

LET MINISTRY TEACH
a guide to Theological Reflection

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Theological Reflection is interested in leading people to God. Basic steps:

- Selecting an Experience
- Describing an Experience
- Entering an Experience
- Learning from an Experience
- Enacting the Learning

1 Selecting the Experience:

- Must be specific
- Current and personal
- Important

Word from God – Revelation

Word about God – bible and faithful words and actions describing God

Word to God – our response

Process Theology: Alfred North Whitehead

1. all things are becoming, in process
2. most experience is not conscious, but nevertheless dynamic & creative.
3. so experience and reflection are almost the same thing.

2 (Ch2) Describe the facts with feeling (who, what, how, when..) but don't interpret.

Use verbatim, case study, critical incident, role play, interview, journal,

The 'facts' point to deeper meaning through their symbolic reference,

so we can move from –

- Describe so as to participate in solidarity
- Then move to personal empowerment
- Then move to social or structural empowerment.

Theological reflection refers to the data and helps us see which of so many connections is appropriate.

(remember that the concept is not real – the fact is real)

3 (Ch3) **Entering an Experience**

- Listen to the Images,
- observe the Objects,
- note Gestures,

but don't anticipate meanings – God is always present.

4 **Learning from an Experience**

(Ch4) **That reminds me** (reflection as **Illustration**)

This method adds examples to what is known.

an experience *illustrates theology* so are clues to God's presence – akin to aesthetics.

Experience is example of a theme.

Experience is example of historic event (in bible, church history, biography)

Experience is personal example of common Experience (me too!)

(Ch5) **Begin to see** (application – but note new definition)

This method expands the usefulness of our knowledge.

Bringing theology from the realm of theory into the realm of an analysed experience, making it real here.

V careful Social Analysis by means of looking for the Players, Plots, Place.

The **application of a theology to a real situation can Change it!!:**

- Reaffirm the theology
- Rearrange the theology's importance for us
- Reveal new theology
 - spiritual, moral, liturgical, practical change.

Theology itself is in process.

(Ch6) **Is that what you mean?** (as Interpretation)

This method changes what I know.

Pluralism displays the complexity of truth.

Allow the experience to suggest all possible meanings.

Allow experience to take us beyond conceptual into values and identity.
Allow it to open up the eschatological future possibilities.

5 Enacting the Learning

(Ch7) What to Do?

Personal enactment – always happens even if affective or cognitive. Can be conversion! Imagination.

To envision a course of action, one's theology must be developed.