Young people also feel that they are not involved in the local church, and often prefer to attend other churches where the youth play an active role and where the style of music and worship addresses the needs and interests of the younger person.

In view of the above considerations, one clearly needs a new model of catechesis in our congregation that will not only be sensitive to the needs of the younger generation, but will increase commitment by increasing the level of knowledge, and will find creative ways of accommodating young people within current liturgical processes. Questions we need to ask ourselves are the following:



Are current models of catechesis and religious education still effective to meet the demands of our age?

- How do issues of modernity and the youth impact on the decrease in church membership and attendance?
- How do we keep (especially) young people in the church today?

1.1.3 THE NEED FOR A TRANSFORMATIVE CATECHETICAL MODEL FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

The rapid decline of youth membership within the community of the Logos Assemblies of God denomination would be one of the key reasons why one needs to evaluate the congregation's educational and catechetical programmes. One also needs to highlight the lack of development in the areas of Sunday school and youth ministry as an important concern, which makes it even more imperative to revitalise and transform the current educational and catechetical approaches in the local church and denomination.

In order to propose such a transformative catechetical model for the local congregation, one needs to consider its current catechesis, and evaluate how Westerhoff's approach to catechesis may contribute to the further development of such a catechetical programme.

The following is a summary of the current approach to education within the local congregation:



Marriage – The local pastor usually conducts 3-4 marriage counselling sessions that includes educational input on marriage and family life and encompasses the vital areas of couples' social, economic, personal and spiritual lives.

Pregnancy, childbirth and infancy – In the local congregation prospective mothers would then receive formal sessions and informal peer education through the mother's ministry. Parents are required to nurture and teach their babies and young toddlers regarding the Bible and God. This is usually done in the cultural setting of bedtime stories and the teaching of spiritual songs.

Sunday school – Christian education for toddlers is furthermore complemented by the local congregation’s formal Sunday school that includes children from as young as three years old up to the age of fourteen years. During the Sunday school children are then divided into age groups, and a more formal catechetical curriculum is followed.

The curriculum focuses mainly on Bible teaching, basic life skills training, and holistic social development, which help the children to be assimilated into the mainstream life of the congregation. The Sunday school usually runs for an hour before the morning service, after which the children are also required to attend the service.

Youth Ministry – From the age of fourteen or fifteen children are encouraged to join the youth ministry, with meetings on Friday evenings, and focussing on the specific needs and concerns of young people. The youth ministry attempts to be relevant and address the challenges (such as HIV/AIDS, teen-pregnancies, drug abuse, etc.), facing young people in a postmodern society.



The youth ministry also focuses on outreach and evangelism, where young people are challenged to practically live out their faith life by being the “light of the world”, and the “salt of the earth”. The young people are also encouraged to attend the church services and other congregational programmes.

Adults – Adults in the congregation receive catechetical instruction mainly through sermons (during church services), evening Bible studies, home cell groups and prayer meetings.

These educational processes are more informal and not structured according to a formal catechetical model, but they play a major role in the process of growth and spiritual nurturing of the members.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research is an evaluation of Westerhoff's model of catechesis in order to determine whether a new model of religious education relevant to the present context in South Africa may be developed from his views on catechesis. In order to further expound on the research problem, it would be important to highlight Westerhoff's key works as well as key contributions from other writers with regard to Westerhoff's work on catechesis:

1.2.1 WESTERHOFF – A SYNOPSIS OF KEY IDEAS FROM HIS MODEL OF CATECHESIS.

Westerhoff was born in the USA in 1933 and ordained as a minister of the Episcopal Church in 1958. He served for twenty years as professor of religion and education at Duke University Divinity School and is the director of the Institute of Pastoral Studies at St Luke's Episcopal Church in Atlanta, Georgia. He is the author and co-author of numerous books such as *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (1976), *Learning Through Liturgy* (1978), *Liturgy and Learning Through the Life Cycle* (1980) and *Values for Tomorrow's Children* (1970). Through these and other writings, Westerhoff made a significant contribution to the development of catechesis and catechetical theory. Taylor (1984: 100) refers to Westerhoff's views on the aim of catechesis as "making known to God's people His saving deeds of liberation."

Westerhoff, in *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*, explains that catechesis and catechetics constitute the basis of what we believe, of our being, and of how we behave within the community, since he defines catechesis as the "deliberate, systematic, and sustained interpersonal helping relationships of acknowledged value that aid persons within a faith community to know God, live in relationship to God, and act with God in the world" (1983: 47).

In another context, according to Taylor (1984: 96), Westerhoff defines catechesis as “the process by which persons are initiated into the Christian community and its faith, revelation, and vocation; the process by which persons throughout their lifetimes are continually converted and nurtured, transformed and formed, by and in its living tradition.”

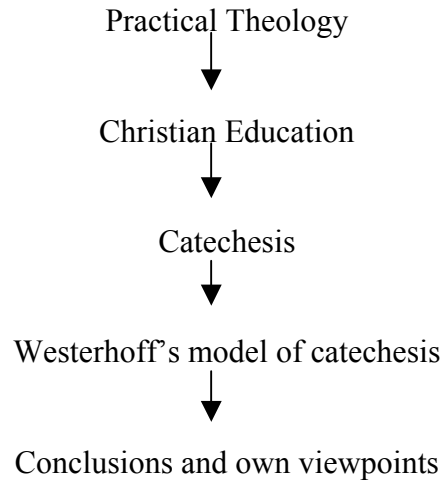
For Westerhoff, the educational role of catechesis has to do with more than oral instruction; it has to do with ways of thinking about Christian education, interaction between learners and teachers, and the role the faith community plays in forming the lives of people.

1.2.2 DELIMITATION OF STUDY AREA

The assumptions of this study are the following:

- Due to divergent viewpoints on Christian religious education, there are many debates regarding appropriate models of catechesis, hence this area needs to be researched properly.
- Traditional models of catechesis may still be relevant in principle, but may also have become redundant, irrelevant and ineffective in their current forms, and may not be able to meet the demands and needs of 21st century Christian communities.
- Churches are losing the interest of young people and children due to the ineffectiveness of models of catechesis.
- People are not properly assimilated into the life of the church due to an ineffective model of catechesis.
- A contextually relevant model of catechesis will impact positively on the life of churches and Christian communities.

A proposed delimitation of the field of study is the following:



1.2.3 HYPOTHESIS

One of Westerhoff's strengths is his extensive research and study on the topic of catechesis, which he could test in a pastoral setting as minister of the Episcopal Church for many years. Furthermore, he is very clear on the definition of catechesis as well as its different aspects and components. Another strength of Westerhoff is that he integrates Christian education with other social science disciplines such as sociology and psychology.

One weakness of Westerhoff could be that his approach is too Anglo-Catholic, and does not make room for other denominational variables. Thus, this approach is of an exclusive nature, and is not so inclusive in terms of broader Christian educational principles.

My hypothesis is thus that, through critical analysis and evaluation of John H. Westerhoff III's model of catechesis, I may draw closer to a relevant and contextual educational model that will accommodate the needs of the South African churches for the 21st century.

1.3 AN OUTLINE OF THE PROCEDURE OF THE RESEARCH (CHAPTERS)

This mini-thesis will involve a literature review of the works of John H Westerhoff III in relation to catechesis. His works referred to below, as well as his articles and contributions to edited works, will be investigated and critically evaluated. An important part of the study will be evaluations of the views of other writers regarding Westerhoff's model of catechesis.

By doing an overview of different catechetical models and reflecting on Westerhoff's works, and more specifically his book *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*, as well as comparing various books, articles and journals on this topic, I hope to prove my hypothesis. Chapter 2 of this mini-thesis will mainly focus on providing an overview of various educational models, as well as comparing them and highlighting their strengths and weaknesses, and why the choice of Westerhoff as the central figure in this debate.

Chapter 3 will then focus more specifically on Westerhoff's model of catechesis by providing an in depth discussion of Westerhoff's work, his strengths and shortcomings, and referring to critical viewpoints from other writers concerning Westerhoff's model. Chapter 3 will be followed by a contextual analysis in chapter 4, reflecting on Westerhoff's model as basis for an acceptable and workable model for one's own local congregation. Chapter 4 will conclude with some guidelines for the development of catechesis for the local congregation and final remarks on this study.

These key viewpoints on Westerhoff's model of catechesis compel me, as an enrolling master's student, to gain insight into the main scholarly debates on catechesis. I therefore decided to do a literature study that will focus on a critical evaluation of Westerhoff's model of catechesis. I hope to contribute constructively to these debates, thereby adding to the richness of the debates within this particular discourse.

CHAPTER 2: SITUATING WESTERHOFF WITHIN THE DISCIPLINE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

This chapter will mainly deal with an overview and comparison of various models of catechesis and Christian religious education, with a view to highlighting their strengths and weaknesses, and thus to provide reasons and motivations for the choice of Westerhoff as the central figure in this debate.

2.1 AN OVERVIEW OF CATECHESIS AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

2.1.1 THE USE OF THE TERMS “CATECHESIS”, “CHRISTIAN EDUCATION” AND “RELIGIOUS EDUCATION”

It is important to note firstly that the terms “catechesis”, “Christian education”, “Christian religious education”, or “religious education” are frequently used interchangeably to refer to the same subject matter. This is confirmed in Seymour and Miller (1982:20), when they refer to Westerhoff who replaced the term “Christian education” by “catechesis”, in order to place a greater emphasis on the initiation and growth aspect within the faith community.

Westerhoff also justifies his use of the term “catechesis” in his article “Formation, Education, Instruction” (Westerhoff 1987:579), where he states that he reverts back to the early church concept of “catechesis” to best describe his understanding of both intentional religious enculturation and religious education.

However, it should be stated clearly that many scholars draw a clear distinction between catechesis and Christian religious education. For example, Warren, in his article “Catechesis: An Enriching Category for Religious Education”, who pleads for a greater convergence between catechetical and religious education theories, promoting an approach whereby the differing theories should rather complement each other. Warren believes that this may be possible if both approaches recognise their past successes and failures, are more open to critique from each other, and accept that their theories are still incomplete (Warren: *Religious Education*, 1981, Vol. 76 Issue 2, p115-116).

It is especially important to separate the term “catechesis” from its traditional Roman Catholic connotation which is very limiting, i.e. catechesis as part of a formal catechetical programme for young people initiated into the church. This does not do justice to the true meaning of such a rich concept. Hence, we find that other Protestant and non-Catholic denominations do not benefit from this term due to its historical and traditional baggage. This calls for continuous reflection and re-definition of the concept “catechesis” in search of true contextual relevance and meaning. How we engage in the contemporary debate on “catechesis” would then be extremely important for such a process.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, terms such as catechesis and Christian or religious education may be used interchangeably, not to create further confusion, but rather to contribute to a common understanding of our conceptualisation of the educational processes involved in the Christian faith.

We need to explore the various models of catechesis and Christian education by first reflecting on the historical development of religious education as a discipline of study or science, and thereafter investigate the key theoretical approaches and models falling within the ambit of this study.

2.1.2 HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Allen J. Moore (in Taylor 1984:95) explains that the discipline of religious education has only developed over the last century into a formal body of information that included content from progressive education and educational psychology.

Taylor (1984:96) credits Moore with the view that the roots of religious education can be traced back to the Judeo-Christian heritage, as well as the history of education, and he further emphasises the historical link between religion and education by quoting the well-known historian Robert Ulich: “In our secular age we are inclined to underestimate the role of religion in the history of education. All early education was religious, and all early religion was also educational.”

Where does catechesis fit into this historical context? For Moore (Taylor 1984:96-97) the Christian practice of catechesis represents one of the historical forms of religious education to which Westerhoff is a key contributor. Moore also notes that catechetics as oral instruction was one of the first efforts to establish religious education as a scientific discipline, with major contributions from Greek and Roman educational philosophers.

Moore (Taylor 1984:96-97) also refers to Frederich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) as one of the first theologians of practical or pastoral theology who regarded catechetics as a sub-discipline of practical theology. This proves to be an interesting viewpoint when we look at the pastoral approach to religious education in the following section. For Schleiermacher then, catechetics was directly related to the primary responsibility of the pastor to care for the needs of the people, which represented the central focus of church life.

According to Seymour (1982:12) there has also been an increase in scholarly research on Christian and religious education since 1970 when scholars especially explored the

relationship of Christian and religious education to public education, Christian theology, and religious studies in relation to the church as an institutional Christian academic centre. For Seymour (1982:12) special focus was placed on the improvement of the quality of Christian living and learning.

These are some critical observations regarding the historical development of Christian religious education and catechesis. Of course, the field of Christian religious education is very wide with many divergent viewpoints and streams of thinking, and it is therefore necessary to focus on a particular aspect or section within this wider debate.

2.2 KEY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LEADING SCHOLARS IN THE FIELD OF CATECHESIS AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

This section highlights the current state of the debate around Christian education and catechesis by briefly outlining some key contributions from leading scholars in the field.

Seymour and Miller (1982:16-31) approach the subject of Christian education from the viewpoint of metaphors being used to explain its main purpose and aim, of which the important approaches consist of religious instruction, faith community, spiritual development, liberation, and interpretation. These approaches then respectively refer to the different metaphors of education, community of faith, person, justice, and meaning.

For Seymour and Miller (1982:16-31) religious instruction is therefore strongly associated with theories on education within the human sciences, but they caution that the power of theology should not be compromised within the framework of educational theory and practice.

Schipani (1988:1-5) approaches the subject of religious education from a liberation theology perspective, and aims is to establish a broad and critical liberation theology

framework for religious education. This is done by having liberation theology and religious education theories confronting each other in order to reach a point of mutual understanding, and with the hope of contributing to the debate between theology and religious education. Schipani (1988:1-5) further focuses on key liberation themes such as conscientization, the kingdom of God, praxis knowing, critical interpretation, and base community, with Paulo Freire's work as a central basis for arguments. The socio-historical settings of developing countries in South and Central America and the Caribbean serve as the locations for reflection in this book.

Browning (1989:1-10) and authors like Foster, Carr and Maas follow a broad approach to Christian religious education by deepening insights into sacramental and liturgical church life, ethics, evangelism, nurture, and conversion. They especially attempt to find new institutional approaches for Sunday school, church schools, catechetical patterns, etc. According to Browning (1989:1-10), the contributing authors agree on the high potential of lay people to be released in ministry where pastors take a leading role in church education. Such pastors become catalysts in developing common vision, pastoral curriculum, sacramental life, spiritual formation, and biblical grounding aimed at the realisation of the ideal of a universal priesthood of believers.

2.3 DEFINITION OF CATECHESIS

In his book, *Building God's People*, Westerhoff (1983) speaks of catechesis as the process of "living into our baptism", and refers to different forms of catechesis, namely liturgical catechesis, moral catechesis, spiritual catechesis, and pastoral catechesis. These are all vital aspects of catechesis that Westerhoff includes in a model of catechesis.

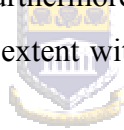
The emphasis on pastoral catechesis is echoed in Taylor (1984:100), when he refers to Westerhoff's views on catechesis as a "practical theology of education that concerns

itself with mutual guidance in issues of faith”, and the pastoral ministry of the Word, where God continuously changes and nurtures those witnessing to the salvation message.

The concept of catechetical theory is of obvious importance in the study of catechesis. Catechetical theory is described by Taylor (1984:252), where he refers to Westerhoff’s views that catechesis is in fact community education, with the community of faith being the chief catechist through its formal and informal structures.

2.4 VARIOUS APPROACHES TO CATECHESIS FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN.

Within catechesis there also seems to be divergent viewpoints as to the approach towards adults and children, especially regarding the element of worship. According to White (1988:150), Westerhoff is of the opinion that liturgy ought to be modified if it is not relevant to children. White (1988:150) furthermore refers to David Ng, a writer on the topic of worship, who disagrees to some extent with Westerhoff, since liturgical change may affect the integrity of worship.



White (1988:150) also states that Westerhoff echoes the earlier views of Horace Bushnell, who strongly promoted the inclusion of children in the communion within the Roman Catholic Church. For White (1988), Protestants have not been as open to participation in worship (as Westerhoff noted), and he notes that children in Protestant churches are not meaningfully involved in the life of congregations, and, even though they are baptised, they are excluded from the Lord’s Table.

With regard to the discussion on the inclusion or exclusion of children in the Eucharist or Mass as catechetically meaningful, White (1988:77) says there is abstract symbolic mystery in the Mass for adults to ponder, whilst there is visible and concrete doings to hold the attention of the young.

White (1988:46) quotes the work of Westerhoff and Willimon, in *Liturgy and Learning Through the Life Cycle*, in which they reflect on the relatedness of liturgy and learning: “We learn what we do; we act our way into new ways of thinking and feeling. We make believe so that we can believe.” Observing what people do in the worship service is therefore a powerful way to read and understand their perceptions and way of life.

With regard to adult Christian education, Jack Seymour (in Nancy T. Foltz, 1986:247) refers to five catechetical approaches, namely 1) religious instruction, 2) faith community, 3) spiritual development, 4) liberation, and 5) interpretation. James Michael.

The aforementioned writers clearly draw from other disciplines, which bring new and fresh dimensions into the realm of religious education. However, according to Albert E. Bailey (in Taylor, 1960:24), one may not so easily marry theology with other educational disciplines of content and method, because this may lead to a humanistic and naturalistic approach to religious education, thereby ignoring the theistic and supernaturalistic faith elements.

2.5 CATECHETICAL FOCUS WITHIN CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Seymour (1982:13) highlights the works of Tracy (*Blessed Rage of Order*) and Macdonald with his “Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education” as important contributions in the debate on the development of frameworks and metaphors for religious education.

This study will then focus on the five models that Seymour and Miller (1982:16) regard as the key metaphors that “have been used to define the aim and purpose of Christian education throughout its history”.

Taylor (1984:100-101) indicates that religious education has developed into two major streams. The first stream represents a practical theology of education that concerns itself with mutual guidance, and of which Westerhoff's catechetical model is a typical example. The other stream, with which Groome is associated, places the emphasis on education and educational practices within religious education. It is imperative that we highlight some of the key contributors of these two streams and the above mentioned five key metaphors, and briefly characterise their models.

2.5.1 THE PRACTICAL THEOLOGY/ PASTORAL APPROACH

The focus of the pastoral approach is on the integration of members into the church community rather than on the educational function of religious education. Westerhoff's model of catechesis is strongly associated with the practical theology approach to religious education.

Thus, for Westerhoff, the process of catechesis is essentially a “pastoral ministry of the Word, the energy or activity of God, which continuously converts and nurtures those whom God has chosen to witness the Gospel of salvation. The aim of catechesis is to make God's saving activity or liberating/ reconciling Word known, living, conscious, and active in the personal and corporate lives of God's baptized people.” (Taylor 1984:100).

This pastoral function and focus can be traced back as far as the third century, as Harold W. Burgess (1996:31) clearly states: “By the beginning of the third century a catechumenal system was operational in at least the larger local church settings. The catechumenate was not so much an effort to educate children of Christian families as it was a means of integrating new converts into the life of the church...Its obvious goal was to morally and spiritually prepare candidates for membership and meaningful participation in the life of the church.”

However, along with the catechumenate there also developed the institution of catechetical schools, which was essentially different from the catechumenate, as the catechetical schools focussed more on an educational approach to religious education. This will be elaborated upon under the heading of the “educational approach” to religious education.

Taylor also mentions Howard Grimes as being associated with the practical theology or pastoral approach. Grimes regards practical theology as a theology that judges the church’s actions and describes what the church should be doing (Taylor 1984:100).

According to Taylor (1984:100), Grimes follows an approach to religious education that falls somewhere between a practical theology that depends on systematic theology, and a practical theology based on the human sciences or experience; thereby also placing emphasis on the “interaction between the systematic branches of theology and the practice of faith, the human science, and the concrete situation.”

Michael Warren confirms the pastoral ministry framework of catechesis, and emphasizes that catechesis is inextricably linked to all other ministries within the church as it seeks to add meaning to people’s lives within the community of faith. (Warren 1981:122).

2.5.2 THE EDUCATIONAL APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

As mentioned under the pastoral section, there also developed a more educational approach to religious education during the first four centuries, with the emergence of catechetical schools.

Burgess (1996:32-38) comments on these early catechetical developments and identifies Clement of Alexandria (150-215), Origen (182-254), Cyril of Jerusalem (310-386), Chrysostom (347-407) and Augustine (354-430) as the key representative educators of the first four centuries. According to Burgess, these writers played a major role in the pursuit of religious education based on academic study, hence shifting its focus to a philosophical dimension that was rooted in the existing Greek disciplines (1996:33).

For Taylor (1984:101), theological writers in the educational stream place a strong emphasis on educational practices, but they are not necessarily less theological. Taylor (1984:101) refers to Thomas Groome and Mary Elizabeth Moore as key contributors within this paradigm. Taylor explains that Groome focuses on the importance of the educational act as it happens within the religious community. For Groome Christian religious education is essentially an educational process that focuses both on the generic nature of the discipline and its theological significance.

Groome's approach is rooted in the idea of "shared praxis", which is described by Taylor (1984:101) as "a group of Christians sharing in dialogue their critical reflection on present action in light of the Christian Story and its Vision toward the end of lived Christian faith."

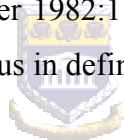
On the other hand, Taylor (1984:101) refers to Elizabeth Moore who seeks to find a middle way between the practical theologians and Groome's shared praxis, with her "traditioning" approach of Christian religious education. This approach essentially has to

do with the remembrance and transformation of history where the Christian community has an experience of God and the world that motivates them for the future. For this reason we find that Moore emphasises the hermeneutical and transformative dimensions within the traditioning approach.

James W. White (1988:197) agrees with the above viewpoint when he refers to Moore's thesis that promotes the notion of embracing both history and change towards the future as integral parts of a traditioning community. For Moore the focal point in traditioning education is the process of formation and transformation of people in all dimensions of existence, which may include cognitive, affective and action-based dimensions (White 1988:197).

2.6 DIFFERENT CATECHETICAL MODELS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

According to White (in Seymour & Miller 1982:11), approaches to Christian education are not mutually exclusive; they all assist us in defining the task of Christian education.



In view of the previous delineation it would seem that the religious instruction and religious resource interpretation would then fall within the ambit of the educational approach to religious education, whereas the remaining liberation, spiritual development and faith community models would be regarded as part of the pastoral approach. The following is a brief description of these models and its key contributors.

2.6.1 RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION MODEL

According to Westerhoff (1976:6-7), the schooling-instructional model of religious education dominated the approach to religious education in the last century. He describes this model as an approach to religious education that has the concept of a "school" and instruction as the context and means of education. For Westerhoff, the school-

instructional model has made significant contributions to the lives of adults, youth and children in the church.

The emphasis on the school-instructional model is confirmed by Westerhoff (1975:1201-1204), where he explains that the church adopted the Public School model and secular pedagogical as well as psychological insights as a basis for Christian education at the turn of the 20th century. However, Westerhoff maintained in this article that the Public School model did not prove to be effective to enable growth in the faith.

Seymour (1982:16-19) also elaborates on the schooling-instructional model by stating that this model has essentially to do with the teaching/learning process and that the discipline of education provides the structure and approach for how religious education should be practiced. Hence, we find the development of the Sunday school model that was largely based on the model of education within public schools.



The instructional nature of religious education or catechesis seems to be quite evident in Roman Catholic circles. This fact is illustrated by Thomas P Walters (1990:84-92), who strongly promotes the religious instructional approach to catechesis.

Walters (1990:84-92), explains that catechesis “is the term that catholic churches currently uses to speak of its instructional endeavours in initiating individuals into the community.” He also refers in this article to the intention of catechetical training, which aims to make people’s faith alive, conscious, and active through the illuminating character of instruction. For Walters, the notion of instructional objectives is another crucial element within catechesis.

James Michael Lee’s strong association with this approach is evident in his statement that “Religion teaching is basically no different from any other kind of teaching. Nor is the

learning of religion basically different from any other kind of learning.” (Seymour & Miller 1982:16-17).

Westerhoff (1976:6, 7), however, cautions that this model has hampered the church towards the development of alternative models, when he makes the following statement: “The schooling-instructional paradigm isolates us from new possibilities while continuing to occupy most of our attention in teaching, research, practice, and resource development. To compound our difficulties, we find it functionally difficult to imagine or create any significant educational programme outside it.”

In other words, if we were to contextualise this point for our own situation, it simply means that this paradigm has kept us from thinking outside the bounds of the traditional Sunday school context. Westerhoff (1987:589), prefers to interpret the relationship between formation, education and instruction as a more holistic approach to religious education, which can be called catechesis.²



2.6.2 SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL

According to Seymour (1982:22-23), this model focuses mainly on the spiritual experience and religious life of the individual as the context for religious education. He associates especially Gloria Durka and Joanmarie Smith, as well as James Fowler, Donald Miller, James and Evelyn Whitehead, and Mary Wilcox with this model. The psychologists Erikson, Kohlberg, and Piaget have particularly influenced these scholars of religious education.

Groome (1980:146) explains the development within religious education and emphasises the epistemological shift in education towards a relational, experiential, and active

² 'Public school' here means 'state school' (American usage), and not 'private school' (British usage).

approach that could be called “experiential catechesis”. Groome associates Pierre Babin and Marcel van Caster with this approach of experiential catechesis that promotes the active participation and creativity of learners.

This emphasis on experience is echoed in Seymour and Miller (1982:24, 25), where Seymour explains: “The spiritual development approach reminds Christian educators of the role religious experience plays in Christian learning.” However, Seymour warns that the spiritual development approach can be too narcissistic or self-seeking, which may then become an obstacle towards the development of true social concern.

2.6.3 LIBERATION MODEL

For Seymour (1982:25-26), this approach to religious education was born out of dissatisfaction with traditional models of education. The liberation model has the justice of God as the basis for religious education.

In other words, it has to do with an approach to religious education where learners are conscientized regarding their social and political world, and especially made aware of situations of oppression and how they should respond as the people of God. For Seymour, this approach is rooted in the works of Paulo Freire and his theory of “education for liberation” and action-reflection discourse. Christian educators associated with this approach are Warford, Shockley and Wren.

Daniel S. Schipani (in Miller, 1995:300-301) refers to the church as a base community that promotes justice that constitutes the context for Christian education. The transformation of society is the aim of such education. Within such a liberation framework, the process and content of educational practice has to do with faithful discipleship and doing theology in action.

2.6.4 RESOURCE INTERPRETATION MODEL

According to Seymour (1982:28-30), the resource interpretation model is an approach to religious education whereby the individual's personal experiences are related to the specific Christian tradition in order to derive meaning from this. Thomas Groome and Douglas Wingeier are strongly associated with this approach. For Seymour (1982:28-30), Groome (with his "shared praxis") and Wingeier (with his "faith translation") are both interpretive in their approaches, because it has to do with helping people to discern God's will for them, and introduce biblical and theological understanding for people's experiences.

In another sense, David F. White and Frank Rogers (Miller, 1995:192), refer to religious education as an approach of "meaning making" whereby the task of religious education has distinctly to do with a process of facilitating the making of meanings through symbols, themes and biblical stories of God's revelation. They expand on this by their reference to Ross Snyder with his meaning-making workshops during which people are guided through life experiences by writing essays about their life stories and sharing their interpretation with others in a group setting.

For Groome (1980:149), the essence of his "shared Praxis" has to do with the combining of present lived experiences with those Christian experiences of people in the past, and this is clearly illustrated by the following quotation from Groome: "Given the kind of knowing that Christian education should promote, I claim that a praxis way of knowing is most capable of meeting the task. It is a relational, reflective, and experiential way of knowing in which by critical reflection on lived experience people discover and name their own story and vision and, in a Christian education context, the Story and Vision of the Christian community."

2.6.5 FAITH COMMUNITY MODEL

According to Seymour and Miller (1982:19), the faith community approach uses various resources to illustrate the purpose of Christian education. Within the faith community model, the real nature of Christian community defines the appropriate procedures for church education. Within the faith community approach, the unique nature of a particular faith community forms the basis for its educational program. They claim that even as far back as 1872 the American Sunday school author Edward Eggleston already challenged the “instructional” approach to religious education, and urged that a more spiritual route should be followed.

Seymour (in Astley, Francis & Crowder 1996:4-5), indicates that Westerhoff strongly criticized the schooling-instructional model by saying that it “has victimized Christian education and imprisoned it in secular pedagogy”. In addition, Westerhoff defines Christian education as “those liberated, systematic and sustained efforts of the community of faith which enable persons and groups to evolve Christian lifestyles”. This definition encompasses the core of Westerhoff’s community of faith-enculturation paradigm.

Michael Warren also confirms the community centred approach to catechesis when he states that the community represents the prime agent and message of catechesis, thereby providing its own unique Christian culture to the faith community. (Warren 1981:121). In other words, each local community of faith must always interpret its culture within the broader context of the Christian faith. There is therefore a strong link between catechesis as community and the socialisation or enculturation of the faith community.

According to Charles Foster (in Seymour and Miller, 1982:67-71), the strength of the faith community model for Christian education is the significance of the collective human experience and common life’s interdependent dimension. Furthermore, this model can

also rely on the wealth of experiences to inform the future, and it facilitates the interplay between teaching and learning and occasions of celebration and mission. Foster (in Seymour and Miller 1982: 68), also points out the weaknesses within the faith community model by stating that the following main concerns:

- The emphasis on the corporate or on community may lead to a preference for the status quo or current situation, and therefore hampers future development and change within such community.
- A romantic focus on a possible limited history may stifle development and growth in Christian education.
- Stress upon teaching may result in lack of recognition for learners' filtering their experiences through their abilities and circumstances.

Foster then highlights the problem of conflict between the communal form of social organisation and the voluntary approach to social organisation, and notes that voluntary associations govern society. This is important, because the voluntary approach is based on linear, sequential and progressive processes, whilst communalism is concerned with how the past affects the future.

The other major difference between the two approaches is the fact that voluntarism assumes consensus, whilst communalism emphasises diversity of values in the larger culture. Leaders of voluntary societies emphasise what is known and how freely chosen relationships can be maintained, whereas leaders in communal structures focus more on the traditions and rituals that gives meaning to their corporate identity. (Seymour and Miller: 1982: 69-71). Thus, Foster disagrees with Westerhoff who minimises the value of the formal schooling model as an institution for value transfer, and promotes education in the faith community paradigm (Seymour and Miller: 1982: 169).

According to Craig Dykstra in *Theological Perspectives in Christian Formation* (Astley, Francis & Crowder: 1996:252, 264), Westerhoff played a major role in the consensus that people's faith lives and spirituality are developed within the context of the faith community. However, Dykstra cautions that the formative power of the faith should not be over-estimated, as one should also take into consideration the power of other cultural influences in the wider society and the element of failure within the faith community.

It should be stressed that the various models described above cannot be seen in isolation but overlaps quite frequently. Hence, we find some integration between the schooling instructional model and the resource interpretation model, and between the liberation and the faith community models. This is confirmed by Daniel S. Schipani, in Miller (1995:302-303) when he refers to the liberationist who insists that the faith community must ensure that all aspects of human life – including religious, social, political, and economical – should be integrated towards justice and peace for everyone.



2.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF WESTERHOFF WITHIN THE DISCOURSE ON MODELS OF CATECHESIS.

Based on the aforementioned models, Westerhoff's model of religious socialization or catechesis clearly falls within the boundaries of the faith community model. Westerhoff's plea was that interaction should not be missed, although socialization is sometimes erroneously characterized as a unidirectional process. He clearly wants sustaining interaction in the faith community among the generations, as noted in his oft-quoted words in White (1988: 137): "True community necessitates the presence and interaction of three generations. Too often the church... sets the generations apart."

Thus, for Westerhoff the first generation represents vision, the second generation refers to the present, and the third generation has to do with the memory of the faith community. These three generations should then be in a state of continuous interaction to ensure the

proper functioning and the maintenance of the Christian community of faith. This approach of interaction between memory, the present and the generation of vision coincides strongly with Elizabeth Moore's traditioning approach and Groome's idea of "shared praxis".

The historical and contextual relevance and significance of the faith community model, as well as the centrality of Westerhoff in this debate, forms the basis and rationale for selecting this particular discourse as an important study. An evaluation of Westerhoff's work that forms an integral part of the faith community model, will be the main focus of this debate, and will be further deliberated upon in the following chapter.



CHAPTER 3: WESTERHOFF'S MODEL OF CATECHESIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION OF WESTERHOFF'S MODEL OF CATECHESIS

The study as a whole is approached from the vantage point of a critical evaluation of the catechetical model of Westerhoff. At this stage one needs to take a closer look at Westerhoff, and in particular an in-depth discussion of Westerhoff's strengths and weaknesses by referring to critical viewpoints from other writers concerning his model.

Secondly, if one studies the works of Westerhoff it also becomes clear that Westerhoff evaluates catechesis within the context of socialisation/ enculturation, the liturgical life of the believer, and the transforming and liberating nature of catechesis. Therefore, this chapter will also reflect on Westerhoff's views of catechesis in relation to socialisation, liturgy and liberation theology.



3.2 THE DEFINITION AND AIMS OF CATECHESIS ACCORDING TO WESTERHOFF

According to White (1988: 25), Westerhoff prefers the Greek word catechesis, which (in the form katechein) means “to echo” or “to hand down”. According to White, “Catechesis” is a concept not intended by its advocates to be applied only to propositional transmission. He said that some people have attempted to make the term more holistic in reference. He pleaded that the Religious Education Association must support and encourage the use of this concept.

For White (1988:25), the term catechesis is directly under the political control of the Catholic hierarchy. Michael Warren can confirm this view when he states that catechesis “is founded upon a body of official Roman Catholic documents”. (Warren 1981:115-116).

Secondly, catechesis operates very much as a one-way communication, from older to younger. Thirdly, catechesis is to some extent also socialisation and enculturation. White puts it in Westerhoff's own words: "Ritual must always be at the heart of Christian education". (1988:138)

White's account is confirmed by Westerhoff (1994:163), and refers to the process of fashioning Christians through their echoing of the Word of God, and the formation of people into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. Felderhof (1985:60) also refers to Westerhoff's description of catechesis as a community-centred activity that is based on life in the faith community in which the members strive towards maturing in faith and living faithfully. Catechesis then also aims at enabling the faith community to live under judgement and inspiration of the gospel with the end of God's will and reign in mind.

Felderhof (1985:60) further sums up Westerhoff's delineation of the aims of catechesis as: "(1) to sustain, deepen and transmit a Christian perception and understanding of life and our lives; (2) to aid persons to live individually and corporately in a conscious relationship with God; and (3) to enable persons to acknowledge and actualise their human potential for individual and corporate life."

Michael Warren expresses similar sentiments when he states that catechesis is rooted in its historical tradition, community-centeredness, ministry-focus, and having a celebration and occasional character. (Warren 1981:117).

3.3 WESTERHOFF'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EVANGELISM, BAPTISM AND CATECHESIS

Westerhoff (1983: 38-46), approaches catechesis from the basis of baptism when he refers to catechesis as “the process by which we prepare persons for their baptism and the process by which we aid persons to live into their baptism.” The reason why Westerhoff emphasizes baptism is his belief that our baptism indicates our identity and reveals our true image in relation to God (Felderhof 1985: 60).

Westerhoff regards baptism not only as a momentary rite, but rather a way of entering into a lifelong journey and pursuit of the full understanding of one's Christian inheritance and identity as part of the family of God (Westerhoff: 1980: 5). Baptism obviously refers predominantly to child or infant baptism in Westerhoff's Anglican context.

It can therefore not be interpreted in the same way within a Pentecostal setting which mainly promotes baptism after the conversion experience and babies and where smaller children are merely dedicated unto God based on the scriptural principle of Matthew 19:13-15. This dedication then represents a more informal way of allowing the child to become part of the body of Christ, and the child only becomes a formal member of the body after the conversion experience.

For Westerhoff, then, baptism represents:

- The initiation of a person into the Christian life through God's grace and the human response to this grace.
- A sacrament, which is an outward, visible sign of an inward spiritual reality.
- The importance of mature faith and living into our baptism.
- The affirmation of communality, the faith of the church, and transformation through conversion and nurture.

A key question we need to ask ourselves is: When does the process of catechesis start in the believer's life? Westerhoff makes some critical comments when he links catechesis to the processes of evangelism and evangelization, in his article "Evangelism, Evangelization and Catechesis". (1994:156-165). Here Westerhoff claims that evangelism and evangelization precede catechesis in the case of adults, but for children who are baptized and confirmed, the process is somewhat different and more diffused, and evangelization is regarded as a dimension of catechesis.

This is a particularly important debate for the Pentecostal tradition where children are not baptized and confirmed unless they have experienced conversion as a direct turning point in their spiritual lives. Only then will they be baptized and formally assimilated into the body of believers. Westerhoff (1994:159), confirms that the principle of adult baptism is more often considered as the norm and standard for baptism in our current day, but it seems clear that there exists a more distinct and separate process of evangelism, evangelization and catechesis within the Pentecostal context.

The abovementioned Pentecostal approach clearly differentiates itself from Westerhoff's approach that views evangelization and catechesis as similar processes. (1994:157). How does one resolve this conflict of interest? Is it possible to develop a more common understanding of catechesis, evangelism and baptism that will bridge the gap between these separate viewpoints?

There may in fact be common ground between the abovementioned conflicting approaches, especially in relation to developing a common understanding of catechesis and baptism, an understanding that emphasises the importance of Westerhoff's focus on Christian nurture and a more spiritual approach to baptism. The local church and denomination can therefore benefit and enrich their understanding of baptism and

catechesis if they consider this shift in focus, and realise that catechesis is a nurturing process that already starts during childhood.

Westerhoff (1983: 38-46) sheds more light on the importance of catechesis by highlighting some key elements that need to form part of a definition of catechesis, namely:

- Catechesis as a converting and nurturing process,
- A process of experience, reflection and action,
- Its relation to readiness and appropriateness,
- Catechesis as a life-style, including our total beings as feeling, thinking, willing persons,
- A personal pilgrimage with companions,
- Catechesis as an activity of the whole community, and
- Having a common life together, similar to that of a family.



In the quest for understanding the process of catechesis, Westerhoff (in Hauerwas and Westerhoff 1992:266, 267) strongly advocates the processes of instruction, education and formation as integral parts of such a catechetical process. He qualifies instruction as the knowledge and skills needed for the Christian life, education as the reflective discovery of how we should live the Christian life, and formation as the nurturing and conversion or transformation of our Christian lives. Westerhoff also describes the usefulness of these concepts:

“While instruction is a useful means for transmitting beliefs and teaching decision making, and education is useful for making sense and interpreting experience, only through formation do persons acquire Christian faith, character, and consciousness.” (1992:268)

3.4 WESTERHOFF'S UNDERSTANDING OF CATECHESIS IN RELATION TO ENCULTURATION/ SOCIALIZATION, LITURGY AND LIBERATION THEOLOGY

It would now be important to investigate how Westerhoff relates catechesis within the context of enculturation or socialization, liturgy, and liberation theology.

3.4.1 WESTERHOFF'S APPROACH TO CATECHESIS AND ENCULTURATION/ SOCIALIZATION

Nancy T. Foltz, in her book *Handbook of Adult Religious Education* (1986:247), explains that Westerhoff's approach to religious education is one of socialization/enculturation within an anthropological perspective. Taylor (1984: 66), who refers to Westerhoff as a scholar who defends the socialisation viewpoint of religious education, also confirms this view where he says that socialisation refers to "the process of being inducted into the ethos, which in turn produces our self identity". Taylor (1984: 68) also says that Westerhoff, together with other like-minded scholars, bring a fresh and new dimension and input to evangelical Christian education.

According to Taylor (1984:266-267), Westerhoff, in expanding on the enculturation theory, mentions the following key points:

- Enculturation within Christian education needs to include theories from the social sciences, especially anthropology.
- Enculturation involves learning in three dimensions, namely
 - Ritual – as celebration of remembering the past and hope for the future in a meaningful way;
 - Experience – focusing on reflection on the community experience;
 - Action – with a focus on action that addresses social issues.

Groome (1980:119-120), who regards Westerhoff as the leading spokesman on religious education, is in agreement with his socialization/enculturation approach since Groome shares the conviction that faith can only be nurtured within a self-conscious intentional community of faith. Groome, like Westerhoff, believes that the church is still caught up in a “schooling-instructional education as a ministry, which is bankrupt” and regards Westerhoff’s intentional religious socialisation as the best possible approach to religious education.

Groome (1980:109, 127), further notes Westerhoff’s good description of socialisation, which utilises the social science disciplines of sociology, psychology, and anthropology. He describes these three as lifelong formal and informal disciplines through which one generation seeks to sustain and transmit its understanding and way of life to another. The processes of socialisation set values, provide responsible adult roles and motivate people to self-identity by being part of people’s way of thinking, feeling, and acting. This holistic approach to the socialisation aspect within catechesis would then be a critical factor to consider when one designs a catechetical programme for the local context.

Groome (1980: 147), says that in the Protestant tradition of religious education, the socialization model is grounded in a relational, experiential, reflective way of knowing, and he emphasises that Westerhoff’s views of religious education and formation arise from the lived experience and interaction of people in communities of Christian faith.

James W. White (1988:136-138) refers to Neville and Westerhoff who both emphasize that religious socialization is a lifelong process of formal and informal mechanisms through which people sustain and transmit their faith in a lifestyle, which embraces their views and value systems. White elaborates on Westerhoff’s views to the effect that the community has a certain lifestyle that includes rites, rituals, myths, symbols, and

expressions of belief, attitudes, values, organizational patterns, as well as liturgical and other activities.

These views of Westerhoff and Neville on religious socialization are echoed by Suzanne de Benedittis (1981:117), when she refers to Westerhoff's insights on the "participation in the life of a tradition-bearing community" as the process through which such lifestyles and value systems are carried over from one generation to another.

This process of lifestyle and value transferral is evident in the development of the Jewish religious culture as it was transmitted through patriarchs onto their future generations, as well as the Christian traditions of the Christian Church throughout the ages. De Benedittis (1981: 117), also highlights Westerhoff's plea for a holistic approach to religious education with his concept of "intentional religious socialization".

White (1988:136-138), in support of Westerhoff's idea of socialization through "enculturation", picks up on the interpersonal theme so vital in Intergenerational Religious Education (IGRE). This strand of thinking in socialization literature tends to emphasize how the catechumen is influenced by the environment, experience and actions of others.

This approach (IGRE) is essentially systemic in nature and views everything as an organic whole with interrelated parts, and is therefore in line with Westerhoff's holistic approach to socialisation, which draws from various disciplines.

Westerhoff's way of thinking is that enculturation emphasizes the process of interaction between and among people of all ages. This would also then become a central theme in favour of Westerhoff's approach to catechesis for our own time and context.

3.4.2 WESTERHOFF'S APPROACH TO CATECHESIS AND LITURGY

In the book of James Michael Lee (1977: 75-93), Westerhoff comments on the liturgical imperative of religious education, thereby emphasising the significance of rites, rituals and a cultic dimension to the development of Christian religious education. For Westerhoff the components of rites and rituals are essential to community life, and every culture would be completed through its common beliefs and ceremonial practices. Nancy T. Foltz (1986:243), further extends this point by emphasising the influence of the cultural milieu in the faith community that may often be more powerful than educational efforts within a congregation.

Groome (1980:121), with reference to Westerhoff's emphasis on ritual, states that Westerhoff gave special importance to the Church at worship, since the church ritualises and celebrates its faith communally: "By unity, learning and liturgy, Christian Education could be enhanced; more importantly, our faith could be transmitted to our children".

Groome (1980:121), said that Westerhoff's tradition was used by the best known Roman Catholic advocate Marthaler for his socialisation approach to religious education today, including: (1) growth in personal faith, (2) religious affiliation; and (3) the maintenance and transmission of a religious tradition.

According to Browning (1989:35), Westerhoff has argued that Christians could be formed completely by the life of a church. In his view a "congregation's rites and rituals, its relationship and actions, the experiences one has in being a part of its life make up a largely unwritten and hidden curriculum which shapes or miss-shapes our vision of the Christian life far more powerfully than anything emanating from a church publishing house". This is confirmed by Anderson, when referring to Westerhoff's argument that communal rituals and ceremonials are very powerful influences forming a person's faith, character and consciousness. (Anderson 1997:349).

3.4.3 WESTERHOFF'S APPROACH TO CATECHESIS AND LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Groome (1980:119-120), also refers to the political aspect of catechesis, by mentioning that Westerhoff's insight into the role of catechesis (Education for the Kingdom of God) was to lead people to social action of "engaging in political activity to reform our economic system until justice and equity are achieved". Westerhoff is more concerned about, and draws the people's attention to his "hidden curriculum" in the educating process, which leads to maintaining meaningful social preparation.

Groome (1980:119-120), furthermore highlights Westerhoff's understanding of the liberational nature socialisation, which involves all deliberate, systematic and sustained efforts to transmit or evoke knowledge, attitude, values, behaviours, or sensibilities. According to Groome, Westerhoff's view is that the church must train people to think politically, socially, economically, theologically and ethically. Groome (1980:119-120), also said that Westerhoff claimed liberation theology above liberal Protestant theology as his theological base and that Westerhoff gives more attention in depth and urgency to the role of religious education than Coe and Dewey in their so-called social reconstruction.

Chapter 3 will be concluded with a summary on the key points in Westerhoff's understanding of catechesis.

3.5 SUMMARY: KEY POINTS IN WESTERHOFF'S UNDERSTANDING OF CATECHESIS

It seems evident from the previous elaboration regarding Westerhoff's approach to catechesis that it represents a holistic approach to the subject of catechesis – an approach that encompasses all the spheres of a person's life and the life of the faith community. This holistic approach is confirmed by Wilkie Au in his article "Holistic Catechesis: Keeping our balance in the 1990's" (1991:350), with the following two propositions of Frederich von Hügel and John Westerhoff:

"1) Religious development of the whole person requires not only an institutional element that transmits a body of beliefs to its members, but also a critical aspect that invites the reflective self-appropriation of conventional propositional faith and a mystical element that fosters personal religious experience (von Hügel).

2) The process of catechesis includes the process of formation, education, and instruction – each of these processes complementing each other in an effort to develop the whole person (Westerhoff). This view is specifically embraced by the national Catechetical Directory in America, who further refers to catechesis as a lifelong developmental process geared towards the maturing of Christians." (1991:353).

Westerhoff made a major contribution to the reformation of catechetical development within American Catholic circles, and specifically with his introduction of the three vital elements of holistic education, namely formation, education and instruction; a three-part approach that has provided a solid basis for holistic catechesis (including both the needs of the individual and the community of faith) during the 1990's. (1991:358-359).

CHAPTER 4: RELEVANCE OF WESTERHOFF'S CATECHESIS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

This chapter will deal mainly with a reflection on how Westerhoff's model may assist one in the development of a unique model of catechesis for the local congregation. It will therefore be evaluative in nature and may lead to a more formal proposal of how catechesis can be structured by considering the relevant contextual factors that may influence our approach to Christian education for the local church. This chapter will thus essentially include some guidelines for the development of a contextually relevant catechesis, and will conclude with some final remarks on the essence and value of this study.

4.5 POSSIBLE WEAKNESSES IN WESTERHOFF'S APPROACH

Groome (1980:126) states that the socialization approach to Christian religious education may be insufficient and writers such as Nelson and Westerhoff do acknowledge its limitations. According to Groome, Westerhoff is quick to explain how the whole Christian community educates, but he is not sure how the community at large can be educated.

Groome (1980:126, 131) refers extensively to Westerhoff, who always warns that the Christian community must not be seen as a mere reflection of the immediate environment. Westerhoff's "continuing question" is whether or not we can turn local churches into communities of faith that can be entrusted with the task of enculturating people into authentic communities. Again, although he knows that the community educates, he has not yet outlined the role that intentional education might play in helping to educate the community toward Christian faith.

Groome (1980:126, 131) states that Westerhoff has given guidelines for building educational programmes, seeing education as an aspect of socialization. What kind of an aspect it is and how it relates to the socializing process are not clear. In fact, he is so sweeping in his rejection of the “schooling- instructional” paradigm that it is difficult to envision what form intentional educational activity might take within his “community of faith-enculturation” paradigm.

Notwithstanding the above, it still appears evident that Westerhoff has a significant role to play in the development of catechesis, and this role will now be evaluated.

4.6 WESTERHOFF’S RELEVANCE FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH AND DENOMINATION

Westerhoff’s notion of community-centredness and a catechesis that is based on the life in the faith community is of importance since it is evident in the local congregation of the Logos Assemblies of God denomination as reflected in the lifestyle and culture that is promoted through the church programme. This lifestyle or culture is essentially one of cultivating the members’ faith life, the emphasis on holiness and faithfulness, and parents being exhorted to nurture and develop Christian principles within their children.

It is a culture rich in symbolism and ritual, and can be identified through the following customs and rituals:

- Family devotions – all families are requested to have individual family devotions on Friday evenings where parents inspire their children through spiritual songs, spontaneous prayer, and Bible reading. (Based on Deuteronomy 6:5-7)
- Blessing and consecration of children through the laying on of hands by parents and spiritual leaders.

- Children are also encouraged to consider a process of personal conversion through evangelistic activities, such as Sunday school, Children's and youth camps, campaigns and house prayer meetings.
- Baptism is also considered when children have reached the age of twelve, but only after their conversion experience.

These practices have in many ways similar aims to that of Westerhoff, when he refers to the transmission of a Christian lifestyle, encouraging individual relationships with God, as well as the corporate church's relationship with God, and the actualisation of all human potential (Felderhof: 1985:60).

The congregation's programmes are also in line with Westerhoff's catechetical aims mentioned in chapter 3 of this mini-thesis, namely the sustaining and deepening of our understanding of the Christian life, helping individuals and the corporate church body to cultivate their relationship with God, as well as the realisation of each person's full potential.

However, it should be stated that the congregation, although embracing these aims, still needs to develop the necessary structures to translate these aims into practical terms. In other words, one needs to define how these aims will prepare individuals and the church to make an impact in the broader society, and on the levels of business, social development, government, family and other relevant social institutions.

The sentiments of Michael Warren mentioned in chapter 3 can also be identified within the local congregation by way of its historical tradition, communal caring for each other and the broader community, its strong focus on ministry development, and through its

celebratory events such as the holy communion, baptism, marriage, celebrating the birth and crucifixion of Christ, etc.

4.6.1 BAPTISM, EVANGELISM, CONVERSION AND NURTURE

It is also evident that when Westerhoff speaks of baptism, he speaks of a deep spiritual process (and not the mere physical water baptism) as basis for catechesis. This is also similar to the understanding within the local congregation, but the major doctrinal difference is around the issue of infant baptism versus adult baptism.

Thus, whereas Westerhoff regards catechesis as a process starting at infant baptism, the local congregation prefers to emphasise individual conversion as a prerequisite for baptism, and therefore the more formal catechetical process within the local context only starts after the conversion event. However, in spite of this difference, one can still embrace and identify with Westerhoff's sentiments of a baptism that represents a lifelong journey towards maturity within the family of God.



It would therefore be important for the local congregation to broaden its understanding of baptism and focus more on the spiritual dimension of baptism so as to enrich the lives of its congregants. The local church and denomination should regard its current tradition of baby dedication as an integral part of the child's spiritual development. In this way, the local congregation can truly develop a catechesis that prepares persons for their baptism and helps them to live into their baptism.

It is especially the processes of Christian nurture and formation that are defended by Westerhoff as vital aspects of Christian education. (1978: 410). In the same article, Westerhoff also refers to the significance of Christian evangelism and conversion, processes and terms that, according to Westerhoff, are often downplayed and confused in mainline Protestant churches. (1978:412). This is an extremely important issue within the

denominational context and local congregation, because of its association with Pentecostalism and the longstanding tradition and preference in favour of evangelism and conversion as vital components of the believers' faith life.

It is evident that the local congregation, in its doctrinal position, places greater emphasis on evangelism and conversion, and lesser emphasis on catechesis and nurture. In formulating a new proposal of educational or catechetical model for the local congregation, one then needs to investigate the interplay between these processes, and develop an approach that will keep catechesis (nurture) and evangelism (conversion) in a healthy tension and balance.

Thus, the challenge for the congregation's educational role would then be how to develop a more formal transformational catechetical model, which will address the shortcomings of the current approach, and facilitate constructive change towards the renewal and revival of the congregation.



4.6.2 LITURGY AND LIBERATION

Such a transformative model of catechesis must take cognisance of Westerhoff's thoughts on liberation theology and the church's acting as an agent for change in society. Of particular importance in this regard would be his reference to the disadvantages of liturgy in the context of transformation and social change.

The challenge for the local church would be to work out how the liturgy can be developed as a transformational tool. This would impel the local church and denomination to change existing traditional liturgical patterns, and become contextually relevant through its worship, prayer and songs based on the prophetic socio-political role of the church within the community. A role that has as its bases the liberation stance of viewing God as a God who sides with the poor and the oppressed. Only then will the

church become relevant in its liturgical focus when serving a community that is characterised by poverty and numerous social ills.

Westerhoff expresses the value of liturgy in the development of catechesis, but he is also not unaware of its dangers. In Lee (1977: 75-93), Westerhoff warns against the negative effect of ritual, when there is a need for change in a particular community, and where people would then use rituals as an excuse to maintain the status quo. There needs to be a critical element that moves us to view the Christian faith as an agent of change, and as the church transforms the world into the community of God, so our rituals must also transform.

Embedded in this view of Westerhoff is the bias of the Christian faith towards the oppressed and the marginalized, with Christians having the responsibility to join God in the shaping of history. This notion of joint responsibility has to do with our stewardship role, which is also echoed by Westerhoff in his book, *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society* (1983:13-35), as well as in Foltz (1986: 241).

Our stewardship role and God's favour towards the oppressed are critical components to be considered in the development of a contextually relevant catechesis, because of the local congregation's historical setting, it being part of a community consisting of previously disadvantaged and marginalised individuals in the former apartheid and racially segregated South Africa.

The challenge would be to develop an educational programme that may effectively deal with the socio-political and economic after-effects and consequences of such a debilitating system that penetrated to the core of the denomination and local church's theology and Christian witness.

Thus, if the local church and denomination wants to be relevant in its catechesis, it must develop a model that will promote good stewardship of every believer in the dimensions of believers' political, social, spiritual, economic, environmental, and every other human aspect. This holistic approach to catechesis and the development of the believer as steward is also confirmed in the unpublished thesis of Dames (1998:71). The thoughts of Westerhoff in this regard would be critical to inform such a process of transformative catechesis.

For Westerhoff (in Lee 1977:75-93), educational programmes should make provision for sufficient preparation of persons to participate meaningfully in the church's liturgical life. The critical question within this view on preparation would be at which age children should be introduced to church liturgy.

4.6.3 CHILDREN AND LITURGY

For Westerhoff, children should form an integral part of the church's liturgical life. Alan Chester (in Francis and Thatcher, 1990:288) confirms this when he quotes Westerhoff's statement that liturgy "is for children and for the child in us." Chester continues (Francis and Thatcher 1990:288) by emphasising Westerhoff's views on the intuitive nature of liturgy with learning being an implicit part within the rituals.

One may thus conclude that children are intuitive beings and should not be excluded from the liturgical dimension of the church. In the context of the local congregation it would be important to note here that there is a principled agreement with this view of Westerhoff, and within the local church the children are encouraged to participate in praise and worship singing, prayer, spiritual dancing, dramas, etc. The only difference would be regarding baptism and the Holy Communion where the children can only participate after their conversion experience and normally after the age of twelve years.

With regard to the abovementioned reference to children and liturgy, one also needs to emphasise the significant role that the family plays in establishing religious rituals and spiritual symbolism. James Hopewell (1987:13) says that the family is indeed a powerful entity that reinforces faith and ritualism.³

4.6.4 LITURGY AS STORY

Furthermore, Westerhoff (in Lee 1977:75-93), emphasises the importance of Christian faith as a story, the story of God's mighty deeds and actions in history and the world, and having a vision of a world of peace, justice and wholeness and well-being of all people. The people, created in the image of God, would then be the central actors in this story. For Westerhoff, the church is also the bearer of that story, with the liturgical emphasis in Christian education having to do with the knowing and owning of that story.

Hopewell (1987:191) states it in the following way:

“Story is the larger liturgy of the congregation. Its local outworking reflects the structures of human societies that struggle to exist throughout the world.”

The above analogy of Christian faith to story forms an integral part of any catechetical programme with children. One finds therefore that the local church and denomination utilise the approach of story telling in their Sunday schools and children's ministries, and teachers would even be empowered to use it more effectively if they understand the theological significance of the Christian faith as a story.

Having considered these evaluative comments on the relevance of Westerhoff for a contextual catechesis, it would now be important to conclude with some guidelines for

³ Hopewell (1987:18) also notes Neville and Westerhoff's contribution in this regard – where they refer to “religious familism” as a term which describes the role of the family in liturgy.

the development the local church's catechetical programme, and thereafter make some final remarks on this study.

4.7 GUIDELINES FOR A MODEL OF CATECHESIS FOR THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

The following proposal serves as a more formal and structured model of catechesis to be considered by local congregations of the Logos Assemblies of God:

- The formal catechetical programme needs to embrace the basic doctrines of the denomination, but also needs take cognisance of the needs of the various ministry groups in the church. A formal structure should link the Sunday school, youth, young adults and adults into a continuous and holistic process of catechetical development. Such a process will also incorporate the crucial elements of evangelism, conversion and spiritual growth, as well as other aspects of human development, as part of this continuous catechetical process.
- The ministries and ministry programmes that will directly involve catechetical development are:
 - Nursery – Babies and toddlers from ages 1 year to 3 years
 - Sunday School – Children from ages 4 years to 12 years
 - Junior Youth – Young people from ages 13 years to 16 years
 - Senior Youth – Young people from ages 17 years to 22 years
 - Young Adults – Young people from ages 23 years to 30 years
 - New Convert classes – Spiritual growth classes for children, youth and adults after their conversion
 - Pre-marital counselling
 - Baptism classes
 - Baby dedication
 - New Members Classes
 - Home Cell Bible Studies

- Human and Life Skills Programmes
 - Social and Economic Development
- The senior pastor in the local congregation needs to lead the way in designing educational material for each department, and all this material for the various departments need to complement each other and follow a logical thread in the development of catechesis within such a local church.

4.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is evident that Westerhoff's approach to catechesis advocates a strong focus on holistic spiritual development characterised by teaching and nurturing, as well as the element of enculturation or socialisation. There is definitely room for such an approach to catechesis as it involves the development of the whole person in relation to others in a community of faith.



As mentioned in chapter 3 of this study, an evaluation of the local context therefore needs to take particular cognisance of Westerhoff's holistic socialisation/ enculturation model of catechesis that follows a multi-disciplinary route to catechetical development whereby values and lifestyles will be transmitted from one generation to another.

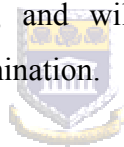
This would then form the basis for a transformation of the local congregation and denomination's catechesis, a catechesis that seeks to be relevant in a post-modern context and focuses on the development of the whole person and includes spiritual, economic, social, political, environmental and human dimensions.

It would be crucial to understand the dynamics of the post-modern world we live in, and how new and fresh approaches to Christian education may assist in meeting the needs of

children and youth, thereby keeping and accommodating them within the local congregation. This then essentially has to do with changing paradigms and existing mindsets, and understanding how to crossover from more traditional ways of being a church to more contemporary 21st century congregational practices.

The local denominational church and local congregation therefore need to critically reflect on the shortcomings of its current traditional approach and develop a more contemporary and contextually relevant approach to catechesis and its catechetical programmes to suit the needs of the new congregation. This approach definitely has to embrace Westerhoff's focus on nurture and enculturation as critical parts to such catechetical programmes.

One therefore needs to conclude that Westerhoff's approach to catechesis would in fact be relevant to the own local context, and will definitely enrich the educational programme of the local church and denomination.



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