

Introduction

Homo Testans

The Life, Work, and Witness of James E. Loder Jr.

DANA R. WRIGHT

Insight happens to the well-prepared mind.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

Love is non-possessive delight in the particularity of the other.

—JAMES LODER

Introduction: Theology, Science, Spirit? Of Course!

Theologian Brian Gerrish once voiced considerable skepticism, shared by many I am sure, regarding the legitimacy of the Christian Kerygma as a partner in academic or scientific discourse. He averred: “Anyone who believes that theology is possible and meaningful in the church alone, that it begins with God in his revelation in Jesus Christ, and that it is scientific just insofar as it corresponds to the word of God

through obedience of faith, will need to come up with a quite different account of theology's credentials as a university discipline, or may prefer to pursue it somewhere else."¹ James E. Loder Jr.'s 40+ years of constructive work in practical theology dared to take up precisely this implausible challenge of rendering the Gospel intelligible to a scientific world.² He developed a "neo-Chalcedonian science of spirit" through which he sought to discern the hidden intelligibility underlying these two seemingly incommensurate realities. He argued that it is at the generative source of intelligibility—the human spirit and especially its potential for redemptive transformation by *Spiritus Creator*—that all human experience, religious and otherwise, becomes known at the deepest levels. His work remains a source of insight for some of us who labor to make our witness to Jesus Christ compelling in a postmodern setting. But it also remains a "hard sell" for many who might even appreciate aspects of Loder's work but who regard his project as a whole to be a highly irregular, irrelevant, or even illegitimate venture bordering on alchemic fancifulness.³

In April of 2001 I began a series of taped interviews with James Loder in the hope that one day I might write an essay summarizing his life and work for a Lilly-funded research project of Talbot Seminary—the *Christian Educators of the Twentieth Century* series. After Loder's death I ended up writing the essay for that series which is now complete and available on-line.⁴ I also wrote two complementary essays on Loder's life and work, an introduction and an afterword for his *Festschrift* en-

1. Gerrish, *Continuing*, 273.

2. Loder was well aware of the dangers of giving priority to strong theological positions, especially in methodological considerations. See Loder, "Normativity," 359–81. Loder taught in the Practical Theology department of Princeton Seminary from 1962–2001.

3. Of the criticisms I heard about Loder's practical theology through the years, some of it focused on what was perceived to be his over-reliance on T. F. Torrance. One well-known scholar I interviewed for the *Festschrift* regarded this reliance on Torrance to be a failure of Loder's own intellectual integrity. Some African American students, feminists, and liberation theologians could not understand why Loder didn't say more about their causes. Others in practical theology did not appreciate his seemingly single-minded devotion to so-called outdated sources of interlocution he kept close—Freud, Piaget, Erikson, Jung, et al. Others lamented his theory dominant methodology.

4. See my overview "James E. Loder Jr." in this resource, which contains biographical essay, bibliography, annotated bibliography, reading guide and quotations from the Loder corpus, as well as an essay on the contribution of Loder to Christian education.

titled *Redemptive Transformation in Practical Theology*.⁵ Toward the end of this set of interviews that stretched out over some weeks, I asked Loder if he was optimistic about the future of practical theology. His answer was a qualified yes, and relates directly to Gerrish's challenge and the conversation enshrined in this present book. According to Loder, in order to serve the Gospel and to be a generative force in both church and culture, practical theology had to be "reconceived according to the great themes of the 21st century, which are . . . science and . . . spirit."

I think it is absolutely crucial that practical theology flourish. But I think it has to be somewhat reconceived according to the great themes of the 21st century, which are on the one hand "science" and on the other hand "spirit." And it is not my idea that the 21st century should emphasize these things. But the practical theology that is going to last is going to show the relevance of those two themes to what we want to talk about in the church and in the teaching of pastors, and in theological seminaries. There is so much to be done in the interplay of those two driving forces. So, I am hopeful because (a) we need it and (b) because I think it is possible for practical theology to adapt to these emerging needs of the church put on it by the changing of culture. And "science" of course applies to technology and "spirit" implies the Holy Spirit not just the human spirit. But I think we will adapt to that. I mean we'll adapt [practical theology] to the transforming work of the Spirit.⁶

Loder's comment struck me deeply when I heard it given so informally. Coming from most of us, the words "theology . . . science . . . and spirit" in the same sentence might have seemed fanciful indeed, even oxymoronic. But coming from the lips of James Loder they seemed completely natural and even deserving of a kind of "Amen!" Loder believed that practical theology needed to be considered a higher-order scientific pursuit, one that shows the inner connections among the Kingdom of God, inspired creative intelligence in a scientific world, and the human longing for meaning and purpose: theology, science, spirit? Of course! Loder argued continually that only through an enterprise that connects theology to science to spirit with their ultimate integrity revealed through the Presence of Christ can we hope to experience the redemptive transformation to which the Gospel calls us and to testify of Christ

5. Wright, "Are You There?" 1–42 and idem, "Afterword," 401–31.

6. Loder, Interview by Dana R. Wright, quoted in Wright, *Redemptive*, 402.

with integrity in a scientific world. What I believe Loder had in mind for practical theological science was the integration of the kerymatic and apologetic tasks of the Church in the world, the uniting of proclamation to the world and dialogue *with* the world, in the service of the redemptive transformation of the world.⁷ Of course!

The *Festschrift* itself came out of those same interviews.⁸ After the manuscript was submitted to the publisher, but before the proofs were issued for final editing, I came under the growing suspicion that the connection among theology, science, and spirit so close to Loder's neo-Chalcedonian scientific vision had been somewhat eclipsed in the book. I thought perhaps Loder's own response to the *Festschrift*, had he lived to write it, might have focused on making practical theology's connections to science and spirit more explicit than was evident in the essays themselves. So I decided to submit an afterword in the hope that it might capture this crucial concern for readers.⁹ What amazed me over and over again as I wrote the afterword (rather feverishly, as I recall) was just how the themes of science and spirit, creative intelligence and meaning, generative insight and purpose—and theology—were so evident at every stage of Loder's life and work. It was as if through his lifetime he had become more and more deeply prepared to make precisely this eccentric connection, like a modern-day Paul who had been called to make the wisdom of Jerusalem understandable to the Athenians on Mars Hill.¹⁰

7. I tried to survey the history of practical theology in the United States using these two concerns, the kerymatic and the apologetic, as two complementary forms of practical theology that had never really been integrated. See Wright, "Contemporary," 289–320. See also chapter 7 of this present work, where I revisit this concern in relation to Loder's unpublished book *Education Ministry in the Logic of the Spirit* (hereafter *EMLOS*).

8. In the course of those interviews I had also asked Loder if any of his colleagues or students had ever proposed a *Festschrift* in his honor. He advised me to take the matter up with President Thomas Gillespie, who immediately responded to my suggestion by throwing the seminary's support behind the project. *Redemptive Transformation* was the result. This book was a joy to bring to life, except for the disappointment we all shared that Loder himself did not live to see the results nor write his own planned response to the essays.

9. Wright, "Afterword," 401–31.

10. On the themes of "Athens" and "Jerusalem" see Loder, "Normativity," 359–381. Loder argued that there are at least five "ethos" that tacitly fund practical theological imagination today: empirical science ("Manchester"→Seward Hiltner), humanist ("Athens"→Edward Farley), ethical-scientific ("Berlin"→Pannenberg), experiential ("Delphi"→Mud Flower Collective), and neo-Chalcedonian science

Loder became more deeply self-aware and more thoroughly articulate about the Gospel's power to "cut the world open at its joints" in order to inspire scientific and theological insight into the nature of provident-contingent relations. He sought to convince us of the integrity of those relations and to empower us to live in them in the midst of a broken world. Loder had lived and died to give just this kind of faithful witness. I wanted the *Festschrift* in his honor to give witness to this passionate concern. That is my same goal for this introductory essay as well some 10 years later.

Science and Spirit in the Early Years

Creative intelligence and the search for meaning were evident in Loder's childhood. At his memorial service his daughter Tami told the story of "little Jimmy," whose kindergarten teacher recognized a special quality of mind that set him apart. "Every day we read a story, and after the story is over, Jimmy gets up and wants to tell us what the story means."¹¹ Science and spirit were powerfully present in Loder as a young college student. At the suggestion of an uncle, Loder attended Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota in 1949, majoring in physics. But soon his professors realized what his kindergarten teacher knew so well, that Loder's intelligent search for learning the "How?" of things was inseparably linked to his equally insatiable curiosity for understanding the "Why?" of things. They suggested he might well turn his attention to *metaphysics*. Loder took their advice and graduated with a BA in philosophy in 1953.

Loder enrolled in Princeton Seminary the next year. The connection of science and spirit to theology became explicit during Loder's Princeton years, but not in the classroom. During his second year his father took gravely ill and Loder went home to be with him. His father died. While in mourning, Loder was stricken with a glandular infection. Thoroughly frustrated and in despair, he grew increasingly desperate to find any meaning in the tragedy. Bedridden, he finally struck his pillow and shouted to the heavens to "Do something!" And something happened! Loder was met from the other side with a palpable sense of the presence of God that threw him out of bed and filled his spirit with hope

("Jerusalem"→Loder).

11. Tiss, "James Loder," 72.

and meaning right at the point of unfathomable darkness (he described it as his being enveloped in liquid heat). Initial articulations of the meaning of this experience came to him from hymnology (he burst forth in a rendition of “Blessed Assurance Jesus is Mine”!) and neo-orthodox theology (he picked up Emil Brunner’s *The Scandal of Christianity* and did not so much read it as recognize the truth toward which it pointed).¹² Significantly, this experience fueled the intensity of what would become Loder’s life-long search for higher-order intellectual explanations for convictional experiences that would make sense in a scientific culture. Theological experience had elevated the creative passion generative of Loder’s search for intelligibility. That is, the spirit of Loder’s intelligence was now reset and expanded in theological dimensions in order to make realistic sense of his traumatic and yet liberative experience.¹³

When he returned to Princeton Loder contacted the Swiss theologian Hans Hofmann, Professor of Theology and Psychology, who had studied with Brunner at Basel, and also with Karl Jung. He trusted that Hoffman would take his experience seriously, both psychologically and theologically. Hofmann introduced the young prodigy to the importance of Kierkegaard for understanding his spiritual experience. Kierkegaard, in turn, became Loder’s preeminent and life-long interlocutor. Kierkegaard’s own saving experience of Christ in the midst of familial chaos, and his extraordinary articulation of the significance of Christ within Christendom offered Loder a way to make sense of his own experience theologically, philosophically, and psychologically.¹⁴ Loder immersed himself in the works of Kierkegaard, whom he testified provided “language for my head.” He continued learning Kierkegaard during his time at Harvard, following his graduation from Princeton, and, of course, for the rest of his life.¹⁵

12. For details of this experience see Wright, “Are You There?” 13 and “Ruinatio,” 77f.

13. Loder later argued that good science requires “fiduciary passion” that depends on what M. Polanyi called *prolepsis*, an “anticipatory glimpse” or “proleptic conception” that is “imprinted upon the informed mind because the internal structure of the phenomenon bears a kinship to our knowing and what we can know as we allow ourselves to indwell the phenomenon” (Loder, “Place of Science,” 28–29).

14. In virtually all of his major writings Loder called attention to the conversion experience of Kierkegaard after the reconciliation with, and the death of, his father as a paradigm of convictional knowing events. For his discussions see *Religious*, 104–7; *Transforming*, 1–8; *Knight’s Move*, 250–53; *Logic*, 234–38.

15. Loder told me in the aforementioned interview of his desire to write a major

But before he graduated, Loder's embrace of science and spirit showed itself to be quite aggressive when, during his senior year, he and some other students refused to take D. Campbell Wyckoff's required course in Christian education. They told the seasoned professor that his course lacked the rigorous intellectual depth and breadth that they all craved.¹⁶ They asked him if they could redesign his course to address the deeper intelligible structures of the discipline itself. So Wyckoff in his wisdom gave them permission to redesign the course under his supervision in a way that satisfied both themselves and the course requirements. This effort to reconstruct the course at a level of intellectual depth proved to be a foreshadowing of the lifelong vocation that Loder would embrace—i.e., his quest to reconstruct the conceptual dimensions of what he considered to be a vastly underdeveloped interdisciplinary venture.¹⁷ Wyckoff was so impressed by Loder's extraordinary conceptual abilities that this episode stayed with him and informed his own decision some years later to support hiring Loder to be his colleague in the Christian education department at Princeton Seminary teaching primarily (what else?) courses on the philosophy of Christian education.

After his graduation in 1957, Hofmann took Loder and three other gifted students with him to Harvard as his research assistants.¹⁸ From 1958–1962 Loder earned two more advanced academic degrees as a Harvard Fellow—a ThM from Harvard Divinity School (1958, with distinction) and a PhD in the History and Philosophy of Religion from Harvard University Graduate School in Arts and Sciences (1962). Loder's

work on Kierkegaard. He taught seminars on Kierkegaard and supervised doctoral dissertations focused on Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard appears in all of his major writings, starting with his own dissertation.

16. The problem was not with Wyckoff per se, whose knowledge of the practice of Christian education was unparalleled. The problem was with the “applied disciplinary” status of the field as a whole. Christian education, like the other subdisciplines in practical theology, had little understanding of itself as a constructive theological enterprise in its own right, although voices for reconceiving the field in constructive terms were beginning to be heard.

17. Wyckoff recalled in a 2002 interview that the well-known religious educator Jerome Berryman was one of the other students! For the influence of Loder on Berryman's lifelong work see chapter 4 in this present volume.

18. Hofmann had received an appointment as Director of Harvard University's Project on Religion and Mental Health under a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. See Ken Kovacs, “Relational,” 20 and *Relational*, 15. See also Homrighausen, “Study,” 544–45.

Harvard dissertation, “The Nature of Religious Consciousness in the Writings of Sigmund Freud and Søren Kierkegaard,” again manifested the connection of science and spirit to theology. In this study he sought “to work toward a sounder integration between theoretical points of view in the fields of religion and psychiatry,” one that overcame Freud’s unnecessary identification of all religious experience with pathology. Indeed, healthy religious experience (described in Kierkegaard) follows similar reality-restoring dynamics as therapeutic healing in Freud, according to Loder’s thesis. That is, the dynamics of creative religious transformation and the dynamics of effective therapy are analogous and reality-restoring in impact.¹⁹ Theology, science, spirit? Of course!

Science and Spirit Transformed

Loder finished his dissertation while serving as a Fellow at the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas. He was now in a position to develop this correlation of the generic patterns of scientific and religious knowing in his vocation as an academic practical theologian. As was noted earlier, Loder was called back to Princeton Seminary as Associate Professor of the Philosophy of Christian Education. His creative and radical approach gained a considerable hearing from the many students who flocked to his exciting courses centered on conflict learning.²⁰ But by his own admission he lost touch during the first 10 years on the faculty with the larger questions of meaning and purpose that his theological experience at the death of his father had opened up for him. Creative intelligence continued, but the larger theological meaning and purpose of his work became diminished and secondary. This intellectual and creative reductionism, however, was challenged again through another redemptive transforming moment. Loder suffered a serious accident in 1970 while on vacation with his family in upstate New York.²¹ This accident

19. Batson, “Creativity,” 84 n. 138f. Loder worked out an analogy between creativity and religious development to provoke healthy personal and social functioning as liberation. He called the underlying reality-restoring dynamism of the human spirit the “hypnagogic paradigm.” See Loder, *Religious*, 180–229.

20. Also important was Loder’s counseling ministry in the days when the seminary had no chaplain to serve students. Indeed, scores of them came to Loder for help in those early years and throughout his 40+ year tenure. For a glimpse into aspects of Loder’s counsel, see the essay by Mark Koonz in this present volume, chapter 8.

21. Loder articulated the experience of “the accident” throughout his writings and

permanently re-opened for Loder the larger theological dimensions of Spirit through which his creative intelligence was transformed into faith seeking understanding. When asked in the 2001 interview, “What changed in your understanding and practice of Christian education after 1970?” he responded with this testimony:

That’s a good question, because before 1970 I was doing all of my teaching within a basic psychoanalytic model, that conflict learning is basic to psychoanalysis. So I was upgrading psychoanalysis a little bit. But that was the basic shape of my understanding. After 1970 I realized it was the Spirit of God who creates the problem and guides us into truth. And the whole convictional picture in four dimensions began to become a way for me to talk about what I know had happened, and what could happen. And so, it was still conflictual but now it had shifted into a much bigger perspective. And the dynamics involved were not just limited to the human spirit but also to divine redemption in action.²²

Loder’s awakening to the reality-affirming, reality-restoring, reality-transforming power of God in his first transforming moment had fallen under the spell of an unredeemed scientific reductionism of the theological. His creative intelligence had been constricted into a two-dimensional framework that obfuscated the larger spiritual and scientific integration toward which an experience of Christ ultimately points. What this second experience of Christ did for Loder, therefore, was to re-open the generative potential of his creative intellect to this larger framework of the Holy Spirit and permanently reset the theological dimensions of his science of spirit. Wising up to the Spirit’s work he could no longer wise down. And now he felt compelled to make the connection among theology, science, and spirit explicit so as to witness to Christ in a scientific culture. Loder set out to restore the integrity of science and spirit in human experience by connecting them to their generative origins in the Spiritual presence of Christ, revealed in and through convictional experiences.²³ As he would later aver: “Transforming moments need to be recognized as sources of new knowledge about God, self, and the world . . . Moments of transforming significance radically reopen the

in many of his classes. See *Moment*, 9–13 for his written account. See also Wright, “Are You There?,” 15f. and “Ruinatio,” 80f., and Moorhead, “Princeton,” 481–84.

22. Loder, Interview by Dana Wright.

23. Wright, “Prophetic,” 20.

question of reality for the persons who experience them.”²⁴ Theology, science, spirit? Of course!



**James E. Loder as a Young Scholar.
Princeton Theological Seminary**

Initially Loder sought to connect theology, science and spirit by immersing himself in pneumatology. He believed that the work of the Holy Spirit was the key to the integrity of both spiritual and intellectual power to restore human beings to sanity, so to speak. His immersion in the Church’s teachings on the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the human spirit suggested that reality-affirming, reality-restoring, reality-transforming insight ultimately come from the initiative of the Holy Spirit and not from the autonomous transformational capacities of the human spirit alone, nor from culture.²⁵ Loder also discerned that

24. Loder, *Transforming*, xi.

25. Loder found particular help from Regin Prenter’s study *Spiritus Creator* and from George Hendry’s book *The Holy Spirit*, especially chapter 5, “The Holy Spirit and the Human Spirit,” 96–117.

our human participation in the work of the Spirit is actualized through the conviction-generated, reality-restoring experiences initiated by the Spirit that can be articulated intelligibly to a scientific culture.

After several years of wrestling with the Holy Spirit's connection to the creative human spirit through the relational dynamics of convictional experience, his ground-breaking book *The Transforming Moment* was released in 1981.²⁶ This carefully crafted work laid out Loder's pneumatological reconstruction of his earlier emphasis on the transformational dynamics of science and religious experience. Loder now gave conceptual clarity to how we might understand the Holy Spirit's convictional interaction with the human spirit in redemptive experience. He wanted to forge "a new understanding of knowing commensurate with the nature of convictional experience" (21) as the key to restoring the full creative intelligence of the human spirit. He argued: "Convictional knowing is a patterned process by which the Holy Spirit transforms all transformations of the human spirit . . . a four-dimensional knowing event initiated, mediated, and concluded by Christ" (93).²⁷ The paradigm of four-dimensional redemptive transformation is the Eucharist, theologically understood.

. . . the four-dimensional transformation of the Eucharist requires that one be inside what is believed in order to "see" whatever is out there, in here, and everywhere in terms of Christ's intention for all creation, from the commonest bread crumbs to the Kingdom of God. Everyday Christian experience badly needs what the transforming moment does to place people inside their convictions, just as the transforming moment needs everyday Christian experience as its substantive content (119).

For Loder, convictional experiences are generative of scientific insight into the very nature of reality. They are reality-affirming, reality-restoring, reality-transforming events that penetrate beneath the social constructions of reality where the Holy Spirit works toward a deeper integrity for the human spirit. For example, a scientific understanding of human development generated out of convictional experience would include a full accounting of the powerful hold death has upon us throughout our lifetime. Citing Luther's experience of convictional

26. Loder, *Transforming* (pagination noted in the text).

27. For discussions of Loder's understanding of transformational processes and four-dimensional knowing events that open up the world, see several of the essays in this present volume as well as *Transforming*.

transformation Loder held that a truly scientific explanation of development would attend to its ultimate meaning by knowing it transformationally “in reverse.” “In reverse” means that

... the final stage in the ordinary course of human development, namely confronting one’s own death and the ultimate meaning of life in light of that death, is inextricably tied to the ongoing sense of void at every stage in one’s life. Thus, the final crisis in normal people is the lifelong crisis for the religious personality, and the scale of normal development cannot contain, much less explain, a person who brings his or her solution to life’s final stage into every intervening stage. In effect, this is to reverse development from a standpoint implicitly outside it (140).

Furthermore, convictional experiences not only generate higher-order, reality-restoring intelligence that takes death and negation in human development seriously. Conviction also engenders an ontological realignment of all relations, which Loder argued was the restoration of power to love (*agape*) at the center of the personality. Convictional experiences “negate the negation” riven through human development so that the Spirit of Christ becomes “the ground of the self without absorbing the self, the living center of the personality displacing but not destroying the ego” (144), leading to the primacy of a dialectical identity, “*I yet not I but Christ*.” “*Spiritus Creator* acts from outside the stage sequence frame of human development” while at the same time She “follows the pattern of transformational logic that is so deeply ingrained in the dynamics of human development” (145). From this convictional standpoint Loder argued that normal human development under the “triumph of negation” (“negation incorporated”) must be redemptively transformed by and through the Spirit of Christ, freeing human beings and communities to take up the way of love. The Spirit integrates higher-order intelligence with Her own relational nature as love, which is, in Loder’s memorable phrase, “non-possessive delight in the particularity of the other.” The true spirit of intelligence is non-coercive, joyous, Christo-qualitative relationality revealed as love, the relational integrity of persons and communities restored into the image of God through Christ (*imago Christi*).²⁸

28. Here is a true point of contact between Loder’s work and the concerns of the Child Theology Movement, in my judgment. Loder’s theories, while academic in tone, are nonetheless oriented toward the restoration of the human spirit to love. Love is an expression of intellectual integrity and intellectual integrity fosters the ability to love.

Loder's efforts to describe the source and structure of the relational integrity of the human spirit in Christ, awakened through convictional experiences, developed further through the 1980s into what I have called his neo-Chalcedonian science.²⁹ In *The Knight's Move*, Loder in tandem with physicist James Neidhardt (a collaboration both men regarded as the richest of their lives) developed a generic model of spirit called "the strange loop." Patterned after the image of the Mobius strip, this disclosure model promised to engender insight into the relational structure of reality underlying both science and theology. In the forward, T. F. Torrance wrote: "One of the distinctive features of this work, written by a theologian and a physicist in intellectual and spiritual harness, is the brilliant way in which basic forms of thought, taken and developed from theological and scientific thinkers like Kierkegaard and Einstein, are allowed to interpenetrate one another with a creative feedback fruitful for both theology and science."³⁰ Loder and Neidhardt argued that relationality in theology and higher-order science (physics) becomes most fully intelligible through Jesus Christ, a claim that needed to be made with great care in order to convince a scientific culture. They wrote that

. . . theology and science qua science need to find new grounds for dialogue that will reach into their common epistemological concerns and restore what once was, contrary to popular opinion, a profoundly rich reciprocity between theological concepts of creation and the scientific study of nature . . . the underlying theological premise of this entire study [is] . . . that relationality is revealed to us definitively in the inner nature of Jesus Christ. In Christ's nature as fully God and fully human, we have the definition of relationship through which all other expressions of personal, social, and cultural relatedness are to be viewed. This applies as well to the model we are using in the methodology of this study; the inner nature of Jesus Christ ultimately defines the scope and limits of the relational model; not the reverse. Our use of the model is intended to reveal the illuminative and explanatory significance of viewing all creation through the eyes of faith in Jesus Christ.³¹

29. See my "Introduction" and "Afterword" in *Redemptive* for this general rendering of Loder's work as "neo-Chalcedonian science."

30. Torrance. "Forward," xi–xii.

31. Loder and Neidhardt, *Knight's Move*, 7 and 13. The authors drew on insights from the natural sciences, i.e. James Clerk Maxwell, Michael Polanyi, Albert Einstein, Nels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg and Illya Prigogine; from the human sciences, i.e. Sigmund

In essence Loder and Neidhardt argued that the closer one gets to the mystery of God-in-the-flesh revealed through the Spirit the closer one gets to discerning and elaborating scientifically the nature of human reality as a contingent and unfolding order of meaning and purpose that renders the natural world as *creation*. This knowledge is scientific and confessional, and no less, but rather, more scientific because it is confessional. “*The Knight’s Move* bore testimony to Loder’s conviction that the two-fold crisis of . . . postmodernity—the crisis of science (discerning the nature and limits of human knowing) and the crisis of spirit (reaffirming the importance of human participation in scientific knowing)—was profoundly addressed in the reality of Jesus Christ.”³² This confessional priority was articulated in the 2001 interview during which Loder responded to a question about his critique of Christian education theories.

Question: “Did you have any sense that something was at stake in the discipline of Christian education itself? Did you have a concern that the developmental paradigm would lead us into error or a loss of something vital?”

Answer: “Yes. Well, the concern that I had that came more and more into focus was, . . . that the definitive discipline is theology, and not anything else. The point is that we are not trying to work theology into our behavioral sciences or our philosophy. And that shift was definitive for me. The Spirit made that definitive for me . . . I continued to learn more profoundly from Torrance [that] you have to start with the answer. You *know* the answer. Don’t try to work up to it. Go from the answer. Start there. And then do the rest . . . You always think it’s not legitimate to start with the answer. [You think] you have to get *to* it from somewhere. No. Start with the answer. And unpack it so that it can be appropriated. Because you can’t get from nature to grace. So if you start from grace as the only theological premise that you can work with, then everything is continuity in reverse. And about the Chalcedonian model. When I began to try to work out the interdisciplinary thing theologically, obviously, that’s already

Freud and Jean Piaget, and from theologians like Karl Barth, T. F. Torrance, Wolfhart Pannenberg, the early Church fathers, and especially the ever-present Kierkegaard, to develop “the strange loop model,” a generic, asymmetrical version of complementarity they hoped would enrich the theology/science dialogue and testify to the nature of reality as relational, according to the definitive revelation of relationality in Jesus Christ.

32. Wright, “Are You There?,” 21.

worked out. The nature of Jesus Christ, the relationship [of divine to human action] is already established. You don't get into that [from somewhere else]. That's the power of the Spirit. So it all began to unfold, and the significance of the Spirit into the testimony of the Spirit through Christ, and the interdisciplinary material is already given to us. That's again starting from the answer."³³

Loder and Neidhardt developed an interdisciplinary basis for a science of Spirit-to-spirit relations that “preached Christ” and was no less, but more scientific, for doing so. Theology, science, spirit? Of course!

Science and Spirit in Human Development and Christian Education

In the decade following the release of *The Knight's Move* (1992) and the re-release of *The Transforming Moment* (1989), Loder turned his neo-Chalcedonian scientific lens toward explaining the hidden orders of intelligibility underlying both (1) human development and (2) Christian education as a practical theological discipline. In regard to the former subject, Loder's *The Logic of the Spirit* took his analysis of the power of convictional experience and the ground of conviction in the Spirit of Christ to develop a theological and interdisciplinary scientific explanation of human development.³⁴ Loder argued that Chalcedonian insight discerns that our profound longing to understand *what* human life is (the *science* quest) and *why* human beings take up the courage to live it (the *spirit* quest) gets distorted under the “reality-diminishing” powers of “normal” human development governed by ego and socialization. He constructed a practical theology of human development that reconsidered the question of “normal” human development in Chalcedonian dimensions. He wrote: “the larger aim of my inquiry is to demonstrate the overall context that a Christian theology of the Spirit provides for the study of human nature, and especially for issues of purpose and meaning implicit in and often insufficiently articulated through the facts and theories of human development” (xiii). Thus, “the human spirit makes

33. Loder, Interview by Dana Wright. See also Loder, “Place of Science,” 22–44, in which he speaks of the relevance of “Jerusalem” for engaging in postmodern scientific discourse.

34. Loder, *Logic* (pagination noted in the text).

all acts of human intelligence self-transcendent and self-relational,” but “[w]hen God acts, Spirit-to-spirit, then human intelligence is transformed into a ‘faith seeking understanding’ of God’s self-revelation—that is, the disclosure of God’s mind in the Face of God in Jesus Christ” (12). Loder carefully delineated how the Holy Spirit, working according to the dynamism of the God-Human structure of relational reality, (a) *affirms* the human spirit’s ability to reconstruct itself through the life span, and (b) *crucifies* the human spirit’s futile efforts to order and re-order ultimate meaning and purpose according to its constructive capacities alone. This affirmation-crucifixion movement through which the Spirit reveals to the human spirit its destiny in death (the “triumph of negation”) at the same time also reveals its power to (c) *liberate (resurrect)* the human spirit out of death in order to live kinetically in the Spirit, making love with integrity possible. That is, Loder showed how the Spirit negates the negation in human development and reconstitutes the relational dynamism of the divine life acting in human experience to redeem us as spirit. He argued for the restoration of the *imago Dei* in human experience at every stage of the life span—human beings fully alive and flourishing in the power to give and receive love—which is the glory of God manifest in human experience.³⁵

In regard to Christian education theory, Loder had taught for many years a popular class on education known as ED105. His follow up to *The Logic of the Spirit* was to be *Educational Ministry in the Logic of the Spirit* based on this course.³⁶ This book, which has never been published, outlined his scientific understanding of the underlying relational meaning and structure of the theory and practice of Christian education.³⁷ Loder began this study with a programmatic chapter entitled “The Crux of Christian Education: Introductory Dilemmas and

35. See my discussions of these transformational dynamics in chapters 7 and 11 of this book.

36. Hereafter *EMLOS* (chapter and page numbers noted in the text). See my lengthy discussion of this manuscript and its potential place as a significant legacy to practical theology and Christian education in chapter 7 of this book.

37. There are several different copies of this manuscript. I am using the copy Loder gave me in the week before he died in Nov. 2001, a copy of the text he had hoped to get published at that time. In conversations with others and through my own readings this last manuscript may not contain his most articulate work. For a good survey of this book see Haitch, “Summary,” 298–324. See also my essay in this present volume, chapter 7.

a Critical Perspective.” First he argued for the priority of theory over practice in scientific discourse, based on his neo-Chalcedonian perspective. Through his Chalcedonian lens Loder discerned that two contradictory dynamic forces in potentially creative tension underlie Christian education—socialization and transformation. He created a theological reinterpretation of Talcott Parsons’ model of human action theory that can be considered his ingenious, theoretical and scientific description of what Scripture means by the conforming powers of “the world.”³⁸ That is, the model describes scientifically and theologically what it means for the church to be held captive to the principalities and powers that ultimately work at cross purposes with the Reign of God.³⁹ Loder defined socialization as “a *tension-reduction, pattern-maintenance process* designed to serve the purposes of adaptation and incorporation into larger and more complex social milieu.”⁴⁰ Transformation, on the other hand, was “a *patterned process whereby in any given frame of knowledge or experience, a hidden order of meaning emerges with the power to redefine and/or reconstruct the original frame of reference.*”⁴¹ These contradictory dynamics are at work in four dimensions of human action—bodily, psychic, social and cultural—that make up the relational matrices of the social construction of reality, from human development in context, to family dynamics, to national and international relations, etc.

In Loder’s understanding, the power of unredeemed socialization-transformation dynamics is entropic. Ultimately, therefore, socialization’s concern for survival generally dominates transformation as death dominates or haunts life. The creativity of the unredeemed human spirit

38. Loder studied under Parsons at Harvard. He later reconceived Parsons’ comprehensive theory of human action theologically and used it as a kind of organizing principle for *EMLOS*. For an introduction to Parsons’ thought, see Hamilton, *Talcott Parsons*.

39. For Loder, the power of the “world” lies not just in its “products” (ideology, pornography, economic disparities, *ad nauseum*), but more importantly must be discerned in how the transformational dynamics of the human spirit that generate these “products” are themselves inevitably distorted and held captive to the dynamics of socialization. These distorted dynamics generate these dehumanizing and dis-relating “products” until and unless they are redeemed by the Spirit of Christ. Thus, the transformation-socialization dynamics must themselves be transformed by the Spirit if human beings and communities are to be liberated from the powers of death and disrelation.

40. *EMLOS*, ch. 1, 12 (emphasis added).

41. *Ibid.*, 14 (emphasis added).

may, on the one hand, be domesticated by being placed in the service of pattern maintenance, tension-reduction, spirit-distorting adaptation to socialized interests for the purpose of survival and control. On the other hand, that same unredeemed creativity may seek liberation from the entropic power of socialization through non-conformity in search of authenticity or self-actualization. Either way, the power of unredeemed socialization-transformation dynamics is essentially tragic in that neither culture nor the creativity that gives rise to it can overcome the entropic movement toward death. Loder calls this inevitable failure of spirit “the triumph of negation” in human experience. Apart from the power of the Spirit, unredeemed transformation has no final power against socialization and no true ground for its ultimate purpose. Under the conditions of sin and the power of death, socialization almost always dominates the socialization-transformation relational matrix, placing even scientific creativity under the power of ego and in service to forms of disrelation endemic in the unredeemed world.⁴² Socialization domesticates the impetus toward transformation and distorts relations that transformation seeks to regenerate and vivify. Furthermore, efforts of persons or communities to escape the conforming hold of socialization through unrestrained spiritual experience or non-conformity renders transformation “gnostic,” or reality-denying. Transformation needs socialization to keep the human spirit from being disconnected from the limitations of human nature. Thus, Loder argued that the distorted spiritual relations embodied in these two contradictory forces must be redemptively transformed through the power of the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit negates the negation underlying the entropic power of socialization and the gnostic flights of fancy and places socialization-transformation dynamics in the service of the redemptively transforming power of the Reign of God.

After this programmatic introduction, Loder traced the history of Christian education in America through the lens of transformation-socialization and the socialization-dominant theory of C. E. Nelson in particular (chapter 2).⁴³ He wrote, “My basic objection to Nelson’s ap-

42. For a powerful study of two creative geniuses, Pablo Picasso and Albert Einstein, who ultimately could not escape the power of negation in their personal and professional lives, see Miller, *Picasso*. Miller was Professor of the History and Philosophy of Science and University College London from 1991–2005. He is now a writer, commentator, and consultant on cognitive theory and creativity.

43. Loder here gives an in-depth analysis of C. E. Nelson’s theory of Christian education articulated in *Where Faith Begins*.

proach is that it seeks to socialize the transforming work of God's Spirit. It needs to be the other way around since God's Spirit is much larger than society and socialization."⁴⁴ In chapter 3, "Lifestyles: Taking Social Reality Seriously," Loder acknowledged Nelson's proper emphasis on "life style" as the "fashioning of power." But he goes on to show how such power operating through socialization permeates communities of faith as well as American culture to fundamentally authorize destructive and distortive life-styles in the name of Christ: *achievement* (distorting love relations), *protean* (distorting the longing for freedom), *authoritarian* (distorting power relations), and *oppressive* (distorting justice). In chapter 4, "Human Development and Personality Formation," Loder showed how the same relational distortions he described in society and culture are relevant to understanding the negation riven into "normal" human development based on ego's unredeemed executive function.⁴⁵

How the Holy Spirit redemptively transforms the socialization-transformation captivity of unredeemed human agency is the subject of the middle section of *EMLOS*, "The Holy Spirit and Human Transformation." Chapter 5, "Transformation in Theology: Analogy of the Spirit," rehearsed the argument of *The Transforming Moment* for its generative insights into the transformation of the human spirit by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Christ reveals to us the deeper dimensions of human existence underlying the social construction of reality through convictional experiences that call us to embrace reality fully in the Presence of God. In this way "the ordinary world becomes the bearer of the extraordinary" as we come to know it through the Mind of Christ.

In chapters 6 through 8, Loder described the impact of the Holy Spirit in more detail in terms of the four dimensions of human action: organic, psychic, social, and culture. His brief discussion of the organic dimension focused on the transformation of bodily concerns for satisfaction and safety into a profound love of life. In relation to ego development (chapter 6), the Spirit's intimacy with the human spirit transforms the defensiveness and control sought by unredeemed ego by placing ego in the service of the relational integrity of Christ—*I yet not I but Christ*. In relation to social reality (chapter 7), Loder showed how the search for

44. *EMLOS* ch. 2, 53.

45. Essentially this chapter reviews his argument in *Logic*, focusing especially on the work of James Fowler. Loder shows how "normal" human development under the unredeemed ego tends to deepen the "captivity" of the human spirit to the power of death.

conviviality—for a non-coercive and intimate relational context of rapport—is found in the *koinonia*, the communion-creating reality of Jesus Christ. The Spirit transforms socialized role structures and makes them reversible so that they are placed in the serve of a deeper intimacy that makes genuine community possible. And in relation to culture (chapter 8), the power of the Spirit works to render language, images, and symbols transparent to the Reality to which they tacitly or explicitly refer, negating the negation of their tendency to lie.⁴⁶ When the Spirit works transformationally in relation to culture, She negates the negation inevitably residing in the “static” image, allowing the human knower to look “through” the image to behold its true power resident in the “imageless” Presence of Jesus Christ—i.e., the Living Presence beyond the cultural construction of reality through which all cultural images find their ultimate meaning. “The transformation of culture . . . does not eliminate culture but makes it iconic, a visible and tangible occasion for entering into the invisible and intangible presence of God.”⁴⁷

In the final section of this book entitled “Human Participation in Divine Action: The Claims of the Theory,” Loder outlined the practical implications of his theory for the practice of Christian education. In chapter 9, “Structuring the Vision,” Loder used a version of the “reporter’s interrogative hermeneutic” to demonstrate how his neo-Chalcedonian lens illuminates the purpose (why?), scope (what?), context (where?), process (how?) personnel (who?), and timing (when?) of educational praxis. In chapter 10, “Climax in Worship,” Loder summarized how the relational reality celebrated in worship becomes the paradigm of redemptive transformation for the whole of the believing community and, by extension, for the whole world. Worship in the Spirit demonstrates and embodies again and again the proper relational integrity of human experience under the transformation of transformation-socialization dynamics governed by the Spirit of Christ.⁴⁸

In the final years of his life, Loder encouraged the practical theological guild to recognize the need for a richer theological and scientific approach to the discipline. In “Normativity and Context in Practical

46. “From the Cynics to the Epicureans, from Nietzsche to Freud, from existentialism to deconstructionism, the point is made again and again: it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for language to tell the truth” (*EMLOS*, ch. 8, 1).

47. *EMLOS*, ch.8, 40.

48. For an extensive interpretation of *EMLOS*, see chapter 7 of this present volume, a chapter requested by the participants in the CTM/Loder consultation.

Theology: The ‘Interdisciplinary Issue’” (1999) Loder argued that practical theology must “establish systematic procedures for remaining accountable to the phenomenon [it investigates] as well as to the disciplines involved in disclosing the inner substance, structure, and dynamics of that phenomenon.”⁴⁹ He argued that practical theology “requires an inclusive theory of action” that “combines two incongruent, qualitatively distinct realities, the divine and the human, in apparently congruent forms of action.”⁵⁰ He also averred that his own critical model for practical theology “calls forth a *transformational dynamic* which is repeatedly awakening us to contradictions between theology and the human sciences, intensifying oppositions until there is a new insight, finally bringing about a reappropriation of the original situation as parabolic of the new relationality in Christ.”⁵¹

In a second essay “The Place of Science in Practical Theology: The Human Factor” (2000), Loder again addressed the core problematic in practical theology but this time focused upon the self-involvement of the knower.⁵² The fundamental claim of the essay was stated in this way:

In the theology-science dialogue, science, as distinct from technology, is the primary dialogue partner with theology. However, no view of science is adequate that fails to recognize that all knowledge of the universe is incomplete and probably misleading until it includes the person, the knower himself or herself. Indeed, it is precisely through persons that the universe becomes conscious of itself.⁵³

Loder contended that just as human rationality reaches its logical limits in postmodern science, so in the Church’s confrontation with the reality of the God-Human, her ability to know reaches its logical limits and compels her to reconfigure theological rationality accordingly. He wanted practical theology, like good science, to “press toward the infi-

49. Loder, “Normativity,” 359–81.

50. Ibid., 2 note 2 (pre-publication draft).

51. Ibid., 11 (pre-publication draft).

52. Loder, “Place of Science,” 22–44 (pre-publication draft).

53. Loder, “Place of Science,” 26. I engage these two essays of Loder in the first part of my discussion of *EMLOS*, chapter 7 of this book, to help us understand how Loder sought to witness to the Gospel in the church and in the world through a redemptively transformed practical theology.

nite in all directions” by recognizing the priority of relationality and the knower’s self-involvement in all rational discourse.⁵⁴

Conclusion: The Witness of James E. Loder—*Homo Testans*

James Fowler, in his book *Stages of Faith*, once described persons who had reached Stage 6 (universalizing faith) as martyrs.⁵⁵ Fowler, however, had trouble explaining how Stage 6 came about through an unfolding of the native capacities of the ego (especially if we consider the conforming power of unredeemed socialization-transformation on all knowing). He argued that something like radical Grace appeared to intervene in those who embodied such faith, transforming the human knower (*Homo Sapiens*) or meaning maker (*Homo Poeta*) into the human witness (*Homo Testans*) to Grace. For Loder, too, this radical transformation of the human knower through redeeming Grace could not be explained as an unfolding of developmental potentials. Neither could the developmental paradigm explain how children bear authentic witness to Christ in powerful ways even when their cognitive and emotional capacities are quite “immature” on the developmental scale.⁵⁶ Rather, Loder argued that the transforming work of the Spirit took place at a deeper level than cognitive or emotional development, the level of spirit, where children may enjoy a distinct advantage over hyper-socialized adults. The crucial issue, then, is not development or cognition *per se* but the transformational dynamics of spirit-to-Spirit relations reconstituting the human knower as intimate witness. Ironically, Loder argued that such transformation of the knower is surprisingly relevant to the postmodern scientific emphasis on self-involved knowing.

54. In his essay “Philosophical Turn,” LeRon Shults noted Loder’s sensitivity to the postmodern “turn to relationality” in philosophy and science. “The theme of ‘relationality’ pervaded James Loder’s writings, as well as his pedagogical and therapeutic practice. His passion was to lead others into a deeper understanding of the illuminative and transformative power of the ultimate relationality between God and humanity revealed in Jesus Christ” (325).

55. Fowler, *Stages*, 200.

56. Loder’s “test case” of such transformation-into-witness in children was Ruby Bridges, whom Robert Coles described in his work *Spiritual Life of Children*. Ruby testified to Christ in her response to those who violently protested her integration into the public school in Mississippi with threats of death. Coles could not appreciate Ruby’s act of forgiving her abusers, because she was supposedly not old enough developmentally to embody such an ethic. Coles later changed his mind. See Coles, *Spiritual Life*, xi–xiii.

In the exercise of reason there is always a self doing the reasoning—but that self is a blind spot, even to self-awareness. The observing self will always elude the attempt at self-observation, but that blind spot is where reason connects to the selfhood of the thinker. Cut that nerve, and reason is blind . . . [This is] indicative of reason's own solution to one of its deepest dilemmas. When in any given frame of knowledge reason reaches its intrinsic limit, not just for this or that problem but the limit in itself with respect to its object of investigation, it is not just a matter of too little information or insufficient technology. It is finally because reason has ignored the reasoner. When this is accounted for, then, a wider frame of knowing must be conceived which includes both reason and the reasoner in a relationality that is pertinent to the field of inquiry involved . . . Thus, in our knowing of physical nature, human nature, and divine nature, when reason encounters its own "invisible ignorance," as physicist A. B. Pippard puts it, it reconstructs the grounds of intelligibility in a frame of reference that ultimately must be comprehensive enough to include the knower.⁵⁷

The neologism that I believe best describes the impact of the Spirit of Christ on the life and work of James E. Loder Jr. (and anyone awakened in spirit to the Spirit) is *Homo Testans*, the human being as *martyr* (*witness*). *Homo Testans* speaks to the theological transformation of *Homo Sapien* or *Homo Poeta*—a transformed life that reflects through the spirit of the knower, imperfectly yet truly, the True Self-witness of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1) and the witness of the Holy Spirit to the human spirit (Rom. 8). In terms of scientific knowing, *Homo Testans* describes the transformed human knower's self-involved spiritual knowing of reality that the Spirit enables through convictional experience—scientific inquiry redeemed as "faith seeking understanding."

If we are to appreciate Loder's achievement and its relevance to both the church and the world, we must learn to hear the totality of his *oeuvres* and his life as reality-affirming, reality-restoring, reality-redeeming testimony, one that discerned a Trinitarian achievement in the making at the heart of human experience and history. Loder's attunement to the complementary scientific and spiritual meaning of the postmodern world, and his experiences of redemptive transformation through the Spirit of Christ, made his testimony exemplary (faithful yet fallible) for

57. Loder and Neidhardt, *Knight's Move*, 62.

a scientific culture. Those of us who have participated in this consultation have heard the potentially revolutionary cadences in Loder's witness as a challenge to deepen our own fallible witness to Christ in the post-modern world.⁵⁸ We wish to invite others into a conversation that really matters about how we all might better bear witness to the Gospel in a world desperately in need of redemptive transformation unto non-possessive love at every level of human experience.

A Word about the Organization and Content of the Book

In August of 2011 Keith J. White, the executive director of the Child Theology Movement, contacted me and asked me to give an introduction to the life and work of James E. Loder Jr. at a conference sponsored by CTM in March of 2012. I had not heard of CTM, but the opportunity to help make the legacy of James Loder better known to scholars and practical theologians from around the world was something I could not pass up. So I joyfully accepted the invitation and created a version of this (now partially revised) introduction to deliver at the conference. About twenty of us gathered together, friends of CTM and friends who had studied with Dr. Loder, on the campus of Princeton Seminary where he taught. We seemed to find unusual rapport as we learned of each other's passion for the kingdom of God and for the most vulnerable of persons whom Jesus declared have a special place in God's heart. Various papers, engaging aspects of Loder's work from a variety of angles and contexts, were delivered, and responses were made and further questions were asked. Many of us felt that something special was emerging through our dialogue together. As time progressed, we decided to produce a book based on our interchange, one that might reveal the importance of Loder's legacy for the work of CTM and show the fruitfulness of such an engagement for CTM and for others. I was asked by the group to edit the volume. I received revisions of the papers in the following months.

As the revisions returned to me, four thematic categories emerged to give the book its present order. First, Part One, "Child Theology Movement and James E. Loder in Dialogue," consists of three chapters that give established members of CTM a chance to critically engage por-

58. I try to articulate how I understand dimensions of the Spirit's redemptive transformation of human nature itself into faithful testimony (*homo testans*) in light of Loder's work in chapter 11 of this book.

tions of Loder's work from diverse perspectives. In the opening chapter, Dr. White discusses what he believes to be the relevance of Loder's work to both CTM and to the Holistic Child Development efforts in England and around the world. White's "exploratory and tentative" reflections on what he believes Loder's potential contributions to CTM could be is offered as a means to revitalizing what White regards is an underdeveloped theological approach within the Holistic Child Development constituency. White's colleague, theologian Haddon Willmer, then reports on a "family resemblance" he discerns between Loder's theological reconstruction of human development and Willmer's own mature ruminations on the notion of forgiveness as constitutive of human nature (chapter 2). Willmer notes that Loder's description of the "uncanny capacity" of an infant to construct the world and create a future that "is indebted to but not controlled by the past" connects to Willmer's account of a forgiving integral to the very being of human creatures. I remember the excitement this essay generated as it was read at our gathering.

In chapter 3, New Testament scholar Elizabeth Waldron Barnett brings to her acute critical reading of Loder her artistic and imaginative appreciation of the radicalness of Pauline theology. Barnett notices certain parallels in how Loder's theological understanding of the Spirit's redemptive transformation of human experience opens up a penetrating critique of human development and progressive scientism in modernity that resonates to Barnett's own sensibility that this same modern bias continues to infect and distort our readings of Paul. Barnett makes a truly original interpretation of Paul's ode to love in 1 Corinthians 13, challenging us to overcome our Western obsessions with development and progress that often blind us to recognizing the in-breaking power of the Spirit of God. She also suggests that readers of Loder must become more fully aware of his own intellectual shaping in the Western intellectual tradition he criticizes.

In Part Two, "James E. Loder and Christian Education Theory and Practice," four essayists discuss important elements in Loder's work they believe to be relevant to this discipline. Jerome Berryman, who knew James Loder at Princeton Seminary, shows in chapter 4 some of the indirect but powerful influence Loder's vision had for Berryman's own well-known *Godly Play* paradigm. Berryman recounts in some detail the various ways in which the theory and practice of *Godly Play* supports important insights that continue to emerge in such scientific fields such

as cognition, consciousness studies, and neurobiology, areas that also informed Loder's work. This essay supports the theology-science dialogue so crucial to both Loder and to Berryman. In chapter 5, Tom Hastings gives a brief but provocative interpretation of Loder's interaction with educator-philosopher John Dewey. Hastings argues that Loder's transformational model may be read as a theological commentary and epistemological expansion of Dewey's philosophy of experience. Loder believed that Dewey's pragmatism, which dominated American educational theory and practice in the twentieth century, needed itself to be transformed by a broader epistemology that more accurately accounts for actual cases of scientific discovery and spiritual awakening. In an attempt to gesture at such a broader epistemology, Hastings breaks with academic tradition by concluding his piece with a first person tribute to Loder's personal influence on his own life and work.

Lauren Sempsrott Foster (chapter 6) interacts with Loder's central paradigm of transformation to uncover practical implications for the practice in education, especially focused on learning theory and practice. She mines valuable insights from Loder's early articulation of the pattern of transformation for the classroom in which transformation of persons becomes the central focus of learning. She connects this dynamic understanding with other important and perhaps better known theorists of educational practice like Paulo Freire, Parker Palmer, and Thomas Groome. Sempsrott-Foster is one of a large evangelical constituency who has appreciated Loder's work through the years for its insights into the impact of conversion on learning theory and practice.⁵⁹

In chapter 7, Dana Wright, at the request of the conferees, discusses the possible legacy of Loder's unpublished work on Christian education, *Educational Ministry in the Logic of the Spirit*. Wright first contextualizes Loder's *oeuvre* within the 100+ history of Christian education as a scholarly and interdisciplinary venture in the United States. He argues that Loder sought to transfigure this conversation and the polarities that dominated it—i.e., theory-practice, liberal-conservative, religious-Christian, theology-human sciences, Barthian-Niebuhrian, etc.—by grounding Christian education thought and practice in the power of the

59. Theorist such as Ray Anderson and Andrew Root make extensive use of Loder's understanding for articulating their own perspectives. Root, for example, sees Loder as a representative of Root's own Kierkegaardian approach to practical theological method. See Root, "Postscript."

Holy Spirit, which gives priority to the Christ-determined relationality that constitutes those polarities. Wright then discusses Loder's theory of education in detail. He avers that Loder offers a unique and even compelling vision for how the pedagogy of the Spirit redemptively transforms human beings and communities in every dimension of human action—survival instincts, egos, social roles, and cultural constructs—reconstituting all human experience as liberation unto worship in the Spirit—the true end of human history.

In Part Three, “James E. Loder’s Relevance to Psychology, Counseling and Sociology,” three essays break some new ground for discerning aspects of Loder’s thought that complemented his primary professional concern for education *per se*. Pastor Mark Koonz skillfully orients his essay (chapter 8) around his conversations with Loder when, as a seminary student, he was confronted with a very difficult counseling situation with a teenage boy in crisis. Koonz transcribes portions of his remarkable taped conversations with Loder to parse out how Loder (and others) guided him to discern the “logic” of the Spirit in relation to this young man. Through this essay we are brought into Loder’s study to overhear Koonz’s conversation with his mentor. This essay puts some flesh on Loder’s own accounts of counselling in his books and classes and makes us vicarious witnesses to practical theology in the making!

Then, in chapter 9, Ajit A. Prasad, the General Secretary of the India Sunday School Union, effectively places Loder’s understanding of transformation into relationship with one of India’s primary theorists in human development, Sudhir Kakar, and pinpoints the parallels and distinctiveness of Loder’s work to Kakar’s. Kakar himself integrated Hinduism and the Western psychological tradition in his own magisterial work and therefore provides a fascinating dialogue partner with Loder on this important theme. Prasad, who studied with Loder at Princeton and who shares Loder’s strong Christological convictions and focus, effectively shows the promise of Loder’s work for affirming and critiquing—and being affirmed and critiqued by—other faith traditions in a non-Western context. Indeed, Prasad had the rare privilege of being Loder’s travelling companion for a 15-day venture across India when he organized five one-day lecture events featuring Loder. This experience well-equipped Prasad to appreciate the importance of bringing about this kind of international and interfaith conversation.

The final essay in this section (chapter 10) is by Wendy Sanders, who brings her expertise in the moral development of young persons and her appreciation of Loder together to give insight into the deep spiritual power children demonstrate for compassionate behavior. Sanders analyses some original research she did on expressions of compassion in children and shows how this research confirms a growing consensus in science generally about the spiritual vitality of children. Sanders encourages us to celebrate and be amazed by the power of the human spirit manifest in children, something very close to the heart of James Loder and to the work of CTM. Her essay also portrays the importance of connecting practical theology to field research, something Loder's work obviously lacked.

Part Four, "Loder and the Transformation of Christian Witness," includes just one essay by Dana Wright: "A Tactical Child-Like Way of Being Human Together: Implications from James Loder's Thought for Post-Colonial Christian Witness." Wright sets up a distinction between two ways of being human, the adult way of *strategics* and the child-like way of *tactics*, using Robert Penn Warren's masterpiece *All the King's Men* as the lead in. He then discusses how Loder's theological reconstruction of the crisis of infant ego formation explains how the "triumph of negation" takes hold of human development early on to engender "adult" ways of being human that distort the capacity for intimacy. This loss of intimacy ramifies throughout human experience as every level of human action takes on "strategic" or defensive postures that militate against the non-possessive delight in the particularity of the other that, according to Loder, the Spirit longs to bestow. Wright shows how Loder's understanding of the "negation of negation" in the action of Christ through the Holy Spirit transforms human nature and thought Christo-relationally, giving rise to a "perichoretic" or "tactical" pattern of life that is child-like in its on-going dependence on the Spirit.

We trust that all of these essays will be of help to academic discussions, to communities of faith, and to all persons and communities who long for a more just and humane world, encouraging all of us to live in the logic of the Spirit as the Spirit redemptively transforms all reality into the New Heaven and the New Earth that bears witness to Jesus Christ, who is our promised rest and our living hope.

Works Cited

- Batson, C. Daniel. "Creativity and Religious Development: Toward a Structural/Functional Psychology of Religion." ThD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1971.
- Brooks, Cleanth. *The Hidden God: Hemingway, Faulkner, Yeats, Eliot, and Warren*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963.
- Coles, Robert. *The Spiritual Life of Children*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1990.
- Fowler, James. *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981.
- Gerrish, Brian. *Continuing the Reformation: Essay on Modern Religious Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Haitch, Russell. "A Summary of James E. Loder's Theory of Christian Education." In *Redemptive Transformation in Practical Theology: Essays in Honor of James E. Loder Jr.*, edited by Dana R. Wright and John D. Kuentzel, 298–324. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Hamilton, Peter. *Talcott Parsons*. Key Sociologists. London: Routledge, 1983.
- Hendry, George. "The Holy Spirit and the Human Spirit." In *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology*, 96–117. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961.
- Homrighausen, Elmer. "A Study of Religion in American Life." *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 14/4 (old series) (January 1958) 544–45.
- Kovacs, Ken, E. "The Relational Phenomenological Pneumatology of James E. Loder: Providing New Frameworks for the Christian Life." PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 2002.
- . *The Relational Theology of James E. Loder: Encounter and Conviction*. New York: Peter Lang, 2011.
- Loder, James E., Jr. *Educational Ministry in the Logic of the Spirit*. Unpublished manuscript.
- . "The Great Sex Charade and the Loss of Intimacy." *Word and World*, 11/1 (2001) 81–87.
- . Interview by Dana Wright. Privately held tape recordings from April 13–20, 2001.
- . *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.
- . "Normativity and Context in Practical Theology: The Interdisciplinary Issue." In *Practical Theology: International Perspectives*, edited by Fredrich Schweitzer and J. Van der Ven, 359–81. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999.
- . "The Place of Science in Practical Theology: The Human Factor." *International Journal of Practical Theology* 4 (2000) 22–44.
- . *Religious Pathology and Christian Faith*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966.
- . *The Transforming Moment*. 2nd ed. Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1989.
- Loder, James E. Jr., and Jim Neidhardt. *The Knight's Move: Relational Logic of the Spirit in Theology and Science*. Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1992.
- Miller, Arthur I. *Picasso, Einstein: The Space, Time, and the Beauty That Causes Havoc*. New York: Basic, 2002.

- Moorhead, James H. "Princeton and Deepening Pluralism, 1959–2004." In *Princeton Seminary in Religion and Culture*, edited by James H. Moorhead, 458–502. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Nelson, C. E. *Where Faith Begins*. Philadelphia: John Knox, 1967.
- Prenter, Regin. *Spiritus Creator: Luther's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1953.
- Root, Andrew, with Blair Bertrand. "Postscript: Reflections on Method—Youth Ministry as Practical Theology." In *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, edited by Andrew Root and Kenda C. Dean, 218–37. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011.
- Shults, LeRon. "The Philosophical Turn to Relationality and the Responsibility of Practical Theology." In *Redemptive Transformation in Practical Theology*, edited by Dana R. Wright and John D. Kuentzel, 325–46. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Tiss, Tamara. "James Loder: Our Christlike Father and Gracious Friend." *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 23 (new series) (2002) 71–73. First delivered at James Loder's memorial service, Miller Chapel, Princeton Theological Seminary, Nov. 14, 2001.
- Torrance, Thomas F. "Forward." In *The Knight's Move: The Relational Logic of the Spirit in Theology and Science*, edited by James E. Loder Jr. and Jim Neidhardt, xi–xii. Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1992.
- Wright, Dana R. "Afterword: The Potential Contribution of James E. Loder, Jr. to Practical Theological Science." In *Redemptive Transformation in Practical Theology*, edited by Dana R. Wright and John D. Kuentzel, 401–31. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- . "Are You There? Comedic Interrogation in the Life and Witness of James E. Loder, Jr." In *Redemptive Transformation in Practical Theology*, edited by Dana R. Wright and John D. Kuentzel, 1–42. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- . "The Contemporary Renaissance in Practical Theology in the United States: The Past, Present, and Future of a Discipline in Creative Ferment." *International Journal of Practical Theology* 6/3 (2002) 289–320.
- . "James E. Loder, Jr." *Christian Educators of the Twentieth Century*, 2002. Online: www.talbot.edu/ce20/.
- . "Paradigmatic Madness and Redemptive Creativity in Practical Theology: A Biblical Interpretation of the Theological and Methodological Significance of James E. Loder's Neo-Chalcedonian Science for the Postmodern Context." In *Redemptive Transformation in Practical Theology*, edited by Dana R. Wright and John D. Kuentzel, 216–51. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- . "Prophetic Practical Theology As Testimony: A Loder Legacy?" *Inspire* 63 (Spring 2002) 20–21.
- . "Ruination unto Redemption: A Short Biography of a Reformed 'Wise Guy.'" *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 23 (new series) (2002) 75–85.
- Wright, Dana R., and John D. Kuentzel. *Redemptive Transformation in Practical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Wright, Dana R., and Kenda C. Dean. "Youth, Passion, and Intimacy in the Context of *Koinonia*: James E. Loder's Contribution to a Practical Theology of *Imitatio Christi* for Youth Ministry." In *Redemptive Transformation in Practical Theology*, edited by Dana R. Wright and John D. Kuentzel, 153–88. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.