Bottom-Up and Top-Down Approaches to Y&C Ministry, Part 2: Finding a Theological Way Forward

Robin Barfield | ORCID: 0000-0002-7748-3333
Associate minister for children and families, Christ Church, Wharton, UK; Adjunct Lecturer in Youth, Children and Families Mission and Ministry, Cliff College, Hope Valley, UK; Union School of Theology, Bridgend, UK; Oak Hill Theological College, London, UK.
robin@thebarfields.net

Gareth Crispin | ORCID: 0000-0002-2267-0852
Lecturer in Practical Theology, Cliff College, Hope Valley, UK
g.crispin@cliffcollege.ac.uk

Abstract

In part 1 the concepts of top-down and bottom-up approaches were introduced as a helpful way of analysing the landscape of youth and children’s mission and ministry. This second part begins to suggest a constructive solution to the question of bringing the top-down and bottom-up together which understands both divine and human action in and of the individual. James Loder’s appropriation of Chalcedonian descriptions of divine-human connection come together with his *analogia Spiritus* and understanding of transformation to provide a way of bringing together top-down and bottom-up approaches which can be understood as a form of ‘spiritual structuration.’

Keywords


---

1 This article has been co-written. Robin Barfield took the lead in drafting the paper and then it was re-drafted, developed and finalised in collaboration with Gareth Crispin.
Introduction

In part 1 the dichotomy of bottom up and top-down approaches was suggested as a helpful and instructive way of understanding the landscape of youth and children’s ministry theory and practice. Top-down approaches seek to minister ‘to’ youth and children with a focus on teaching and God’s transcendence. Bottom-up approaches emphasise the agency of the young person and seek to do ministry ‘with’ them, engaging with their views and opinions and drawing on the action of God in the world (immanence). In this second article a theological proposal will be made which seeks to take both approaches seriously yet finds a model for understanding the interaction between divine and human forces in ministry. This will particularly draw on Princeton educationalist James Loder and his theories around Chalcedon, the Holy Spirit/human spirit dynamic, and the dynamic of transformation in the individual. Following on from the analysis of immanence and transcendence as well as structuration in paper 1, this proposal will be presented as bringing top-down and bottom up, immanence and transcendence together in what will be termed ‘spiritual structuration.’

Via Chalcedon

Theological precedence for establishing an understanding of the coming together of divine and human in an encounter could have many sources but one that has consistently been used is the formula of the Council of Chalcedon in its statements on the incarnation of the divine-human Christ. The Council of Chalcedon was an ecumenical council, the fourth of its kind, in 451 AD in response to Christological heresies. It developed previous council statements but ended up passing twenty-seven canons and becoming known for establishing Christological orthodoxy.2

Chalcedon presents a careful and nuanced answer to the question of how Christ’s divinity and humanity co-exist. The Chalcedonian statement speaks of Christ as being

---

only begotten, of two natures, without confusion, without conversion, without division and without separation; the difference of natures not being removed by their union, but rather the propriety of each being preserved and concurring in one prosōpa and in one hypostasis so that he is not divided or separated into two prosōpa but in one and the same only begotten Son, God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ.³

A number of terms need to be defined here: prosōpa refers to the outward appearance or ‘external form’ that Jesus takes (often translated ‘person’) and hypostasis is the underlying reality. Torrance has the term nature (or physis) as meaning the ‘nature of things in their being.’⁴ Gerald O’Collins helpfully brings these together by expressing the one hypostasis and two natures (physeis) as ‘one “who” but two “whats.”’ In this way Jesus’ humanity ‘did not and does not have the independence that would constitute a second (human) person alongside the divine person of the Word of God.’⁵

This nuanced Chalcedonian phrasing then represents a ‘delicate balancing act’ holding together the clear separation of Creator and creation in one united person. In this sense Chalcedon was not a ‘theological program, but rather a set of limits’ which established the model of Creator/creation engagement.⁶ This set up a ‘fence’ within which further discussion about the nature of Christ could continue.⁷

Torrance describes the incarnation as the ‘act of divine condescension and humiliation, in which the Son mercifully took upon himself our alienated humanity, in order to assume our alien and creaturely human being into unity with himself.’⁸ Torrance makes clear that this is a divine act of divine initiative, not something that can be willed, coerced or enabled by human technique or approach. In this joining of the hypostatic union, we see the protection of the terms ‘without confusion’ and ‘without change’. The divine and human natures cannot be mixed, nor can one become the other or take on aspects of the other. There is therefore no change in the divine nature of the Son in taking on flesh and nor did the created human body suffer any change.⁹ This

---

⁴ Torrance, Incarnation, 202.
⁷ Brown, Heresies, 184.
⁸ Noll, Turning Points, 77.
⁹ Torrance, Incarnation, 206–7.
¹⁰ Torrance, Incarnation, 208.
matters for establishing how the meeting of divine and human does not occur. God does not mix with His creation nor take on any of its aspects, overemphasising His immanence, but nor is He so transcendent as to be complete mystery. Whilst the Council’s statement did not end the debates it has endured as a declaration of orthodox Christian belief. It was reaffirmed at Trullanum, or Constantinople, in 680–81 and has stood since as the boundaries within which discussions of Christology can take place.\(^{11}\)

**Loder’s Appropriation of Chalcedon**

James Loder utilised this approach for understanding ministry which has the coming together of divine and human as its central point. James Loder was Professor of Christian Philosophy and Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary until his death in 2001. He describes the coming together of bottom-up and top-down approaches as a ‘relational unity’ akin to the ‘two edges of a Möbius band’.\(^{12}\) This approach maintains the mystery that is present in the incarnation yet allows divinity and humanity to encounter each other without the mixing of substance. Loder is clear that there is an ‘asymmetry’ in this relationship in that there is a ‘logical and ontological priority over the human’ by the divine; this is not a coming together of equals, as if the human person had equal authority with God (one is creature and one is Creator). It is though, this coming together which defines ministry.\(^{13}\)

This Chalcedonian approach brings together the bottom-up, our experience of the world (which Loder names ‘science’) and the top-down, our experience of God (which Loder names ‘spirit’).\(^{14}\) Science and Spirit, heaven and earth are brought together in Jesus as He is born of Mary by the Holy Spirit. This then is the blueprint for how children and young people, encounter God; as the mystery of God accommodates Himself to earthly humanity in Christ\(^{15}\) so He does so when He meets with each child or young person. This enables the person of

---

\(^{11}\) Brown, *Heresies*, 192.


\(^{13}\) Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit*, 37.


God to be encountered and comprehended without loss of agency on the part of the individual but then also without untethering the self, as creature, from our Creator.

Step one then in establishing a constructive solution to the tensions of top-down and bottom-up approaches is to recognise the foundational theological importance of Chalcedon as a paradigm for divine-human encounter. However, the question then comes as to what exactly is going on in the meeting of the divine and human in Christian ministry. How does the model of the incarnation, as stated at the council of Chalcedon, help give shape to God’s action with those who are ‘in Christ’ (Eph. 1:13)? This is where Loder’s developments become particularly significant, notably in his use of the *analogia spiritus* as a way of understanding the place of encounter in the child or young person and the implications of that.

**The Analogia Spiritus**

James Loder’s proposal is that there is an aspect unique to humanity that has been created to encounter the divine. Loder terms this the *analogia spiritus* – the analogy of the human spirit with the Holy Spirit. What occurs in an encounter between the young person and God-in-Christ is that the Holy Spirit and the human spirit connect. This is what the human spirit has been created for: a connection with her maker. They are like two pieces of a jigsaw which have been designed to fit together for, ‘human nature is as wired for spiritual insight as it is for mathematics’. The connection is not corporeal in nature as might be determined by the measurements of traditional child development theories; rather the corporeality and spirituality of the individual is deeply connected but not bound by the other. Thus Loder’s approach remains Chalcedonian; it concerns having ‘the mind of Christ: the disclosure by God of the mind of God Spirit-to-spirit’.

Loder understands there to be four steps to this Spirit-spirit encounter in the individual. First, he speaks of awakening. This awakening consists of the ‘outcry of the whole person who recognizes the vast abyss between herself and God’. The individual recognises that the aspect of their person which was created to encounter God is far from the one to be encountered. This requires

---

17 Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit*, 73.
the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God. Second, ‘purification’ results. This is a longing to enjoy the fullness of God, a seeking and searching for that connection. The human spirit has still not encountered God at this stage but is looking and desiring something other than what they have known to this point. Third, ‘illumination’ occurs as faith begins to take hold of Christ. This leads towards four, ‘unification’ where union with Christ is discovered and established.\textsuperscript{20}

Loder overlays this theory with the paradox of time and eternity in the inbreaking of the Kingdom. There is a ‘Christomorphic relationality’ between time and eternity, patterned on the incarnational event as the eternal Son of God enters the 1st century Jewish culture. In establishing the encounter of chronological time and eternity in these moments such ministry then ‘brings Jesus Christ out of the remoteness of history into the immediate situation at hand’.\textsuperscript{21} The \textit{analogia spiritus} then gives a theological account of how a top-down and bottom-up approach might make sense of mission and ministry to and with children and youth. Loder’s theory takes account of the revelation of and presence of God (the ‘eternity’) in ministry and the authoritative function which this gives; yet it does this without ignoring or overriding the agency of the individual (the time) involved. We see here again the ontological priority as mentioned above; it is the eternal that breaks authoritatively into time, but in doing so the eternal does not do violence to the importance and specificity of time in the sense of ignoring it.

Loder’s proposal grew out of a dissatisfaction with developmental theories, particularly those of James Fowler,\textsuperscript{22} which see the child as progressing towards something better or more advantageous. And yet nor would Loder consider the view of the child as a ‘thin place’ as theologically defensible. Seeing emerging adulthood as spiritual regression, demanding the views of the child or young person not be challenged, does not sit well with Loder’s approach.\textsuperscript{23}

The paradox of top-down/bottom-up is clear in his understanding of worship and Christian education in liturgy as a ‘four-dimensional transformation’. Dana Wright explains the sequence:

\textsuperscript{20} Loder, \textit{The Logic of the Spirit}, 64–70.
\textsuperscript{21} Loder, \textit{The Logic of the Spirit}, 64.
- Phase 1: The minister moves the congregation from ‘marketplace language to “divine” language’ through the liturgical opening.
- Phase 2: The Word of God is spoken directly (lectio)
- Phase 3: ‘The sermon mediates the Word in marketplace language’
- Phase 4: The Word becomes alive in the people.

This also ties together the role of ministry to/with children and young people as worship and Christian education; the encounter in worship also educates the worshipper in the nature of the one being worshipped. There is no separation of ‘knowing’ from ‘knowing about’ rather the two are intimately connected. Note also the Chalcedonian reference in these phases as the Word becomes flesh in the ‘marketplace language’. Divine transcendence can be accessed (though not exhaustively) yet there is an immanence which has retained a sense of special revelation. The ‘from below’ and ‘from above’ are held together.

Loder’s understanding of Christian ministry is both Christological and pneumatological. This will be demonstrated in the next section but can also be seen in the sequence above: as Phase 1 seeks the accommodation of the eternal Word so Phase 4 understands the vivification in the Spirit. At the heart of it is the mediation by the pastor or preacher in the explanation of the lectio.

This is a movement of meaning to significance. As the text is expounded from its historico-cultural context and the meaning understood, its significance for the current moment becomes alive in the community of faith. This enables a level of challenge and agency in assessing how the meaning remains stable but the significance will differ from congregation to congregation and even, more subtly from individual to individual. There does not appear to be room in Loder’s schema for the individual to ‘make meaning’ nor for the community to retain conflicting interpretations based on their agency. In such a direction lies chaos and incomprehension. Yet nor does this allow the performer of the sermon the unchallenged authority to determine the meaning and significance in the life of the community. In this direction lies the failure

---

24 ‘Marketplace language’ is the language of time, science and the world and ‘divine language’ is the language of eternity and heaven.
to vivify and transform; the Word fails to come alive in the people. As Parker Palmer writes,

> It is ironic that objectivism, which seems to put the object of knowledge above all else, fosters in practice a teacher-centered classroom. Objectivism is so obsessed with protecting the purity of knowledge that students are forbidden direct access to the object, lest their subjectivity defile it. Whatever they know about it must be mediated through the teacher, who stands in for the object, serves as its mouthpiece, and is the sole focus of the student’s attention.\(^{28}\)

Loder’s *analogia spiritus* provides a vital corrective in an age which seems divided between the old way of authority and the new way of authenticity. The Spirit-spirit connection allows each to have their place and to interact in the life of the community and the ministry of the pastor. In Loder’s terms

> the crux of Christian education is ultimately grounded in the bipolar relational unity of Christ’s person. Fully God and fully human, his Person defines and indeed constitutes both the disturbing discontinuity and the glorious unity that resides at the center of this field. An elementary principle for Christian education, then, is that its two great constitutive forces are held together and apart as the God-Human Jesus Christ holds the nature of humanity and divinity together and apart.\(^{29}\)

Building then on Chalcedon, step two in establishing a constructive solution to the tensions of top-down and bottom-up approaches is to recognise the foundational theological importance of the *analogia spiritus* where divine revelation is not stressed such that the individual’s personhood is overwhelmed, yet nor is the human agency so important that the source of revelation is somehow sought within. Instead, what is observed is a relationality, an interpersonal communication between the two parties of God and child/young person in conversation, though this is a conversation that God initiates and leads. However, this leaves the question of what happens when God initiates and leads an encounter of His Spirit with the spirit of the child or young person? This leads to the third step that Loder gifts us: the process of transformation.

---

Transformation

If the divine-child encounter, which has been discussed above, is observed then what outcome is expected and/or hoped from such an encounter? For Loder the hope is that transformation occurs, but that transformation has a particular shape, content and direction. For Loder transformation is, ‘the patterned process whereby within 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’. This sense of transformation is not merely some generic move in a ‘positive direction,’ it is the very identity of Christian ministry as evidenced in the resurrection and the transformation of death itself. This is more than merely ‘socialisation’ as if being shaped by our context were enough, rather socialisation ‘is to be in service’ to transformation. This is also a transformation that relies on reality; the ‘hidden order’ is discovered to be true and the human person is repatterned according to God’s reality rather than a repatterning according to an individuated expression of self. Lauren Foster describes Loder’s educational theory as a “leading out” towards truth. This does not mean that each individual self is changed so totally so as to effectively be erased. Mirroring Jesus’ resurrection individuals become new creations, but those new creations are still clearly them. In this sense each individual is affirmed as an individual even as they are transformed into the truth of the ‘hidden order.’

Here Loder’s work in The Transforming Moment is helpful in shaping an understanding of the mechanics of transformation. Loder seeks to elucidate the psychology of how transformation occurs in the logic of the Spirit. This is a ‘patterned process’ which characterises ‘the nature of the human spirit, and in a very different but analogical way it also characterises the work of the Holy Spirit in human experience’. Loder’s work here has a coherence about it that allows his theories on both the analogia spiritus and transformation to be used concomitantly.

30 Loder, Educational Ministry, 12.
31 Loder, Educational Ministry, 53.
32 Loder, Educational Ministry, 15.
Loder has five steps to his transforming moment: conflict, scanning, imagination, release and interpretation. Firstly, conflict; this is key to our understanding of the whole nature of transformation. Conflict arises from what Loder calls a ‘rupture in the knowing context’. This is a distance between what we think we understand and what is true, or a distance between what we are and what we should be. There is a recognition of indwelling sin here and the need for change which is often absent from postmodern youth and children’s ministry. There is a distance between the child-as-sinner and the child-transformed which only the work of the Spirit of Christ can bridge.

There is something in the self which dislikes this conflict and is seeking resolution or wholeness. As Foster writes, ‘the hope placed within us for final resolution urges us forward and onwards into truth-seeking’. Loder illustrates with an abstract line puzzle. At first the puzzle appears as though it might be easy to solve, but then its difficulty becomes apparent. The person attempting to solve the puzzle might become irritated by the puzzle, even refusing to try to solve it any more, but even then the puzzle ‘has them’ it is under their skin, they want to solve it, even if outwardly refusing to try. In other words the person seeks resolution or wholeness.

Jerome Berryman draws on Loder’s theory and seeks to link it to what is occurring in his pedagogy for childhood worship, Godly Play. He begins by modifying this aspect of conflict by speaking of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ openings. By a hard opening he sees the conflict as being particularly acute; something that ‘shatters one’s assumed world’ such as a significant illness or death. Soft openings he limits to the natural world that ‘cause one to wonder’. He uses this to promote Godly Play’s use of wonder, beauty and play in the soft openings which occur in it. Yet Berryman’s modification appears to miss the point of the term ‘conflict’. Berryman’s soft openings do not appear to provoke the need for resolution that Loder is suggesting is necessary for beginning the transformation process. Berryman undermines Loder’s theory in his questionable modification.

Pedagogically this will mean that our ministries provoke, raise problems and questions and seek to display the ways in which our world and lives lack

36 Foster, ‘Pedagogical Implications of Loder’s Theory of Transformation’, 145.
coherence and resolution. Ministry will not shy away from difficult topics such as gender, sexuality, politics, education, consumerism, disability or race.\textsuperscript{41} If life in the kingdom is to be marked by transformation then there will be a continuous ‘hard conflict’ with the world.

The second step of transformation is an ‘interlude for scanning’.\textsuperscript{42} This is a seeking of answers to find a resolution to the conflict which has arisen. The stronger the conflict the greater the urgency of the task. Loder writes that to be ‘baffled’ by conflict in a situation means being drawn into the psychological process of searching out the possible solutions, taking apart errors, keeping parts, and discarding others.\textsuperscript{43} Pedagogically this will involve allowing an exploration of possible solutions in order that the individual can see what does not fit. It will not allow contemporary answers to pass without scrutiny. Trite responses will not produce transformation.

This is the point where ‘contemplative wondering’ occurs, not in the first as Berryman suggests.\textsuperscript{44} The learner ‘immerses her-/himself in the exploration of connections and combinations of meaning for which both the basic problem and the redeeming conflict may still be obscure.’\textsuperscript{45} This wondering allows the individual to survey the possibilities in order to search for a resolution. As a minister to children or youth this may be a scary moment if we fear that other possible solutions may seem more preferable. This may be where such resolutions require testing and need to be tried out, worn to determine their functionality and beauty.

The third step is a ‘constructive act of the imagination’.\textsuperscript{46} Here a moment occurs where a rebuilding is required, a repatterning through the frustration of the unresolved conflict. This is a moment of insight – ‘has there been a breakthrough in learning, excitement over a wonderful idea?’\textsuperscript{47} Foster rightly says that these moments ‘cannot be forced or fabricated’.\textsuperscript{48} This is the work of the Spirit. In many ways this is the most crucial and uncontrollable part of the process.\textsuperscript{49}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{41} Whilst tempting, one of these will not be taken up as a worked example due to the significant space each would require to be properly explored.

\textsuperscript{42} Loder, \textit{The Transforming Moment}, 37.

\textsuperscript{43} Loder, \textit{The Transforming Moment}, 37.

\textsuperscript{44} Loder, \textit{Educational Ministry}, 281.

\textsuperscript{45} Loder, \textit{Educational Ministry}, 281.

\textsuperscript{46} Loder, \textit{The Transforming Moment}, 38.

\textsuperscript{47} Loder, \textit{Educational Ministry in the Logic of the Spirit}, 268.

\textsuperscript{48} Foster, ‘Pedagogical Implications of Loder’s Theory of Transformation’, 149.

\textsuperscript{49} For Foster to then suggest how this step may be enabled seems to undermine the quoted statement: this seems to be fabricating this unforce-able action.
\end{footnotes}
This chimes with Kevin Vanhoozer’s description of the imagination. Vanhoozer writes that the imagination is ‘a faculty for making or discovering connections and meaningful forms. Analytic reason takes things apart; the synthetic imagination puts things together’.\textsuperscript{50} In this way the imagination functions as a form of worldview glue: that aspect of our being that makes sense of the parts into a coherent whole. As Vanhoozer puts it the imagination is ‘a vital aid in discerning fittingness – the way parts “belong to” a whole’.\textsuperscript{51} Pedagogically, then, time must be spent allowing the learner to process and de-segment: to place the parts of the jigsaw together.

Fourth is a ‘release of the energy’ from the conflict and an ‘opening of the knower’ to oneself.\textsuperscript{52} Loder sees this as the ‘aha’ moment as the excitement of the discovery propels the learner forward. This will link in with further aspects which were missed and significances made. For Loder, solving the puzzle enables further puzzles to be attempted.\textsuperscript{53} There is a sense of joy at the re-patterning and recognition; ‘learning then needs to indwell this experience with joy’.\textsuperscript{54} This leads to further ‘dreaming’ that ‘leads to the desire to learn more’.\textsuperscript{55} Pedagogically this is evidence for the teacher or minister that the transformation is occurring: a deep sense of joy and delight that calls for deeper discovery. This can cause all kinds of problems for ‘planned’ ministry as it derails the intentions of the leader, but it elevates the moment to something richly spiritual/Spiritual. It allows a visualisation of the \textit{analogia spiritus} as the revelation of God and the personhood of the individual engage together.

The fifth step Loder terms ‘interpretation’ or a ‘repatterning of the context’.\textsuperscript{56} This is a time of testing the solution against the parameters which have been set.\textsuperscript{57} He understands this as a working backwards (‘congruence’) and a working forwards (‘correspondence’).\textsuperscript{58} The first seeks to make sense of the solution with the original conflict and the second seeks to make sense of the solution with a wider understanding of the world. This leads to action and ‘not a trivialized activism but a powerful reflective action’.\textsuperscript{59} This is the opposite of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} Kevin J. Vanhoozer, \textit{Pictures at a Theological Exhibition: Scenes of the Church’s Worship, Witness and Wisdom} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 24.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Vanhoozer, \textit{Pictures at a Theological Exhibition}, 24.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Loder, \textit{The Transforming Moment}, 38–39.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Loder, \textit{The Transforming Moment}, 39.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Loder, \textit{Educational Ministry}, 268.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Foster, ‘Pedagogical Implications of Loder’s Theory of Transformation’, 151.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Loder, \textit{The Transforming Moment}, 39; Loder, \textit{Educational Ministry in the Logic of the Spirit}, 292.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Loder, \textit{The Transforming Moment}, 39.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Loder, \textit{The Transforming Moment}, 39.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Loder, \textit{Educational Ministry}, 292.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
a simple affirmation of a person in their self-discovery which tends towards inaction and lack of change. Instead this is a dynamic and instigating force that the Spirit brings.

Pedagogically it should be considered that a child or young person has seemingly boundless energy at times and a natural, almost naïve, desire to make the world a better place. Ministry, as Loder describes it, will see that energy directed differently. While that may be prophetic it will also be harnessed in the holiness of the Spirit. As Foster writes, ‘the transformational process of education is not fully entered into if it does not lead to transformed living’.

This process is critical to understanding Loder’s dynamic of the *analogia spiritus*. When confronted with the Holy Spirit there is only one direction in which the human spirit ought to travel. Loder is clear that the transformation has priority due to the imbalance of the spirit/Spirit dynamic: it is the action of God which is intervening. God acts in this way without overriding the person; each individual is affirmed in their personhood as they are met by God’s Spirit and transformed. It is the ‘life of Christ [which] challenges socialized existence to undergo redemptive transformation for the benefit of all’.

Thus, building on the foundation of Chalcedon and the *analogia spiritus*, the third step in constructive solution to the tensions of top-down and bottom-up approaches is to see the importance of or even need for transformation in the logic of the Spirit. Having examined these three steps it is now possible to see how this proposal can be taken back into some of the concerns of paper 1 and be presented as a form of spiritual structuration.

**Spiritual Structuration**

Transformation via the *analogia spiritus* can be seen as a spiritual version of Gidden’s theory of structuration as discussed in part 1. Whilst Loder frames his thinking in terms of placing socialisation in opposition to transformation that does not mean that he is ignoring the traditional debate within sociology of agency vs structure nor has he missed the possibility of structuration, indeed he sees structuration, or ‘composing’ and ‘construing’ as he calls it, as a normal part of human existence. This normal human process however does not lead to true transformation because it remains within the two-dimensional

---

60 Foster, ‘Pedagogical Implications of Loder’s Theory of Transformation’, 151.
immanent frame of ‘self-world’. All it can do is socialise people into producing one of four lifestyles, namely:

1. Achievement – an orientation/obsession towards achieving;
2. Authoritarian – a pre-occupation with the importance of power and control;
3. Oppressedness – a latent anger against an unidentified oppressor;
4. Protean – a shifting and perpetual identity crisis.63

What is striking about this list is that it potentially covers both top-down and bottom-up approaches as set out in part 1. Top-down approaches, with their focus on structure, are arguably pre-occupied with power and control, whilst bottom-up approaches, with their stress on agency and Weberian social models, might equally be seen as fostering both protean and oppressedness lifestyles. With respect to the latter, Loder notes that even rhetoric that is ‘crying “liberation” in the name of God’ could be ‘all the time entrenching its “liberation” in some new, more sophisticated form of the ontocratic pattern.’ By ‘ontocratic’ Loder means human founded structures in which (even if they appear focussed on liberation) the individual and the marginalised are held captive by the same immanent two-dimensional self-world socialisation that will have its own ‘divine ordinances’ and ‘priestly caste.’64 In these instances apparent concerns for ‘agency’ are only concerns for structure in disguise and hence can only lead to socialisation.

In this way, for Loder, discussions around structure and agency miss the point because they are captured by the immanent ‘self-world’ frame. Transformation, via the *analogia spiritus* moves beyond this two-dimensional socialisation to four-dimensional spiritual transcendent structuration by including the two further dimensions of the void and the holy. The void is the absurdity of life without God. The Holy is meeting Jesus Christ. Loder illustrates this through the narrative around the Road to Emmaus. The disciples (selves) are composing their worlds in relation to what has happened in Jerusalem (world). Post crucifixion they face the absurdity of the absence of God and are broken (void). They then meet Jesus Christ, the Holy and their life is transformed. In light of this, Loder summarises how mere socialisation becomes transformation (or what can be called spiritual or transcendent structuration) by saying that the ‘Spirit comes to us from beyond our social constructions of reality but intervenes within them to awaken the human spirit to the presence of Christ, enabling transformation in four dimensions’.65 This awakening does

63 Loder, Educational Ministry, 20.
64 Loder, Educational Ministry, 41.
65 Loder, Educational Ministry, 166.
not do violence to the individual as it is embedded in the grammar of the self and world and so affirms the individual; and yet ‘when you truly recognize the presence of Jesus, you realize that you cannot compose him as an object in your world. You don’t compose him into your world. He composes you into his world.’

**Conclusion**

Loder gives a shape, via Chalcedon, to the top-down/bottom-up dynamic that has been discussed in these two papers. This stems from a transforming ministry of the Spirit which results in an encounter of the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. Ministry viewed in this way has a specific particular pattern and telos. It maintains the dignity and particularity of each individual as well as recognising the importance of their particular lived experience and how they constitute reality through a conversation between the two. However, this immanent structuration will always be captured by the processes of socialisation until they are transformed by the second two dimensions, the void and the Holy, through an encounter of the Spirit of Christ from outside.

**References**


Vanhoozer, Kevin J. Pictures at a Theological Exhibition: Scenes of the Church’s Worship, Witness and Wisdom (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016).

