

## THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION - SCM Studyguide

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James 1:22 – faithful should be “doers of the word and not hearers only”

### Definition?:

1. Life and faith rumination”
2. Like practical theology thought-out correlation of life and faith
3. Disciplined integration of belief and practice by God’s people  
[\* a tough pursuit! So take care – Prayer and Share.]

### Origins:

1. Liberation Theology [*cf earlier European progressive Catholics: Cardijn 1930s, & Friere 1972, & Marxist praxis for oppressed*]
2. Clinical Pastoral Education Movement, Anton Boisen 1920s Chicago? which puts patients’ experience and words at centre in verbatims.
3. Jn Dewey 1930s (philosr) – reflective practice in professional formation. Led to less linear model in Daniel Kolb (1984) experiential learning circle. [*she’s obviously copied this from my LDTheol which unfortunately misprinted, it’s David Kolb*] This now normative in Social Work, Medicine, Education, Counselling and issues into specific, focused process of mentoring/group supervision, etc.

Till 1960s Historical, Biblical, Doctrinal, Ethical studies.

Later Pastoralia then Pastoral Studies as optional extra.

Theological Reflection *should* be shot through all theological activity.

But since 1980 cycle has been used in conservative way.

‘Practical Theology’ has theological reflection at its core but not same.

### PTR Progressing Theological Reflection

- Progressing – always moving on to new life, transforms
- Particular – specific events
- Potent/Prophetic – do God’s truth

- Practical – results

### (Ch3) **APPROACHES AND METHODS**

#### **Daniel Kolb 1984** [*David Kolb*]

From Piaget – from active concrete experience the learner must distance herself to observe, reflect. General principles are induced which are then acted on experimentally.

#### **Clifford Geertz 1973**

Using Gilbert Ryle's 'thick description' – excessive description using SA tools.

#### **Andrew Todd**

##### **Uses verbs not nouns for his six phases**

1. Experience;
2. Analyse (thick description),
3. Reflect (w scripture and tradition),
- (4. Kairos Moment of insight (Vision),

[this is more carefully worked out in my secondary cycle, but could lead to splitting off of theological perspective from other disciplines – but guard against this by going back and forth round circle, not just one way (as with the two faces)]

5. Reflective Action
- (6. New Situation)

#### **Spiritual Wisdom ~ Killen & de Beer**

1. Clear the mind of prejudices and explore
2. re-enter the experience
3. attend to feelings and sensations
4. allow those feelings to present an image
5. connect those images with theological themes to give new light
6. identify new ways of thinking and acting.

#### **Narrative Reflection ~ Gillie Bolton, Frances Ward, Heth Walton**

Writing stories about our experiences but from different perspectives and using different genres, and sharing them. Like Midrash.

#### (Ch4) **SCRIPTURE IN PTR**

##### **Jewish Midrash:**

Perform a text it changes and lives.

Jews took 'very Word of God' & constructed myths (aggadah – aggadot sing.)

Paste bible passage at centre & let group put own stories round it like Midrash

Paul says Hbw Rock of Desert was Christ. We use drama, sculpture, etc.

Some start from Scripture, Lectio Divina, and relate experience to it.

##### **Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises:**

Like living through the events of Holy Week. Maundy Thursday watch, Stations of Cross to Golgotha, sorrow service of Friday, Rejoicing of Sunday.

##### **Themes**

Note *A Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Ryken et al. 1998)

##### **Lectio Divina**

Reading focused as conversation with God who has invited us into his arms.

Encourages deep reverential listening (Benedict Rule)

1. Lectio: after prayer Text is read slowly
2. Meditatio: key phrase repeated as concerns ruminate
3. Oratio: prayers attuned to God's will
4. Contemplatio: rest in God's arms.

#### (Ch5) **THE KAIROS MOMENT**

Correlation not easy: Gap between faith and issues not humanly bridgeable. God's grace only. Eureka moment in science. This is where prayer is crucial – so Lectio Divina comes into its own. Creating Sacred Space.

##### **[A Rule of Life for Reflective Theologians: (cf p.114)**

- which Model to use? How to adapt it for own group's use?
- Patterns of prayer
- Daily Reading of Scripture & Tradition
- Which groups to run with?

- Receptive to insights from other disciplines?
- How often to set aside time for Theology?
- Monitor your actions – were they theologically informed?

Supervision (individual and peer), Journal, hear examples (PtoP & Urban M)

### (Ch7) PTR & PERSONALITY STYLES

- Enneagram & Myers Briggs.

**Kolb's research:** people preferred different parts of his circle.

- Activist – involved taskers/gamers, liking the challenge
- Theorist – detached thick-describers, see patterns, question.
- Reflector – observation, preparation, listening
- Pragmatist – models with clear application, trying things

Theorists: analysis

Reflectors: reflection

Pragmatists: new planning

Activists: experience

Therefore keep approaches changing in the group. Let them say what they prefer and allow for differences.

### (Ch8) PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Uses Theological Reflection Cycle at its core.

Now used to include **making firm links between belief and practice.**

#### David Tracy:

Kind of Theology	<b>Philosophical</b>	<b>Systematic</b>	<b>Practical</b>
<b>Public:</b>	Academy	Church	Society
<b>Aim:</b>	Rational demo	Significance for faithful	Leads to liberation
<b>Stance:</b>	Non-confessional	Confessional	Identity with oppressed

<b>Criteria:</b>	validity	meaning	Ethical action
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[But do we want the three to remain distanced?]

## (Ch9) USES OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

**Interfaith:** keeps it focused.

**Analysing institutions:** to decide if we will work with them. 'bottom line'?

Cannot change world otherwise. Stem-cell research, terrorist treatment,

### **Health Warning:**

**Could seriously affect your whole attitude to life**

**NOT JUST FOR COURSES!**

## **TOOLKIT FOR REFLECTION**

**Computer Games** – design one. What is the object of quest? What obstacles? Main actors?

Your team and gifts? Duncan Ballard MTh Thesis 2005 unpublished

### **HYPertext**

Engage in virtual dialogue. The hypertext keeps you from linear thinking. Out of the box.

Duncan Ballard again at [www.etheology.com](http://www.etheology.com) and Facebook Postcolonialism.

**Fantasy Fiction** – change the direction and see what happens

**Spider Web picture** – gets away from linear thinking

**Godly Play** – making the bible our own and making connections

**Imaginary Dialogue** – choose Desmond Tutu, MLK

**Midrash** – put main passage in centre and group adds their stories/thoughts around.

**Press Report** – A. a celebration of event. B vilifies event C balanced account

**Body Focus** – focus event from different aspects A eyes/head B. heart C Guts