



CREATE

Canterbury Research and Theses Environment

Canterbury Christ Church University's repository of research outputs

<http://create.canterbury.ac.uk>

Copyright © and Moral Rights for this thesis are retained by the author and/or other copyright owners. A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge. This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder/s. The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given e.g. Northing, J. (2017) A theological reflection on education, and an educational reflection on theology. Ed.D. thesis, Canterbury Christ Church University.

Contact: create.library@canterbury.ac.uk



**A theological reflection on education, and an educational reflection on
theology**

by

Janet Frances Northing

Canterbury Christ Church University

**Thesis submitted
for the Degree of Doctor of Education**

2017



Thesis Submission for Doctorate in Education

Author's Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is expressed in my own words and appropriate recognition and credit has been given to the work of others where appropriate. It is copyright material and any quotation from the thesis should only be used with proper acknowledgement.

Signed: *Janet Northing*

Date: *8th August 2017*

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my family for your love, support and inspiration on this part of my learning journey, especially my husband Ross, my son Luke and daughter-in-law Felicity, and my granddaughter Katie.

Thank you to my friends, for the interest you have all shown in my work and your constant encouragement to keep going.

Thank you to my supervisors, Dr John-Paul Riordan for giving me the confidence to believe that I could do this, and Dr Bob Bowie. I am also grateful for the guidance and support of Professor Trevor Cooling and Dr Lynn Revell.

Dedication

To my late mother and father

A theological reflection on education, and an educational reflection on theology

Abstract:

This research explores the impact of the resurrection in St. John's Gospel, through focusing on the theme of 'hope'. Consideration is given as to how this might inspire a theological vision of 'hope' in an educational context, in particular that of Church of England primary schools.

The method for this research involves Biblical analysis of the resurrection appearances as recorded in the Gospel of St. John. The methodology uses Bevans' (2012) praxis model of contextual theology combined with Kennard's Thiselton-Ricouer hermeneutic (2013). The theoretical perspective is informed by Thiselton's 'two horizons' (1980; 1992) and N.T. Wright's 'five act' hermeneutic (1992; 2013). The epistemology involves both critical realism and ontological realism.

More recently the Church of England has published its *Vision for Education* (Church of England Education Office, 2016b). This initial articulation of a Christian vision, underpinned by both theological and educational thinking, is a useful starting place for further theological reflection. In articulating a theology of education based on 'hope' using the Bible as its inspiration, this research seeks to contribute a fresh perspective on the purpose and practice of Christian education.

Findings show that when the resurrection of Jesus Christ is viewed as a new beginning rather than a positive conclusion for Jesus and his followers then resurrection offers 'hope' of transformation. The very task of education can be seen similarly, as an act of 'hope', transforming lives and opening up new horizons. A theology of education inspired by 'hope' recognises the complexity of the human condition. It looks to the future in a way that encompasses the present and past, with God as companion offering purpose and expectancy.

Contents

Author's Declaration	2
Acknowledgements	3
Dedication	4
Abstract	5
Chapter 1: Introduction	9
1.1.1 Introduction	9
1.1.2 Purpose of the Research	15
1.1.3 Theology of Education – Definition of terms	16
Chapter 2: Literature Review	18
2.1 Introduction	18
2.2 Church of England: Educational Policy and Practice	18
2.2.1 The Way Ahead (2001)	18
2.2.2 The Church of England Children's Strategy (2003)	20
2.2.3 Going for Growth (2010)	22
2.2.4 The Church School of the Future Review (2012)	23
2.2.5 Making a Difference? A Review of Religious Education in Church of England Schools (2014)	29
2.2.6 Fruits of the Spirit: A Church of England Discussion Paper on Character Education (2015b)	30
2.2.7 Church of England Vision for Education (2016b)	31
2.2.8 Rooted in the Church (2016c)	35
2.3 Christian Education and Theology	36
2.3.1 Christian Education	36
2.3.2 Theology and Education	41
2.3.3 Theology and Sociology	45
Chapter 3: Research methodology	51
3.1 Knowledge Paradigm	51

3.1.1	Other Epistemological perspectives of knowledge and interpretation	56
3.2	Theoretical perspective – Contextual Biblical hermeneutics	65
3.2.1	Biblical hermeneutics	65
3.2.2	Contextual theology	68
3.2.3	Thiselton-Ricouer hermeneutic	73
3.3	Research design	77
3.3.1	Phase 1: Praxis (reflection on/ and practice)	78
3.3.2	Phase 2: Critical reflection (Praxis/ existential connection with the text)	78
3.3.3	Phase 3: Critical reflection (Praxis/ textual critical realism/ Biblical hermeneutics)	79
3.3.4	Phase 4: Critical reflection (Praxis/ contextual critical realism/ Biblical hermeneutics)	80
3.4	Method (document analysis)	81
	Chapter 4: Applying the Research Design	84
4.1	Phase 1: Praxis (reflection on/ and practice)	85
4.2	Phase 2: Critical reflection: (Interpretation Level 1/ existential connection with the text)	88
4.3	Phase 3: Critical reflection: (Interpretation Level 2/ Textual critical realism	92
4.3.1	St. John 20:1-10 (The resurrection of Jesus)	93
4.3.2	St. John 20:11-18 (Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene)	98
4.3.3	St. John 20:19-29 (Jesus gives the disciples power to forgive sins)	103
4.3.4	St. John 21:1-14 (Jesus appears to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias)	111
4.3.5	St. John 21:15-19 (Peter is given a command)	118
4.3.6	St. John 21:20-25 (Jesus and the Beloved Disciple)	121
4.4	Phase 4: A re-reading of the Bible and Christian tradition	123

4.4.1	A Community of Hope as a Collective Existence	125
4.4.2	A Community of Hope as Love in Action	131
4.4.3	A Community of Hope as the Peace of Christ	137
4.4.4	A Community of Hope as a Vision of Resurrection	141
4.5	Phase 5: Refined Action: more rooted in Biblical tradition/ contextual reality	147
Chapter 5: Conclusion		151
5.1	Limitations	155
5.1.1	Originality	156
5.1.2	Future Development	158
Bibliography		159
Table of Figures		
Figure 1:	Research methodology	51
Figure 2:	Bhaskar's depth ontology Dyson & Brown (2005)	55
Figure 3:	Sources of knowledge and inspiration N.T. Wright (1992)	57
Figure 4:	Positivist position N.T Wright (1992)	59
Figure 5:	Phenomenologist position N.T Wright (1992)	59
Figure 6:	Critical realist position N.T. Wright (1992)	61
Figure 7:	Praxis model Bevans (2012)	73
Figure 8:	Hermeneutical approach Kennard (2013)	76
Figure 9:	Praxis model Bevans (2012) combined with Thiselton-Ricouer hermeneutic Kennard (2013)	77

Please note: All quotations are in their original format unless identified by (...) or (Italics mine) or [words changed or added].

Number of words: 51,588

Chapter 1: Introducing the Research

1.1 Introduction:

The rationale behind this research comes from my personal reflections whilst attending the Eucharist service during the residential weekends at the taught stage of the Doctorate in Education (EdD). At its heart, this research involves a narrative giving a sense of purpose and direction to the journey. In essence, there is an interweaving of my story with the research question. As such it is a personal journey of discovery on many levels. Moore encapsulates this in describing such research as “a personal venture which, quite aside from its social benefits, is worth doing for its direct contribution to one’s own self-realisation” (Moore, 1984, p.155). To begin the narrative of the research I am using the structure proposed by Polkinghorne (1988) who describes three levels of narrative: experience, telling and interpreting.

Experience & Telling: During each doctoral residential weekend held at Salomons Campus there was always a morning Eucharist service on Sunday for those wishing to attend. Most members of the cohort chose to be part of this time of worship and for me, a traditional Anglo-Catholic, it was important to have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of holy communion. The chaplain of Canterbury Christ Church, Reverend Dr Jeremy Law, travelled to Salomons Campus to celebrate the Eucharist with us, and as part of that service he always gave a short homily on the Gospel reading. On this particular Sunday in April 2013 the Gospel reading was from St. John 21:1-14. This passage of Scripture recounts the events surrounding one of the resurrection appearances of Jesus involving a miraculous catch of fish. The passage describes how a group of the disciples spend all night fishing on the Sea of Tiberias, but catch nothing. Early in the morning as they return to the shore, Jesus stands at the water’s edge although the disciples do not recognise Him. He calls to them asking if they have caught any fish, to which they reply no. Jesus instructs them to throw the net on the right side of the boat, assuring them that they will have a better outcome if they do this. Doing as He says, the disciples find that Jesus has been true to His word as they are unable to haul in the net because it

contains so many fish. Then St. John recognizes Jesus, and Simon Peter jumps from the boat into the water. The other disciples follow in the boat towing the net full of fish. They are about one hundred yards away from the shore. When they land they see that Jesus has lit a fire and already has fish that He is cooking to have with bread. He tells them to bring some of the fish they have just caught, so Simon Peter climbs aboard once more and drags the net ashore. Although it is full of 153 large fish, the net does not tear. He then invites the disciples to come and have breakfast with Him. None of the disciples ask who He is because they know that it is Jesus. He then takes the bread and gives it to them before doing the same with the fish. St. John records that this was now the third time that Jesus appears to his disciples after he has been raised from the dead.

In the homily that followed the chaplain talked about the way Jesus supports the disciples in their disappointment and turns their failure into success. He described how Jesus met them at their point of need and gave them clear directions about what to do in order to achieve the right outcome. At the end of the homily the chaplain posed the question, “What does this have to say to us about the role and purpose of education?”

In our final doctoral meeting in November 2014 at Canterbury Christ Church the Eucharist was celebrated in St. Augustine House. This was Advent Sunday, and the homily focused on the theme of hope in the second coming of Jesus. Links were made to the first coming of Christ, the hope of the resurrection and the difference this makes to the world in which we live. By means of a practical illustration the chaplain used a toy truck, which travelled down a constructed slope to show the linear path that life follows. He then used a bouncy ball to show the potential of the resurrection to set us free from this linear path in life, to a place of hope with a future full of limitless opportunities.

Interpreting: At a time when I was considering what particular focus I might have for my dissertation, this question really influenced my thinking. For me, the question posed about the role and purpose of education, and the subsequent illustration about the way the resurrection experience changed the lives of those first disciples, was an answer to a conscious search for

God's guidance about what the essence of my thesis should be. I was aware that I was leaning towards a theological focus because one of the prime motivators for undertaking this doctorate was to deepen my understanding of how theology could underpin educational practice. By doing so it might be possible to add to the body of knowledge seeking to find meaningful ways to practically express a theological vision for Christian education.

Further reflection has enabled me to interpret the narrative sequence outlined above in such a way as to formulate a research proposal meriting this study. In continuing to think further about the link between resurrection and education, I found it useful to reflect on my own faith experience and the impact that this continues to have on my learning journey. A conversion experience in my late twenties was to be a catalyst for the realisation of my academic potential. Having been disinterested in learning throughout my secondary education and unable to apply myself, I eventually left school with no A-Level qualifications. Post-conversion, my experience mirrors the illustration of the bouncy ball in terms of realising a life that is full of limitless opportunities. I trained to be a teacher, and qualified with a first class B.Ed. (Hons) degree, before teaching in a range of community and Church schools. Eventually, I became the headteacher of a Church of England primary school. I also completed a part-time MA in Religious Education at Kings College London, passing with distinction. These illustrations from my own life demonstrate the potential of the resurrection to give life changing hope and motivation. This was realised through education that similarly has the potential to open up life's opportunities for those of faith or none. Within the Church school I will argue it is the impact of the Christian Gospel, and in particular the hope of the resurrection, that ultimately leaves its footprint on the present and future generation.

There now follows a brief reflection on hope within my own career in education. I retired from a seven-year headship of a Church of England primary school in 2013. I continue to work in Christian education having a variety of roles within the diocesan structure. As a Diocesan School Support Consultant I work in various ways with headteachers of Church schools to support them in maximising the impact of their school's Christian distinctiveness on all areas of school life. As a SIAMS Inspector (Statutory

Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) I carry out inspections of both voluntary controlled and voluntary aided Church of England primary schools for two dioceses. I am also a Foundation Governor in a Church of England Primary Academy. I continue to work in these roles because I am committed to the Church school distinctiveness, and the rich experience that being part of a Church school community can bring to children's lives. Between June 2015 and September 2016 I also worked as a Consultant on a national research project with Canterbury Christ Church University and the Education Division of the National Society. This was funded by the Department for Education and The Jerusalem Trust and focused on promoting the Christian virtue of hospitality as a means of supporting children's character development to prepare them for life in a diverse and multicultural society. In addition to these experiences within Christian education I bring with me my Christian faith in committed action to a particular context – that of searching for a theological vision for Christian education that has the potential to be translated into educational practice. This research focuses on the resurrection appearances in St. John's Gospel as a means of articulating a theology of education based on the theological virtue of hope.

It is on my current diocesan work and previous role as headteacher of a Church of England primary school that I have chosen as a reflection on praxis and the part that hope played and continues to play in those roles to start my hermeneutical approach. Prior to taking up my appointment as headteacher I was invited to a meeting with the diocesan director of education who emphasised the need for the school community to see themselves as primarily a Church school rather than a village school. Through consultation with all stakeholders, a set of core Christian values was put in place. These were celebrated and promoted so that they informed all areas of the school's life. Hope did feature in the twelve Christian values that were identified as being important to the school and local community at that time.

As a Christian called to the role of headteacher in a Church school, my main motivation was directed towards carrying out this responsibility in the best way that I could. Whilst becoming a headteacher was a huge

achievement for me personally, I also know through personal testimonies, letters and other practical expressions of gratitude that for most pupils and their families, though not all, being part of a Church school community made a positive impact on their lives. Perhaps this was particularly true for pupils with a learning difficulty or special educational need who were accepted, valued and encouraged to be aspirational about what they could achieve. Parents could see that their children were making progress, and therefore became more hopeful of what the future might hold for their children and for them. Caring for families during times of difficulty, including loss and bereavement were also aspects of school life requiring pastoral input, and as a Christian, I felt able to pray with families in addition to offering practical support.

As a headteacher I also look back on this as a time of some unfulfilled hope, even a sense of disappointment or despair. This was mainly due to the fact that for a variety of reasons standards of academic attainment and progress took time to improve and reach a point where the school was judged to be good in Ofsted terms. Commenting on despair as a constant threat to hope, Marcel suggests that:

The truth is that there can strictly speaking be no hope except when the temptation to despair exists. Hope is the act by which this temptation is actively or victoriously overcome. The victory may not invariably involve any sense of effort: I should even be quite ready to go so far as to say that such a feeling is not compatible with hope in its purest form (Marcel, 2010, pp.30-31).

Writing at the start of the new millennium, Liston hints at the despair felt by some practitioners within education:

In many a teacher's heart there is an enveloping darkness that amounts to a devastating sense that the education, teaching and life we have clung to with such hope and promise are losing their grip ...the

promise of education to transform, ennoble and enable, to create the conditions for new understandings of our world and ourselves, have become tired and devalued promissory notes (Liston, 2010, pp.30-31).

Halpin suggests that very often being hopeful implicitly involves critical reflection about the current conditions or circumstances, which is possibly what I have described in my own practice:

The proper practice of education, which, because it is premised upon the hope that it will lead to improvement, is often accompanied by frustration that the actual conditions for teaching and learning are inadequate to the task (Halpin, 2001, p.395).

He refers to the ‘love of teaching’ and the pursuit of the ‘common good in education’ as the motivation for many teachers entering the profession at that time. This in turn links to the recent publication of *The Church of England’s Vision for Education* (Church of England, 2016) which refers to ‘serving the common good’ as part of its strapline. However, he goes on to say that:

To build up the common good, teachers need to feel that their best work is valued and their higher motivations applauded and that they are not in competition with their colleagues for resources and students. ‘Naming and shaming’ schools and tarnishing the profession with a negative brush for the faults of a minority not only frustrate the process, but dangerously inhibit it ever getting started (Halpin, 2001, p.407).

Similarly, Jacobs articulates the teacher’s temptation to despair, citing examples of teachers who feel a sense of powerlessness to change certain aspects of the role. These include: “A curriculum we are told to teach that is not of our design, an ever-increasing number of students in our classes [and]

the implementation of high-stakes testing for our students” (Jacobs, 2005, p.792).

Reflecting further on my experience in education, I am now able to put a more positive interpretation on my own feelings of unrealised hope. It does mean that in my current diocesan role I am able to appreciate the pressures on headteachers in terms of meeting the requirements of Ofsted; budget constraints; Academy conversion, personnel issues and the drive to continually improve academic standards. I can therefore, offer support to serving headteachers and use my knowledge and expertise in developing the impact of their school’s Christian ethos on all areas of school life. My inspection role is complementary to my supporting role of consultant as I have a clear understanding of what good and outstanding practice looks like in Church schools. I am also in a position to advise leaders and governors about putting strategies in place that will improve their provision so impacting positively on outcomes for pupils.

This interpretation of the narrative focuses on the connection between theology and education, providing the stimulus for a future course of action that gives the research coherence, meaning and purpose. This reflective approach has been a very important part of the initial steps in this research process and remains an important element within the chosen methodology and the conclusions I have drawn. Polkinghorne (1988, p.22) describes the process of narrative interpretation and reflection in these terms: “Narrative understanding is the comprehension of a complex of events by seeing the whole in which the parts have participated.”

1.2 Purpose of the Research

Reflection and interpretation of the narrative sequence of events described above has resulted in the formation of a research question. As a heuristic device the research question assists me as the researcher by clearly defining what the research is about and informing the methodology. In the case of this particular thesis the research question is also important to the readers and users of the research, for its ultimate aim is to have some influence and benefit for those working in the field of Christian education.

In general terms there are a number of factors to take into account when considering the impact of this research on educational practice and policy. The purpose of this study is to explore whether there might be a unifying theological vision for Christian education that could be translated into educational practice. The publication of *The Church School of the Future Review* (Archbishops' Council, 2012) highlighted the need for a theological vision to be developed in response to the radical opportunity created as a consequence of the current climate in state education. The methodology within this thesis is designed to establish a theological vision for Christian education. It does by providing an exemplar study of the way in which the vision of a Church school can be informed by theology. In the light of this my chosen research question is:

How might the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ in St. John's Gospel inspire a theological vision for Christian education?

1.3 Theology of Education: (Definition of terms)

Before reviewing a range of literature that explores the relationship between education on the one hand and theology on the other, I intend to define my understanding of these terms in relation to this research. Firstly, by 'Christian education' I mean education that takes place within the setting of a Church of England primary school. However, as stated in the *Church of England Vision for Education* (Church of England Education Office, 2016b, p.3), it is not my intention to exclude any school wishing to share in the outcomes of the research, and therefore the term 'education' is also used in an inclusive way for all those involved in educational practice. In addition, in referring to Christian education, I am not meaning the subject Religious Education, for a theology of education will encompass all aspects of school life and not just those concerned with religion.

In using the term 'theology of education' I will focus on the importance of educational context. A variety of theological methods could be used to develop a theology of education. For the purposes of this research, my use of the term 'theology' focuses on the importance of context in seeking to understand the implications of the resurrection to

inspire a theology of education centred on hope. Francis notes the importance of educational context in a theology of education, “a theology of education must begin by taking its educational context seriously” (Francis, 1990, p.349). Whilst, classical theology involves the study of the nature of God through reference to two theological sources, namely Scripture and Tradition, *contextual theology* recognises a third source of theological expression involving culture, history and contemporary thought. In so doing it takes into account the faith experience of the past and the present context. In addition, I have chosen the *praxis model* of contextual theology as a means to develop a theology that is relevant to the particular context of a Church of England primary school. This involves reflective action on the practice of the school community and the education that it seeks to deliver. Given the nature of the research I feel that it is important to have critical reflection on praxis at its heart. I will explore contextual theology and in particular the *praxis model* in more depth within the literature review and the research methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction:

We will now turn our attention to reviewing a range of literature to explore the potential for Christian theology to inform educational policy and practice. Firstly, this will involve an overview of existing Church of England education policy and practice since the start of the new millennium. Focusing the literature review on Church of England reports and documents will identify theological gaps within the policy and subsequent practice. Therefore, some critical evaluations will be made before making some general conclusions about the overall direction of the work to date as a means to identifying the potential contribution of my research.

2.2 Church of England Educational Policy and Practice:

Since the start of the new millennium the landscape of education has been through a period of considerable change including: the reduction in Local Education Authority control; the Academies Programme; the creation of Free Schools; and changes to teacher's pay and conditions (Northing, 2015, p175). There is the suggestion that these government reforms in education have been driven by a "utilitarian, economically driven and narrowly test-orientated system" (Archbishops' Council Education Division, 2012, p.17). Against this backdrop, the Church of England as the largest single provider of schools in England continues to have a major role to play within the current education system. This point is made in *The Church School of the Future Review* (Church of England Education Office, 2012, p.15) which states that, "At a time of educational change and challenge, the need to be unambiguous and explicit about the key characteristics of Church schools becomes a priority." I will now consider a range of Church of England reports and publications since the start of the new millennium informing its current educational policy and practice as a background to the research.

2.2.1 The Way Ahead (Archbishops' Council, 2001):

At the start of the new millennium the Archbishops' Council commissioned a review of Church schools under the chairmanship of Lord

Dearing. *The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the New Millennium* articulated the General Synod Resolution that: “Church schools stand at the centre of the Church’s mission to the nation” (Archbishops’ Council, 2001, p.1). Aimed at leaders of church schools the report set out the full implications of this assertion by giving schools access to a coherent national strategy. This incorporated three strands of distinctiveness, strategic development and vocation. However, this assertion came with a proviso that only Church schools that were ‘distinctively Christian’ could be considered to be at the heart of the Church’s mission.

In addition, the report reaffirmed the Church’s commitment to continue to provide education for its own sake as a reflection of God’s love for humanity. It also attempted to articulate the nature and purpose of Church schools in a more theological way.

Church schools are places where the faith is lived, and which therefore offer opportunities to pupils and their families to explore the truths of Christian faith, to develop spiritually and morally, and to have a basis for *choice* about Christian commitment. They are places where the beliefs and practices of other faiths will be respected. Church schools are not, and should not be, agents of proselytism where pupils are *expected* to make a Christian commitment (Archbishops’ Council, 2001, p.12).

However, Elbourne in commenting on *The Way Ahead* (Archbishops’ Council, 2001), criticises the missed opportunities following its publication to create what he describes as an: “Anglican education academy or theological community” that would develop the Church’s educational capacity and resources still further (Elbourne, 2013, p.253). He urges the Church to spend time theologising about the overarching purpose and mission of its schools or to set out a critique of the prevailing secular orthodoxies in education as a priority, in order to offer them reflective tools enabling them to explore anew their purpose and identity:

Dearing's report was pragmatic and while it made a number of recommendations about developing the Christian distinctiveness of Church schools, did not point to the importance of establishing an on-going theological and reflective enterprise. Little was said about the Christian purpose of education or what may be the characteristics of 'Christian education' in the school context (Elbourne, 2013, p.244).

He also points out that the report led to the prominence of a number of key words and concepts signifying what the Church thought its schools should embrace. The three concepts most frequently used to denote the hallmark of a church school being *Distinctiveness*, *Inclusiveness* and *Christian values*. However, it would appear that rather than leading to a greater theological depth of understanding of the nature of church schools they became "a substitute for further thought and development" (Elbourne, 2013, p.245). He further argues that, "The era upon which we have now embarked requires us to reinvent and extend the vocabulary of what lies at the theological heart of Church schools" (Elbourne, 2013, p.246). Although in agreement with Elbourne's views, I also believe that any new articulation of a vision for Christian education should maintain continuity with the past. Moltmann (2002) supports the importance of Christian tradition and recognises the way it informs the present and the future. Although it is rooted in the past, it is also intrinsically forward looking and can therefore impact positively on the here and now.

As the era and impact of Dearing's report draws to a close there is the opportunity for exploring different ways of being a church school in the twenty first century using a range of metaphors, concepts and key words. Within this creative space my thesis puts forward the notion of the church school as a community of hope through a theological reflection on the impact of the resurrection in the life of a church school. In addition, the methodology used has the potential to generate a theological depth of understanding within varying contexts.

2.2.2 The Church of England Children's Strategy (Archbishops'

Council, 2003)

The Church of England in its *Children's Strategy* (Archbishops' Council, 2003) commented on the radical changes that had taken place in children's lives over the previous fifty years. It highlighted that the perhaps inevitable outcome of the decline in Church attendance meant that opportunities for children to experience being part of a faith community, whether or not they were a believer themselves, had greatly reduced. This meant that the relationship between Church and school had become even more vital in terms of children's experiential knowledge of Christianity in action. Somewhat contradictory to the Gospel message of Jesus Christ: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10), the strategy also points out that the Church can learn from the challenging academic targets and rising expectations placed by schools on children, which were reportedly justified by the dramatic improvements in achievement. The report does indicate that the range of expectations is too narrow, but suggests that the Church should similarly have high expectations of what children can achieve: "If the Church has low expectations of children's potential, children themselves will have low expectations of the Church's potential for them" (Archbishops' Council, 2003, p.4). Whilst educators, whether Christian or otherwise, would always seek to enable their pupils to reach their full potential, the apparent lack, in this instant, of a clear Christian theology underpinning the Church's thinking on educational matters would seem to place the Church in danger of aligning herself with the very utilitarian, economically driven and narrow test orientated forces that the Christian belief in the uniqueness and value of each individual contradicts. It would therefore seem highly desirable that further theological research, this thesis being one example, will provide the scope to consider education in a Christological context, given Jesus Christ's impact on the world and the value of each individual child to the God who created them.

For Jesus, the child was a sign of the Kingdom of God. Anyone who wants to share in the values taught by Jesus must welcome and respect the small and weak, as much, or even more, than the great and

strong. Within the small and vulnerable child is Jesus and behind him is *'the one who sent me'* (Mark 9:36-37) (The Mission and Public Affairs Council, 2005, p.6).

This report highlights the important part that church schools play in children's lives given that so many families no longer have contact with the Church in the context of attending Sunday worship. For many pupils and their families the church school is the church, and attending a church school could be their only experience of being part of a Christian community. My thesis supports this notion of the church school as a Christian community of hope underpinned by a theological understanding of the relevance of the resurrection in an educational context.

2.2.3 Going for Growth (Archbishops' Council, 2010)

This report called for the Church to take seriously the larger context of its universal mission. It put forward a theological understanding for the role of the Church in Christian education by providing essential guiding principles to be grasped. Although written primarily to provide an insight into the Church's ministry with and among children in a church context, the report *Going for Growth* (Archbishops' Council, 2010) provided a great deal of theological insight that can also be applied to the Christian educational setting of a Church school. By engaging with children and young people, the Church can fulfil the requirement to engage with God's on-going mission here on Earth. The following is a précis of the three important theological and guiding principles presented in the report as lying at the heart of Christian education whether in a Church or Church school setting:

- Principle 1: *The absolute value of every child and young person*: The recognition that each individual child is made and created in the image of God and called to grow into God's likeness. This understanding leads to an acknowledgement that every child is precious in the sight of God. Christians are called to accompany children of all faiths and none, in their search for self-identity, recognizing that this may not always result in becoming followers of Christianity. This should be reflected in all

contexts, including that of a church school, and should not be limited to those within the Church (p.8).

- Principle 2: *The importance of relationship with God, other human beings and the created order*: God calls individuals and communities into relationship with Him and each other. This relationship is exemplified in the mystery of the Trinity – one God in three persons, a relationship held together by love. Frequently relationships become broken but through the redemptive power of the cross there is “hope of forgiveness, welcome, restoration and new beginnings.” This thesis clearly identifies hope as a positive outcome of resurrection and provides a theological understanding of the nature of education as a hopeful activity. This theological understanding opens up the potential for others to experience a relational encounter with God, though always with the proviso that each individual is free to choose whether to engage or not (pp.8-9).
- Principle 3: *The establishment of the kingdom of God here on earth*: “We are called to work towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth and our engagement with children and young people must reflect the values of the Kingdom. We must have the willingness to critique the values we hold, and the confidence to make changes” (p.9).

In applying this “emergent theology grounded in the proclamation of a Gospel rooted in the ontological reality of the Trinitarian God” A. Wright suggests that the missionary task of the Church outside its own context is twofold as follows:

First, to bring persons into an encounter with God – in a manner that is open, honest and respects their freedom – and teach, baptise and nurture Christian converts; second to work for the common good by responding to human need, challenging oppression and injustice, and caring for the environment (A. Wright, 2013b, pp.197-198)

2.2.4 The Church School of the Future Review (Archbishops’ Council, 2012)

At the time of its publication *The Church School of the Future Review* (Archbishops' Council, 2012), also known as *The Chadwick Report*, was thought to have the potential to impact positively on Church school education for the next decade. Primarily the review was set up by the National Society and the Church of England's Board of Education to examine four broad areas: challenges facing the Church school system in the future; the defining characteristics of a Church school; how the Church family might develop and grow; how Church schools should be supported at diocesan and national levels. These were designed to give Church schools strategies to enable them to respond to the recent changes in education that included amongst others: the demise of Local Authority control; the drive for schools to convert to academies following the 2010 Academies Act; a new national curriculum and; the introduction of an English Baccalaureate from which Religious Education was excluded. Many teaching professionals expressed concerns over the fragmentary nature of the changes, the speed with which they occurred and the lack of an underpinning educational philosophy to bind the changes together.

The Bishop of Oxford in a speech delivered to the General Synod of the Church of England in July 2012, spoke of the need for the Church to realise that it had much to offer:

In an age of creeping scepticism about religion we know we have the Greatest Story Ever Lived, one with never-ending relevance to every human life. So we need to make sure our schools are so rooted in the Great Story, so distinctively Christian in beliefs, values and behaviour, that people will be thrilled and challenged by what they see (Bishop of Oxford, July 2012, p.5).

The purpose of this thesis is therefore to explore whether, in the midst of this turmoil in state sector education, there might be a unifying theological vision for Christian education that could inform the academic and communal life of a Church school.

At the heart of *The Church School of the Future Review* (Archbishops' Council, 2012) lies the belief that Church schools offer a distinctive provision that should not be compromised or diluted as a result of changes to the education system in this country. This distinctiveness requires a commitment to placing faith, spiritual development and the Christian ethos at the heart of every aspect of school life. Included in this is the delivery of high quality Religious Education, along with the drive for excellence and high standards. Where there is parental demand, Church schools should also continue to be expanded (Archbishops' Council, 2012, p.3).

Chapter three of the Review focuses on what it means to be a Church School and highlights many key elements that make up their distinctive Christian identity. Three aspects identified for further development are pivotal for this thesis that seeks to offer a positive response:

3.11 Survey respondents called for the Christian foundation to be seen to be having an influence on the whole curriculum. Repeatedly, they expressed a conviction that the Church of England system provides an alternative philosophy of education in a context where economic concerns seem to be driving educational priorities (Archbishops' Council, 2012, p.17).

3.12 The importance of clearly ascribed Christian values and their outworking in the life of schools is widely accepted. Many respondents to the survey referred to this as a key marker of the distinctive character of Church schools (Archbishops' Council, 2012, p.17).

3.13 The National Society began some thinking about how the whole curriculum might be shaped by the Christian foundation. This took the discussion

beyond values and ethos into questions about the nature and purpose of education. The underlying assumptions behind curriculum content and delivery should be examined in the light of Christian theology. Many respondents were passionate about remaining committed to a bold and broad view of education in the face of what they saw as a utilitarian, economically driven, narrow test-orientated system (Archbishops' Council, 2012, p.17) (Italics mine).

This third area highlighted for future development in the *Chadwick Report* (Archbishops' Council, 2012) is the main focus that this research is proposing to address. The key sentence in this area is the proposal that: "The underlying assumptions behind curriculum content and delivery should be examined in the light of Christian theology." The background for this recommendation is that it represents the further work to be carried out on how the Church school ethos might pervade the whole curriculum, and not be confined to Religious Education and collective worship. Although it is not possible to change the curriculum that is taught, as it is a statutory requirement (Department for Education, 2014), there is the potential for theology to influence positively the overarching purpose of education. This thesis puts forward the notion of the church school existing as a community of hope. This informs the purpose of education in order that the school community as a whole are equipped to experience life in all its fullness. Whilst the answers may not be straightforward or clear-cut, the possibility of establishing a link between educational principles based on a theological rationale is a realistic aspiration. Disappointingly, the follow up recommendations that came out of this area for development did not explicitly mention the need for any assumptions to be examined in the light of Christian theology. Therefore, this is where I anticipate that my research will make a contribution, through exploring the relationship between theology and Christian education.

In July 2013 the National Society published an *Implementation Report* (Archbishops' Council, 2013) to outline the progress that had been

made following the recommendations of *The Church School of the Future Review* (Archbishops' Council, 2012) and to highlight some of the challenges that still remained. The wording of the recommendation states that: "The National Society must work with educationalists and schools to model a school curriculum that includes implications for pedagogy, curriculum content and school organisation" (Archbishops' Council, 2013, p.4). Action taken at this point includes: practitioner and researcher workshops at Church universities that aimed to explore and help develop the distinctive nature of the curriculum in Church of England Schools; analysis of material including background, learners and learning, spirit and ethos, teaching, teachers, governance and participation, and excellence for all (Archbishops' Council, 2013, p.5). However, there appears to be no specific reference in the document that any of the above have been examined specifically in the light of, or underpinned by, Christian theology.

It would appear that this unheard cry for a Christian theological underpinning of education is not a new phenomenon. In a Green Paper *A Future in Partnership* published by the National Society in 1984 the point was made that:

It seems strange that education, a process which helps to shape the vision humans can have of a particular cultural world and which indicates how personal and communal fulfilment with a particular society might be achieved, has aroused relatively little interest among theologians. In spite of the vigorous contributions that have been made since the 1870's to validate the contribution of the Church of England to the education service of the nation through its schools, there has been little written within the vision of faith as articulated in theology. Arguments in favour are often framed as responses to those who argue against it (National Society, 1984, p60).

A Future in Partnership (National Society, 1984) outlined a

Trinitarian basis for education in Church of England Schools. In response, the theologian, educator and writer John Hull, who went on to become Emeritus Professor of Religious Education at the University of Birmingham, suggested that this Trinitarian model which he described as “the Trinitarian mission of Christian education” supported the delivery of an education that could meet the social and educational needs of all children (Hull, 1994, pp.21-22). Commenting on Hull’s lecture, Brown suggests that:

Hull’s words are a continuous challenge to the Church of England’s Board of Education and the National Society to express its educational mission in clear theological terms and to present headteachers with a clear and accessible theology (Brown, 2015, p.157).

A Future in Partnership (National Society, 1984) further highlighted that the difficulty for a Church school, set within the maintained sector of education, lay in translating the theological vision once formulated into educational practice. However, theological reflection applied to education as a particular social activity could result in the modification of its very objectives, direction, methods and content. Written at a time of increasing political pragmatism and utilitarianism, *A Future in Partnership* (National Society, 1984) warned against the prevailing relativism engulfing the pluralist society of the day. “Perhaps there is a particular challenge to the Christian in education to express the process of learning as a gradual realisation of human potential and so be prepared to criticise what is mean, narrowing or restrictively utilitarian” (National Society, 1984, p.70). It identifies that the crux of the issue lies in answering the question of how theological models which interpret God’s revelation as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, relate to the activities of a school (National Society, 1984, p.66). Although this is an important question, my theological focus is on resurrection rather than the Trinitarian nature of God. The notion of seeing the learning process as a gradual realisation of the human potential resonates with the view that education is about equipping learners to experience life in all its fullness. This thesis shows Christian hope is an

outcome of the resurrection. In an educational context this can underpin the narrative of the school community's corporate life. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

2.2.5 Making a Difference? A Review of Religious Education in Church of England Schools (Archbishops' Council, 2014)

This in-depth review was carried out as a result of the findings of *The Church School of the Future Review* (Archbishops' Council, 2012), which expressed concerns about the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education. I have stated that in seeking to make the link between theology and a vision for Christian education, this research addresses assumptions underpinning the educational experience in a Church school and not just Religious Education.

The *Making a Difference Review* (Archbishops' Council, 2014) also provides further contextual background for my research in terms of the recommendations that came out of the findings. As my experience in education is at primary level, it was interesting to note that whilst secondary schools presented a very positive picture, the situation in primaries was very variable. Although there was a strong commitment to teaching Religious Education in primary schools this did not translate into exemplary practice, particularly in the teaching of Christianity. Interestingly, the findings matched Ofsted's 2013 report: *Religious Education: Realising the Potential*, though the sample sizes varied considerably making a valid comparison problematic. Ofsted's report noted that: "Religious Education teaching often fails to challenge and extend pupils' ability to explore fundamental questions about human life, religion and belief" Ofsted (2013, p.4). Similarly, one of four key areas identified for improvement in the Church of England's *Making a Difference Report* Archbishops' Council (2014, p.7) required that: "Greater emphasis should be placed on thinking theologically and the art of theological enquiry as a distinctive Anglican contribution to the improvement of Religious Education nationally." In response to the requirement in the *Chadwick Report* (Archbishops' Council, 2012) that standards of teaching and learning in Christianity should be raised, the National Society launched *Understanding Christianity* (Church of England

Education Office, 2016d) which will also seek to address many of the issues raised in the review of Religious Education. This resource is structured around key theological concepts at the heart of Christianity, and is designed to support theological enquiry (Church of England Education Office, 2016d, p.3). It is too early to judge whether this resource is able to deliver sustained improvement in developing skills of theological enquiry in children and teaching staff delivering the programme over time.

2.2.6 The Fruits of the Spirit: A Church of England Discussion Paper on Character Education (Church of England Education Office, 2015b)

Aimed at school and church leaders this discussion paper proposes ways in which the Church can add its voice to national conversations about the place of character education in schools. As part of the government's strategy to counter radicalisation, schools currently have a statutory duty to promote 'fundamental British values'. Government guidance suggests that this is best achieved through spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (Department for Education, 2014). This discussion paper links with assertions set out in *The Way Ahead* (Archbishops' Council, 2001) and *The Church School of the Future Review* (Archbishops' Council, 2012) by reinforcing the commitment of the Church to provide an education with the potential for the development of human wholeness. "Within the concept of a full and flourishing life, the Church of England seeks to provide all young people with the opportunity to have a life-enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ" (Church of England Education Office, 2015b, p.5).

Within any school community character education is delivered in the explicit formal teaching that takes place and implicitly through the culture, practices and relationships within the school context. The discussion paper suggests that character and virtues fall into three different categories linked to civic, moral and performance character virtues. It is interesting to note that hope does not feature in any of the examples of character or virtues given. This is not surprising as hope does not feature in the fruits of the spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-3. However, character education is more than

simply a tick list. Context, community and culture influence character development. Elbourne notes that:

Schools are contexts in which civic virtues are discovered and practiced; in a church school, they are rooted in the Christian ideal of love and the Kingdom of God and the rediscovery of the common life (Elbourne, 2013, p.251).

If character and virtues grow through being part of a community then the expression and experience of the ethos and culture of that community will be highly influential in developing particular behaviours. This links with my research in recognising that certain character traits will be developed through the church school living out its daily life as a community of hope. My research also offers a fresh perspective on character education through advocating hope as a character trait that is worth pursuing as it benefits responsible citizenship as well as supporting moral and performance virtues.

2.2.7 Church of England Vision for Education (Church of England Education Office, 2016b)

The need for a theological response by the Church of England to the current situation in education has been answered more recently by the publication of the *Church of England's Vision for Education* (Church of England Education Office, 2016b). It is designed to equip leaders of church schools in their delivery of an inclusive and aspirational approach to educating for Wisdom, Hope, Community and Dignity. One has to look back over thirty years to the publication of *A Future in Partnership* (National Society, 1984) to find a theologically informed articulation of the Church of England's vision for church schools. This document sets out to articulate a vision rooted in the Bible, the tradition of Christian faith and practice, and seeks to fulfil the Church's calling to serve all members of society. Four basic elements underpin this vision expressed in the strapline: 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good'. These are: Wisdom, Hope, Community and Dignity (Church of England, 2016b, p.3). Together they are described as forming an ecology of the fullness of life referred to by Jesus in St. John's Gospel: "I have come so that they may have life and have it to the

full (10:10). This encompasses not just academic achievement and attainment but recognises the importance of physical development as well as spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth for each individual. The four themes incorporate other elements, which contribute to a Christian vision for education aimed at achieving fullness of life from an educational perspective inspired by Christian tradition, faith and practice. These are:

- Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills: Reference is made to the wisdom literature of the Bible as an exemplar of wise education in its fullest sense rather than limiting it to a purely religious context. Similarly Jesus' offer of 'life in all its fullness' mentioned earlier was a universal offer to all people and not just to those who were His friends or disciples. In educational settings this is demonstrated through the development of positive attitudes to learning and the acquisition of skills across a broad and balanced curriculum. It is about building a type of character that is able to be 'mutually hospitable' and accepting of difference and diversity without it leading to conflict and alienation (Church of England, 2016b, p.13).
- Educating for Hope and Aspiration: Reference is made to the Christian hope in God's future for the world as well as His love and compassion for all people expressed in the Bible and ultimately through the life of Jesus Christ. In schools this is shown through the potential for education to expand horizons of hope and aspiration whilst at the same time supporting children when things go wrong in their lives or the lives of their family (Church of England, 2016b, p. 15).
- Educating for Community and Living Well Together: Reference is made to the quality of Jesus' relationships and the community that He formed. In addition His teaching about love of God and neighbour form a vision of life as part of an inclusive and loving family with God at the heart. Every school is a community in itself but it is also set within a wider community. Therefore everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the wellbeing of every member of that community (Church of England, 2016b, pp.16-18).
- Educating for Dignity and Respect: The knowledge that every human

being is created in the image of God and loved by Him underpins this element of the vision. This theological understanding is profoundly expressed in the life, teaching and example of Jesus. His special care for the poor, the lost, the disadvantaged and the outcast demonstrate the worth of every person in the sight of God. 'Fullness of life' includes many other elements apart from dignity and respect that are the right of every individual. These include: blessing, creativity, joy, reconciliation and glory. Educational settings therefore need to be places where the vulnerable and disadvantaged are provided with all the resources and support they need to achieve well, realise their potential and flourish as human beings. Vigilant safeguarding is referred to as being of prime importance in ensuring the dignity and respect for every individual (Church of England, 2016b, p.18-20).

Although one of the themes highlights the vocation of the Church to serve the wellbeing of the whole community through the quality of its relationships there is no explicit reference to the Trinitarian nature of God as informing the 'Christian inspiration' behind the vision. Whilst this is a difficult area of Christian theology, it is an aspect of the Godhead that could offer further insight into the experience of community. The Trinity as a community of 3 divine persons united in mutual love and dwelling in each other is a model for the quality of the relationships present among members of a human community, which can inform the way in which the community functions as a body of people.

The overarching vision for education put forward by the Church of England is described as 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good'. As the established Church the vision re-articulates the Church of England's mission to work for the 'common good' of the whole of society. Without the 'thoroughly Christian' foundations, this model of education could be interpreted as simply seeking to bring harmony to an increasingly diverse and potentially unstable society. This is one of the main foci of liberal education as highlighted by A. Wright:

At the heart of liberal education is a concern for the harmonious wellbeing of society. If an open and

plural society is to flourish then education must produce the next generation of citizens capable of contributing altruistically to the 'common good'. This requires a basic education oriented towards the cultivation of a virtuous character, supplemented by a more specific commitment to the vocationally driven transmission of knowledge and skills. The Enlightenment ideal of individuals thinking for themselves is thus recast as the liberal ideal of individuals thinking for themselves within the confines and constraints of a non-negotiable liberal order. Hence, despite the rhetoric of freedom and the insistence that pupils must be taught to take responsibility for their own lives, the failure to equip children to engage intellectually in the pursuit of knowledge orientated towards fundamental questions of ultimate truth reveals liberal education to be inherently conservative, grounded in the task of inducting pupils into the prevailing norms of a liberal culture (A. Wright, 2004, p.136).

Members of the theological reference group involved in developing the *Church of England Vision for Education* Church of England Education Office (2016b, p.3) recognise that their vision is not meant to be the final word on the Church's vision for education. However, it is a useful starting point for consideration of how Church schools might fulfil their calling to "enable every child to flourish in their potential as a child of God." This thesis contributes to the current discussion around the underlying Christian principles informing the educational vision for Church of England primary schools. Biblically informed outcomes in my research indicate "Hope" and "Community" as key themes and aspirations for a Church school vision similar to that of the *Church of England Vision for Education*. This synergy between the two visions is interesting as it implies consistency of Biblical interpretation. Of equal importance, are the differences in outcome demonstrating the openness of contextual theology and in particular the

praxis model to be applied to different educational contexts. The vision in my research includes a strong emphasis on “Love in Action” and “Peace” in contrast to the *Church of England Vision for Education* favouring Wisdom and Dignity. A theologically informed Christian vision for education does not have a predetermined outcome and it is this that makes it fit for purpose.

2.2.8 Rooted in the Church Summary Report (Church of England Education Office, 2016c)

This report is the summary of research carried out to explore the relationship between the Church of England and young people. It is aimed at discovering their views on what is important to them about Church membership and what causes them to become disengaged from it. From a Church school perspective one of the important conclusions in the report is the suggestion that: “Churches should be encouraged to explore the possibility of admitting baptised children to Communion before Confirmation” (Church of England Education Office, 2016c, p.3). Whilst this might not be considered appropriate to some traditionalists within the Anglo Catholic wing of the Church due to their particular theological stance and strong sacramental focus, for others this might open up the possibility of including primary aged children in a school Eucharist. From a theological perspective this could broaden children’s experience and perception of the meaning and relevance of the Eucharist in their own lives from an early age. It could also serve to create a meaningful and tangible link between Church and Church school through including younger children in this sacramental liturgy. The importance of a theological basis for young people’s Church attendance speaks to the focus of this research in terms of looking to theology as the *raison d’être* for Christian education within the setting of a Church school. The communal life of a Church school has the potential to be similarly strengthened and invigorated by sound theological principles that explicitly underpin its corporate life and identity.

This report links closely with the findings of my research in the way it supports the concept of the school community being in communion with one another and with God. Celebrating a regular School Eucharist creates time and space to explore more deeply, in a theological and spiritual sense,

the whole concept of being in communion with each other and God as part of a shared and collective existence.

2.3 Christian Education and Theology

The educational context for this thesis is specifically Church of England Primary Schools. At this point I will consider a range of literature expressing different viewpoints about Christian education in general before stating my rationale for Christian education.

2.3.1 Christian Education

Theologians and educationalists alike interpret the term ‘Christian education’ from a range of contextual viewpoints. Some apply it to their writing about Christian nurture within the context of a Church: (Day, 1992; Martin, 1994; Estep, Anthony and Allison, 2008). Groome (1980) uses the term synonymously in connection with Religious Education. At other times it is applied interchangeably to both Church and school settings: (Hull, 1984; Astley, 1994; Smith & Shortt, 2002; Seymour, 2010). Finally, there are those writers who use ‘Christian education’ within the context of Church School education as a whole: (Smith & Smith, 2011; Cooling, 2013; A. Wright, 2013a and 2013b). It is important to be aware of these differing contexts to which the term is applied. However, it is also interesting to note that when he was Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams described a Church school as a ‘kind of Church’ (Astley, 2002). This is a useful interpretation to draw upon, as there is the suggestion that the two contexts of Church and school have aspects of commonality and this opens up the possibility for the interchange of insight from one context to another. Drawing on my experience within Christian ministry and primary school headship, I saw my role as a Christian educator to translate Christian practice into Christian pedagogy (Northing, 2015, p.174).

My research interprets ‘Christian education’ as the educational experience that takes place within the context of a Church school as a whole. However, I am aware that even this understanding of Christian education can be expressed in a range of ways, though within each there does appear to be a similar focus on character formation as the intended

outcome as can be seen in the following examples. The National Society highlights the potential for the distinctive Christian ethos found in Church of England schools to encompass the whole curriculum and not to be confined to Religious Education and collective worship. “For Christian education is explicit both about the values that underpin it and the beliefs that give rise to those values; namely the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ” (Archbishops’ Council, 2008, p.3). The Archbishop of Canterbury suggests that:

A Christian institution is not necessarily one where everyone is drawn into the same patterns of the moral life or discipline, but it is one where people are constantly being exposed to the challenge of living in such a way that justice and mercy and mutuality become visible (Archbishops’ Council, 2009, p2).

Similarly, Smith brings out the concept of formation in his interpretation of the purpose of ‘Christian education’:

Christian education is not just about the communication and dissemination of Christian content but the formation of a people who are defined by a certain set of desires or passions which are themselves defined by a certain *telos* [purpose] – namely the shape of the coming kingdom (Smith, 2011, p.140).

Another expression of ‘Christian education’ involves the use of phrases such as: *distinctively Christian*; *distinctive Christian character* and *distinctively Christian values* which feature in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools evaluation schedule (National Society, 2013). Commenting on the notion of *distinctiveness*, Elbourne (2013, p.246) suggests that this is often interpreted as meaning ‘different’, so limiting the possibility for more in-depth thinking and consideration about what should lie at the heart of the school’s Christian identity. *What If Learning* seeks to

offer a classroom pedagogical approach that focuses on character development in a way that is distinctively Christian (Cooling, 2013).

It makes sense for schools that claim to be distinctively Christian to imagine a future where their pupils manifest distinctively Christian strength of character and for the school to seek to develop that in all that it undertakes, particularly, teaching and learning which is the core activity for education (Cooling, 2013, pp.183-4).

One notable opponent of ‘Christian education’ was the educationalist Paul Hirst (1972), who believed that a Biblical or Christian view of education was not possible for a number of reasons: firstly, he believed that education is underpinned by objective and therefore rational principles that are completely independent of Christian or theological ideals; secondly, that education is an autonomous and *sophisticated* concept, and does not involve any *primitive* presuppositions of a religious character; and thirdly, that the Church has no place in secular education, needing to be clear about the difference between education and catechesis. As far as Hirst was concerned, when the Church was involved in catechesis it should accept that it was not engaging in *education* Hirst (1981). In effect, Hirst was seeking to limit the influence of theology on educational practice. A point made by Francis (1983, p.150) when commenting on Hirst’s viewpoint: “While theologians may contribute to the theory and practice of catechesis, they are firmly excluded from being allowed a contribution to the theory and activity of education.” In commenting further on Hirst’s views, Cooling concludes that:

It is fine, in sophisticated education, to teach about religion because pupils need to know and understand people’s religious beliefs and practices. RE [religious education] is therefore a worthy subject, helping pupils to understand beliefs and to make their own autonomous choices. However, what is not legitimate is to make religious belief the basis of

an educational ethos or to permit religion to have a shaping influence on the curriculum. This would be to allow religion to reach beyond its rightful remit (Cooling, 2010, p.17).

Adopting a similarly autonomous and objective view of education to that of Hirst are Humanists, who argue for an inclusive school system motivated by their concern for, ‘the common good and social cohesion’, (British Humanist Association, 2017). From a Humanist’s perspective, faith schools by their very nature fail to deliver a purely secular, objective and therefore neutral education which Humanists believe is necessary to prepare children for life in a pluralist society. Responding to this Cooling makes the point that:

Religious faith is too important an influence in human life to be ignored in education. To treat it as a problem that is only studied in RE [religious education] is to assume that secularism is the only worldview that has the potential to be social glue in a diverse society. That is not an inclusive or fair approach, nor is it wise, if the religiously diverse society that Britain is now is to flourish (Cooling, 2010, p.66).

There will always be critics of faith schools who consider that a more autonomous, neutral, non-religious stance, offers a more objective perspective on life (White, 1990; Callan, 1997; Short, 2002; Walford, 2003). Yet education is at its heart replete with beliefs and values and it is important to acknowledge that the very process of being educated places the learner in an environment that can never be totally value free, for learning does not take place in a vacuum. Ameen & Hassan (2013) explore the perception that faith schools are predisposed to indoctrinate rather than to foster autonomy. They suggest that liberal education’s quest for truth, or rather an individual’s perception of truth, is driven by constant doubt. They cite Peters (1965) who argues that the educational criterion should be “that something of value should be passed on.” Therefore they ask the question:

“How does one care and commit oneself to truth when an inculcated and overriding sense of doubt prevents one from accepting truth even if one should happen to perceive it?” (Ameen & Hassan, 2013, p.14). Those whose job it is to educate will implicitly impart something of their own attitudes and values to the learner. It could be argued that children attending a non-faith school are also being indoctrinated, but into a secular way of thinking. Copley makes a similar point in stating that:

A child from a home in which religion and God are never mentioned and encountering a curriculum in which they do not occur, except perhaps *en passant* in history lessons, may not only have no belief in God, but may view the entire question of God as unnecessary and irrelevant, even incomprehensible. How much ‘choice’ has such a child had in forming this view? (Copley, 2005, p.5)

My stance on Christian education expressed in this thesis demands that the values underpinning the educational experience in a Church school should be as transparent as possible. Although this may be difficult to put into practice the Church school should be clear and explicit about the Christian vision, ethos and values that underpin its communal life. I use as an example the Mission Statement from the website of *All Saints Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School* in Wellingborough: “With Jesus as our guide we will inspire a passion for learning, high aspirations, and respect for all.” This is a bold and clear statement about the mission of the school and the principles underlying it. It is vital that the Church School is a place where the whole curriculum and educational experience is driven by its Christian vision because the majority of children attending it are unlikely to attend Church with their families on Sundays. The Church school is therefore the only experience that most children will have of a lived Christianity. I would reasonably suggest that far from limiting children’s understanding of life’s options by providing a ‘neutral’ state form of education that is devoid of religion, a Church school education potentially

offers children a broader experience of life, leading to a more informed consideration of life's options.

2.3.2 Theology and Education

This thesis seeks to explore and establish a link between theology and education. I will now review a range of perspectives from theologians, educators and writers who have similarly sought to express a link between theology and education. As with the term 'Christian education', there is diversity of contextual interpretation and application attached to theology and education. As previously stated, the focus of this research is directed towards Christian education within the context of a Church of England primary school. Brown (2015, pp.156-7) suggests that it is the theological, as well as the educational response to the Anglican concerns for all children that is the fundamental distinction between a Church school and a Community School. This comes across clearly in the *Church of England's Vision for Education* (Church of England Education Office, 2016b) with its strapline of *Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*. Church schools exist for the good of all children in society whatever their religion or background, but Community Schools would state the same. This strongly indicates to me that the difference lies in the theology that underpins and drives the educational experience of pupils attending a Church school. Dr Rowan Williams when he was Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of this in an introductory video on the Church of England school values website:

A Christian school is one in which the atmosphere has that kind of openness about it, that sense that people are worth spending time with, that people need time to grow, need loving attention. The Christian Gospel says that every person has a unique task to do, with God, and for God, whether they know it or not. It doesn't necessarily mean that everyone involved has to share the same theology or philosophy. It doesn't mean that everyone knows that they have this relationship with God, and is consciously working at it. But a Christian school is

one in which the entire atmosphere is pervaded by a conviction that there is something mysterious, and potentially wonderful, in everybody (Williams, 2009).

In addition to the setting of a Church school, some consideration of other contexts is relevant in further informing the outcomes of the research. I will explore a range of viewpoints demonstrating that it can be difficult to apply theology to contexts outside of the Church. This blending of contexts within a theology of education is expressed by Hull:

Its work and the problems it encounters fall within the attempt of theology to apply itself to areas which lie mainly beyond the community of faith. Some of its concerns will, however, be related to the attempt of theology to apply itself within the community of faith, and here we would find catechetical and religious nurture (Hull, 1984, p257).

Most writers appear to see the relationship between the theology and education as one of dialogue and mutuality: (Groome, 1980; Hull, 1984; Francis, 1983 and 1990; Heywood, 1992; Estep, Anthony and Allison, 2008; Seymour, 2010; A. Wright, 2013b). Although primarily commenting on the Church as the setting for Christian education, Seymour (2010, p. 279) states his belief that: 'Theology and education are united – theology is in partnership with education considering the power and insights of the Christian tradition, educational research, and social analysis.' Seymour uses Moore's (1984) practical theology of education to explain what is involved in being what he describes as a 'theologian of education':

- 1) Recovering historical metaphors and paradigms of guidance and formation that can be reimagined in some helpful way today;
- 2) Reflecting on education theologically in the context of a global society and all the human, political, and social realities that involves (Moore, 1984, p.28).

As I have previously discussed, Hirst (1972 and 1981) adopts the stance that there is no place for Christian theology in education (see pp.38-9). It is evident that a number of theologians and educationalists have felt it appropriate to respond to Hirst's arguments in defending the connections between Christian theology and education: (Francis, 1983 and 1990; Hull, 1984; Phillips, 1994; and Cooling, 2010). In his response to Hirst, Hull highlights five possible connections between Christian theology and education:

- 1) Christian theology might be necessary and sufficient for an understanding of education.
- 2) Christian theology might provide a necessary but not sufficient understanding of education.
- 3) Christian theology might provide a sufficient but not necessary understanding of education.
- 4) Christian theology might provide a possible and legitimate understanding of education, but one which is neither sufficient nor necessary.
- 5) Christian theology might be impossible and illegitimate as a way of understanding education. It would have no contribution to offer (Hull, 1984, p.231).

For Hirst, the last position is the only legitimate option, whereas Hull (1984, p.261), maintains that: "the aim of any theology of education must be to show that theology can provide a legitimate and possible source of understanding for education, but not a necessary one." Cooling (1994, p.53) gives the example of Jesus' teaching methods to illustrate theological support for education's rejection of indoctrination. Hull recognises the autonomous nature of education but maintains that this does not mean that it is unreasonable for theology to comment. He suggests that theology could play a legitimate and *illuminating* role in supporting educational concepts Hull (1994, p.323). Hull maintains that it is inappropriate for theology to have an *adjudicating* role in which education because of the secular nature of education (Hull, 1994, p.323). His basis for this is that a genuine

theological scrutiny of education must clearly state both its aims and limitations. Theology cannot claim to have exclusivity over education, for this would deny access to everyone other than religious believers. At the same time theology has a right to influence education in such a way that the integrity of education as a “secular sphere of human expertise is secured, but it is made clear that such secularity does not carry with it immunity from criticism from other forms of life such as religion” (Hull, 1984, p.261). However, I suggest that a Christian educationalist may choose Christian theology as their *raison d’être* to inform their practice. So, in addition to offering a “possible and legitimate” contribution to education as Hull suggests, I would suggest that for the individual practitioner who is a worshipping Christian, theology assumes much greater importance. In fact it becomes for them “necessary and sufficient” for an understanding of education as it supports their worldview (Brown, 2015, p.156).

Finally, there are also those who maintain the priority of theology over education. For example, Miller (1950, p.5) quoted by Heywood (1992, p.150), asserts that Christian education is primarily a theological discipline:

The centre of the curriculum is a two-fold relationship between God and the learner. The curriculum is both God centred and experience centred. Theology must be prior to the curriculum!
Theology is ‘truth-about-God-in relation-to man.

He goes on to outline the requirement that any theology of education should take into account the educational and historical context of the Church school, the current climate of educational debate, and empirical research data concerning the functioning of Church schools. Although the Church school agenda has moved on since the start of the new millennium, these remain relevant areas for consideration when formulating a theology of education in the present age.

In conclusion, it does appear that the responses to Hirst have provided very useful reflections on the relationship between theology and education. However, they do not appear to have been the catalyst for a

sustained theological engagement with education over the last twenty-five years resulting in a subsequent practical theology of education. One reason for this could be that the field of Christian educationalists wishing to engage theologically with education is relatively small in comparison to educationalists per se, whose worldview would not necessarily be expressed in these terms, nor would they be motivated to articulate a theology of education. From a theological perspective it could be that theologians in general do not recognise Christian education as an area of interest requiring theological reflection. Articulating this dichotomy between theologians and educationalists, Francis states that:

For the theology of education to be taken seriously, theologians need to be convinced that the subject matter of education is worthy of theological scrutiny and educationalists need to be convinced that the methods of theology are worthy of serious consideration within the educational arena (Francis, 1990, p.349).

It would seem to me that in order for theology and education to forge a mutually beneficial partnership there is the need for Christian educators to see themselves as ‘theologians of education’, to use Moore’s description (Moore, 1984, p.28).

2.3.3 Theology and Sociology

I will now consider a further debate relevant to this study, which concerns the relationship between education, theology and sociology. Theology involves the critical study of the nature of God and humanity informing beliefs and actions. Sociology is concerned with empirical research about society, its institutions and values, which it uses to carry out conceptual analysis. Heywood (1992, p.103) suggests that the issue centres on which of the two disciplines, theology or social science, has the most dominant claim to express the norms for education in a religious context. He seeks to address the problem by looking at the relationship between theology and the social sciences.

Christian education is a religious undertaking, and as such needs to be informed by theology. Christian education is a form of education, which has its own body of theory, in which the social sciences play a major role. In Christian education, the practices of education and theology meet. Yet what is to be the relationship between them? Is Christian education simply a particular variety of education, or is it a branch of practical or pastoral theology? Which is to be the dominant or foundational ‘macro-theory’ for Christian education, theology or social science? (Heywood, 1992, p.99)

I think the answer to these questions, though not straightforward, lies in the fact that Church schools exist in a range of sociological contexts. Therefore, I do not believe that it is a question of theology or sociology, but rather one of establishing a clearly defined and mutually beneficial relationship between the two in order to provide a theologically informed educational rationale within a particular sociological context. Other writers argue for the priority of theology over sociology and vice versa. For example, Heywood (1992) cites Miller (1980) who maintains the priority of theology over the social sciences on the basis that it is theology which interprets experience, provides the primary content of Christian education and “an understanding of the learner as a person in a particular relationship with God which is the presupposition for Christian education” (Heywood, 1992, p.100). Similarly, Westerhoff comments on the manner in which theology also judges the methods of Christian education in recognising that “our theological presuppositions provide the screen for understanding both theory and practice” (Westerhoff, 1978b, p.285).

In its publication *A Future in Partnership*, the National Society (1984, p.21) indicates three imperative principles for educationalists underpinning their practice. These are also of great interest to the sociologist and the theologian. The first concerns the educationalist’s vision of the importance of each individual. The second concerns their vision of the kind of society that can be achieved through education and the third concerns

how that individual can be educated in such a way as to enable them to make a full contribution to that society. It suggests that theology has a major part to play in achieving the vision and creating that society. Interestingly, it also makes the point that theologians are not contributing to a Christian understanding of education:

Can theologians not reveal the power of the written and spoken word to illuminate the human predicament and be a touchstone of divine truths, and so be a force for reconciliation rather than self-interest? Cannot theologians' contribution to the understanding of knowledge and truth assist teachers and pupils to a mature appreciation of culture and the demands of rationally validated morality? Does not the presence of an articulated Christian theology in education create the space within which those of other faiths may test their contributions to and expectations of the education service? (National Society, 1984, p.28)

Offering a different perspective, and one that is critical of the theological approach, is the writer James Michael Lee (1973, p.58) quoted by Heywood (1992) who puts forward the view that "religion is learned according to the way the learner learns and not after the manner of its own existence." Lee (1973) is further quoted by Heywood in the way he appears to support the view that it is religion and not theology that is the authentic content of Christian education because "theology relates only to the cognitive sphere, religion embraces a person's whole life" (Heywood, 1992, p.101). I think that this viewpoint puts forward a rather compartmentalised view of the place of theological thinking in everyday life. It suggests that people can only be theologically informed by reading and reasoning. However, as we will explore in Chapter 3, contextual theology, and in particular the praxis model, recognises that people are formed theologically through action and service. Keane & May express this very well in stating, "Biblical theological education is not inert theology and unreflective action

but *praxis-laden theory* and *theory-laden praxis*” (Keane, P. & May, M., 1994, p.40).

Expressing a similar view to my own, Groome (1980) sees the relationship between theology and his praxis methodology as one of dialogue rather than dominance. He describes this mutuality in terms of the need for shared praxis to be informed by theology and theology to be informed by the shared praxis of the people:

The importance of the mutuality I am arguing for here can be highlighted further by a historical perspective on the present social arrangement in the Church between theology and Religious Education. It appears that in the early Church the ministry of *didaskaloi* (and it was an official ministry – see Acts 13:1; 1Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11) was both to know ‘sound doctrine’ (2 Tim. 4:3) and to teach it. In this sense the *didaskoloi* were both theologians and educators (Groome, 1980, p.229).

He suggests that over time the sociological and theological dimensions informing the practice of Christian education have gradually drifted further apart. This has resulted in a form of Christian education that is largely uninformed by theological thinking because theologians have abandoned their responsibility to either be Christian educators or to adequately support those who are.

In further support of my viewpoint that theology and sociology are mutually beneficial within the context of Christian education, Estep, Anthony and Allison (2008) comment on the dichotomy between the two and seek to resolve the dominance debate by putting forward a case for the beneficial integration of the two disciplines.

If Christian education is to preserve its Christian distinctiveness, then it must be a theological discipline; and if it is to be educational, it must be a social science discipline. It is through the thorough

integration of theology and the social sciences on a paradigmatic level that a consistently Christian theory of education will be achieved and the benefits of such a union realised (Estep, Anthony and Allison, 2008, p.41).

They suggest that applying the term ‘Christian’ to anything means that it must be theologically informed: “That is informed by Scripture, Christian tradition, and theology so as to reflect a distinctively Christian quality” Estep, Anthony and Allison (2008, p.25). However, this still leaves a number of questions to be answered. For example, at what point does education become Christian education? Does it become Christian by reference to the Bible in order to justify educational practice? Does the rejection of the social sciences lead to the unification of education and theology resulting in Christian education? Estep, Anthony and Allison (2008, p.32) suggest that: “the issue at hand is the quality of the integration shared between theology and the social sciences so as to formulate a distinctively Christian approach to education.” They propose that Christian education should serve as a ‘taxonomy’ for the integration of theology and the social sciences. They cite five levels of integration within Christian education, giving a practical application of each linked to the example of a student answering the question: *What is a Christian educator’s view of human development?* At the student’s disposal are two supporting documents: Paul’s Epistle to the Romans and Piaget’s *The Psychology of the Child* (1962).

Level 1 – Disintegration: At this level education is based purely on the social sciences with theology as an irrelevance to the subject of education. Education could not be considered Christian due to the absence of theology. Using Estep, Anthony and Allison’s example, in answering the question the student chooses Piaget and is completely unaware that Paul’s theology has anything to contribute to human development.

Level 2 – Segregation: At this level education is considered Christian because it is purely theological. There is a rejection of all that could be regarded as the secular influences of the social sciences considered

incompatible with theology. However, theology is so detached from the social sciences that it is difficult to distinguish it as education. Using their example, although the student is aware of Piaget's influence, he is rejected on the grounds that he is incompatible with Scripture.

Level 3 – Paradoxical: At this level education is Christian because it recognises the validity of both theology and the social sciences. However, there is no attempt to harmonise the two, thereby minimising the potential educational benefit. Using their example, in answering the question, the student uses both Paul and Piaget independently, so some parts are answered using Paul and others Piaget.

Level 4 – Synthetic: At this level education may be considered Christian because it provides a theological description of the social sciences. There is some integration of the two disciplines but theology is still seen as subsidiary to the social sciences. Using their example, the student uses both Paul and Piaget but favours Piaget's theory over Paul's theology. There is no significant engagement with Scripture other than a Biblical image or citation.

Level 5 – Paradigmatic: At this level education is Christian because theology and the social sciences are fully integrated in a Christian context. As such they validate one another's insights and influence on education. Using their example, the student answers the question using both Paul and Piaget simultaneously and this is reflected in their analysis and application (Estep, Anthony and Allison, 2008, pp.33-35).

In conclusion, the position that I am adopting within my research is that in order for education to be Christian it must be an integrated field of theology and the social sciences to become a theologically shaped sociological discipline. Christian educators need to ensure their practice is informed by theological principles so that they are theologians as well as educators.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

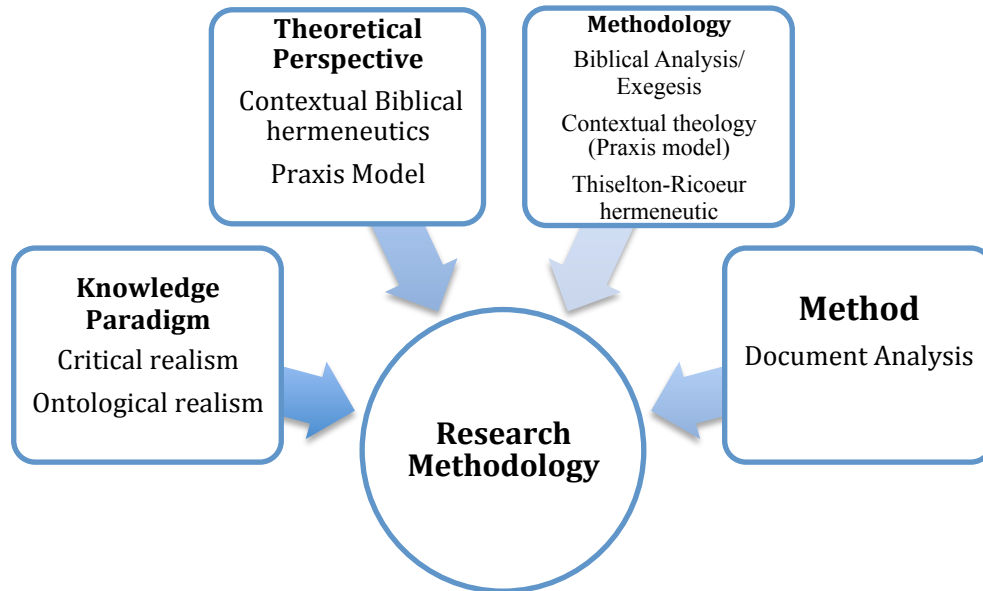


Figure 1: Research methodology

Figure 1 outlines the four elements that I have chosen to use in order to explore my research question. Working as a Christian in primary education, my intention is to use a theological paradigm to explore plausible links between the concept of resurrection as portrayed in the life of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of St. John and a vision for Christian education. There now follows a rationale for the methodology that I have selected and an outline of the particular manner in which each will be used.

3.1 Knowledge Paradigm

My worldview, praxis and response to ultimate questions concerning truth and reality are influenced primarily through my faith perspective and life experience. As a traditionalist Anglo Catholic I bring certain assumptions to my work, not least in the way I confess Jesus is Lord, recognise the authority of Scripture and acknowledge God as an objective reality. With these underpinnings in mind I have chosen to use a critical-realist epistemology with particular reference to A. Wright's (2013a) critical realist worldview hermeneutic. This also gives continuity to my own learning journey having been taught by Andrew Wright when studying for

an MA in Religious Education from 2000 to 2002 at Kings College, London. His writing outlines the need to discuss the “ontological substance and epistemic warrant of the Christian account of ultimate reality” in the light of their engagement with critical realism (A. Wright, 2013a, p.4). In addition, reference will also be made to the work of the conservative Biblical scholar N.T. Wright. In particular his book *The New Testament and The People of God* (1992), which advocates the use of ‘story’ to articulate a critical realist epistemology and worldview, which will support my quest to link the resurrection appearances to a Christian vision for education.

Although critical realism has had a relatively limited impact upon historiography in comparison to other fields such as natural science, sociology and theology, (A. Wright, 2013a, p.239), it is an appropriate epistemology for the purposes of this research. From a historical perspective it offers an alternative to the positivist historiography of ‘bare facts’ and that of the idealist ‘subjective interpretation’ through “the meaningful narrative of events and intentions” (N.T. Wright, 1992, p.82). This is an important consideration when interrogating a historical text like the Bible. N.T. Wright (1992, p.67) indicates that historical accuracy requires that there will be “appropriateness about potential meanings and an inappropriateness about others ... this is not a private game.” By this N.T. Wright means that any proposed new interpretation of a Biblical text must demonstrate at least some element of continuity with previously discerned historical meanings. In the case of a parable for example, this is a story originally told by Jesus that was then recorded by one of the Gospel writers. When we read it, the parable already has a history with layers of meaning and previous interpretations already attached to it. N.T. Wright suggests that:

We may believe that we can, again in principle, achieve some sort of historical accuracy in these readings the ‘meaning’ that the parable *continues to have* will in several respects remain open...the test for new proposed meanings will have to do with their demonstrable continuity with the historical meanings (N.T. Wright, 1992, p.67).

In applying this to first century Jewish and Christian religious narratives, N.T. Wright makes the point that there are two distinguishable types of stories. The first are representative and express a particular worldview without making reference to real events that actually happened. Within the context of the Bible the parables fall into this category. Contained in the second group are stories, which also represent and express a particular worldview but recount, more or less, what actually happened and which are recorded elsewhere as historical accounts. In Judaism books like 1 and 2 Maccabees, which record the history of the Jewish people in the first century BC, fall into this category. Within Christianity the issue is more complex with responsible Biblical interpretation drawing on a variety of possible analytical resources. Setting the resurrection of Jesus Christ within the second group of stories “only makes sense in a context of telling Israel’s story in the form of Jesus’ story” (N.T. Wright, 1992, p.400). However, while N.T. Wright’s focus is on promoting notions of the Kingdom of God through the Bible as an inspired and authoritative text, mine will be on promoting notions of resurrection with a particular focus on hope. We will now consider a brief overview of critical realism before focusing on N.T. Wright’s epistemological application of critical realism to Biblical interpretation.

Within critical realism the link to ontology is made clear because the first premise of critical realism is *ontological realism*, which maintains “the ontologically objective existence of reality, independent of our beliefs about it” (Archer *et al.*, 2004, p.1). In so doing, critical realism retrieves ontology from the *epistemic fallacy* of being totally assimilated into epistemology. While accepting that, in epistemological terms, totally objective knowledge is not possible, the *epistemic fallacy* goes further by inferring that ontologically there is also no objective view of the world. A critical realist view of the world by contrast asserts that there is such a thing as objective reality, which remains constant and unaffected by our beliefs about it. Objects can exist and events can happen in reality without us having any awareness of them, but that does not make them any less real. “Once the distinction between ontology and epistemology is established, it becomes possible to develop a rich account of the contours of reality” (A. Wright,

2013a, p.11). While advocates of critical realism: (Bhaskar 2008; McGrath 1999; Shipway 2011; A. Wright 2013a) stress that all knowledge is provisional and therefore open to revision, critical realism rejects claims that religious language is only useful in providing guidance and meaning for the believer. “Rather the words represent and refer to an objective and external reality that exists independent of human thought or our beliefs about it. The existence of God is a paradigm case” (Archer *et al.*, 2004, p.1). Although it is not possible to prove God exists, this does not mean that God is not real. In retaining the notion of ontological realism, critical realism accepts that it is not possible to attain a single correct understanding of the world that is totally independent and unbiased by any particular viewpoint.

The second premise of critical realism is that there is always a case for viewing the world with *judgemental rationality* (Archer *et al.*, 2004, p.2). This involves engaging in public discourse in order to focus on different truth claims before making reasonable yet provisional epistemological judgements about what is objectively real and what is not.

Accounts of reality are not all of equal value: it is possible to judge some to be more truthful than others. If this were not the case we would be faced with relativistic tyranny, prematurely imposing epistemic closure on the pursuit of truth, undermining the possibility of emancipatory praxis, and sounding the death-knell of intellectual debate (A. Wright, 2013a, p.15).

When truth claims appear to be convincingly strong, critical realists arrive at a point of *alethic truth*, a term used by Bhaskar (1996). One example of alethic truth is the law of gravity for example. Whilst it is not the aim of this research to prove the existence of God, it is worth noting at this point that the question of God’s existence is open to judgemental rationality. In outlining this aspect of a critical realist epistemology A. Wright (2013a, p.15) employs a critical hermeneutic of faith that is continually reviewing established beliefs and knowledge in order to refine and test them. In a

similar way Lonergan (1990, p.55) describes “the wisdom of discernment: be attentive; be intelligent; be reasonable and be responsible.”

Because critical realism is committed to ontological realism, it does not automatically follow that any interpretation is as good as another, a point mentioned earlier in connection to Biblical interpretation in particular, N.T. Wright (1992). Judgemental rationality determines that not all accounts of reality are equally valid. Theoretical structures can be helpful to pre-empt descriptions of the world that are inappropriately unreasonable and lacking in truth. Bhaskar’s (2008) ontological realism approach can bring a depth of meaning to the interpretation, leading to meaningful transformative practice. This Bhaskar presents in three levels. The first is the “empirical” layer, which is the most superficial, applying to everything that can be observed or experienced (the tree branches in Figure 2). The second is the “actual” level and applies to what is going on that may not be observed, but which is regulating the empirical (the tree trunk, obscured by wall, in Figure 2). The third and final layer is called the “*real*” and applies to that which underpins the ‘actual’ (the tree roots in Figure 2). These Bhaskar describes as “generative mechanisms” that contribute to our understanding of the actual but which cannot be fully explained. Instead, they are “tendencies” or causative agents. Similarly, critical realism views unobservable structures as real, on the grounds that their effects can be experienced or observed (Dyson and Brown, 2005, p.38).

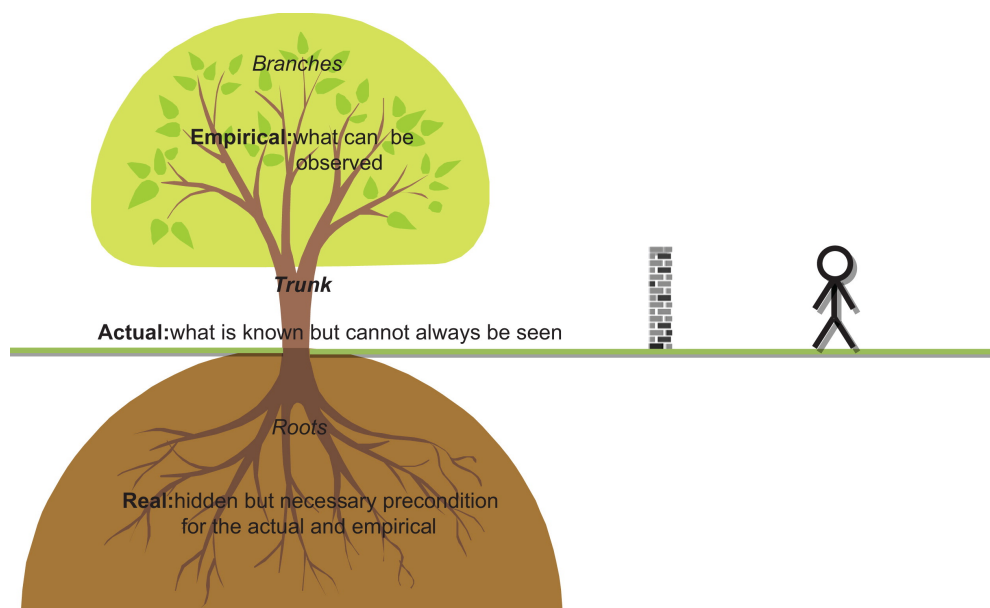


Figure 2: Bhaskar's depth ontology (Dyson and Brown, 2005, p.38)

Finally, we move on to explore the third premise of critical realism that of *epistemic relativism* (Archer *et al.*, 2004, p.3). This means that we are all making interpretations but not all judgements are equally valid, for critical realism maintains that some judgements are objectively better than others. Epistemic relativism recognises that all the judgements we make are influenced by our social and historical circumstances, which in turn means they are not infallible. In addition, people's experiences of the world are different, and therefore it is unlikely that they will view the world in totally similar ways. It is quite rational for people to trust their own personal experience as having some validity but there are times when this can also mean that our experiences can be interpreted in a way that misinforms us. This can also be true of religious belief and experience. For example, believers will very often act on their beliefs as if they are true, and they can feel intellectually justified in doing so providing they are prepared to subject their beliefs to rational scrutiny resulting in the need to revise or renounce them. In this way "knowledge takes the medieval scholastic form of 'faith seeking understanding', rather than the modern form of 'understanding seeking faith'" (A. Wright, 2013a, p.14). The difficulty here is that one of the legacies of the enlightenment is that atheism is seen as some kind of intellectual baseline making religious belief or experience something to be explained or defended Archer *et al.* (2004). However not even atheism is immune from epistemic relativism, for refraining from belief in a transcendent reality does not equate to a position of value-laden neutrality.

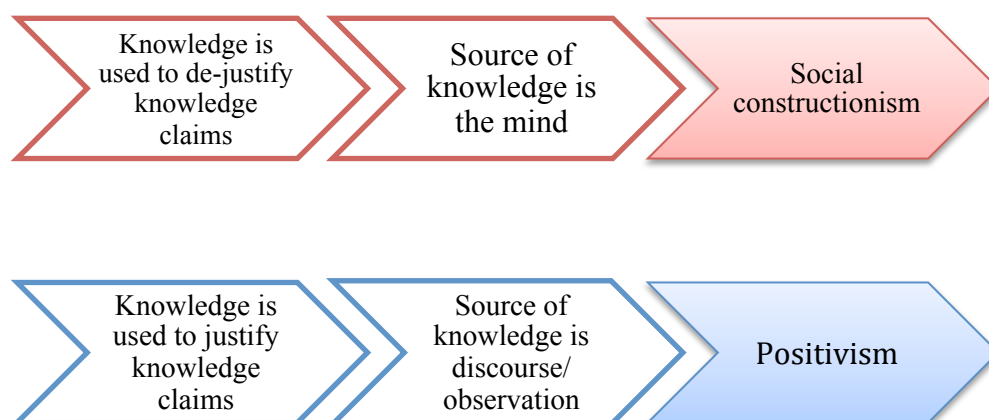
At this point we will now compare critical realism with other epistemological perspectives to explore more fully the link between critical realism and Biblical hermeneutics, which is the philosophical stance informing my methodology.

3.1.1 Other epistemological perspectives of knowledge and interpretation

Positivism: Critical realism is based on a critique of positivism (see Figure. 3), which supports the view that there is objectively true knowledge. However, in positivist thought truth is only certain within the physical world

where things can be tested empirically. This leaves all other ways of knowing as simply subjective or relative. For example, a positivist approach to a historical text like the Bible would seek to minimise the subjective input of the historian in order to maximise it as an objective fact of the past, which is considered by positivists to be closer to the truth. A positivist Christian stance could lead to Christian fundamentalism through belief in a literalist interpretation of the Bible. A. Wright (2013a, p.240) accuses positivism of “reducing reality to regular conjunctions of objects or sense data devoid of any metaphysical or theological underpinning.” Although in agreement with the positivist stance concerning the notion that knowledge can be positively developed and applied, critical realism seeks to ground this on a realist vision rather than on an empiricist notion of science.

Social constructionism: A rival perspective to critical realism in the realm of social science lies in postmodern social constructionism (see Figure 3). Even though historical and social factors influence our ability to think and reason, this thesis assumes that “reasoning and reasonableness are not simply products or constructions of social or historical conditions, as in postmodern social constructionism” (Thiselton, 2009, p.18). Driven by a critique of positivism, social constructionists believe that reality is socially constructed and therefore open to interpretation. Whilst all three are concerned with the source of power and knowledge, they differ in the way they interpret it (see Figure. 3).



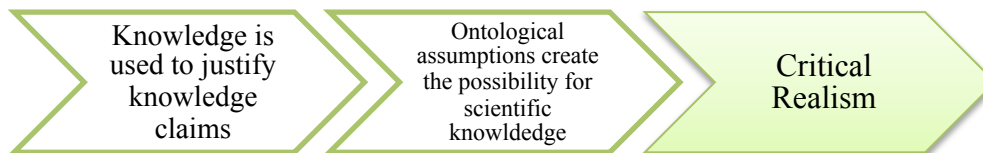


Figure 3: A representation of N.T. Wright's (1992) differing perspectives concerning the source of knowledge and interpretation

Whilst there are many different ways of expressing a critical realist epistemology: (Meyer 1989; Shipway 2011; Kennard 2013; A. Wright 2013a), this thesis will use the approach of (N.T. Wright, 1992). As mentioned previously he advocates the use of 'story' to articulate a critical realist epistemology and worldview, which will support this research to link the resurrection appearances to a Christian vision for education.

In his work *The New Testament and the People of God* (1992), N.T. Wright outlines his application of the critical realist approach to Biblical hermeneutics. Wright is seeking to propose another way of knowing that is an alternative to the two extremes of positivism on the one hand and phenomenology on the other (N.T. Wright, 1992, p.34). Social constructionism is rooted in phenomenology, which promotes personal knowledge and subjectivity, emphasising the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. This links to the reader-response theory which will be discussed later in the thesis. In describing critical realism as forging a middle ground, between the epistemological certainties found within positivism, and the dismantling of objective knowledge found within social constructionism on the other, N.T. Wright (1992, pp.35-36) offers useful diagrams to illustrate the critical realist position in relation to the other two epistemologies.

a) Positivist Position:

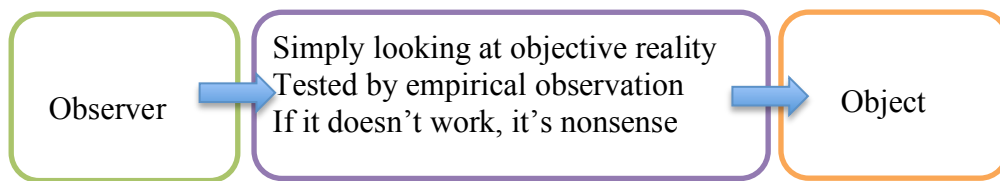


Figure 4: A representation of N.T. Wright's (1992, p.35) diagram of the positivist position which shows knowing as a straightforward line from the observer to the object.

To illustrate this N.T. Wright (1992, p.66) uses the example of a positivist reading of a parable from one of the Gospel accounts. A positivist reading of the Biblical text seeks to discover the historical context and present an objective account of what the parable means. This results in the reader adopting a positivist hermeneutic and believing that they have found the Biblical view. They might feel that they have proved their point until someone with an alternative positivist reading of the same parable arrives at an equally objective conclusion but one that is quite different. They may enter into a discussion with each other, but at this point it seems that positivism is not as straightforward as it may have seemed.

b) Phenomenologist Position:

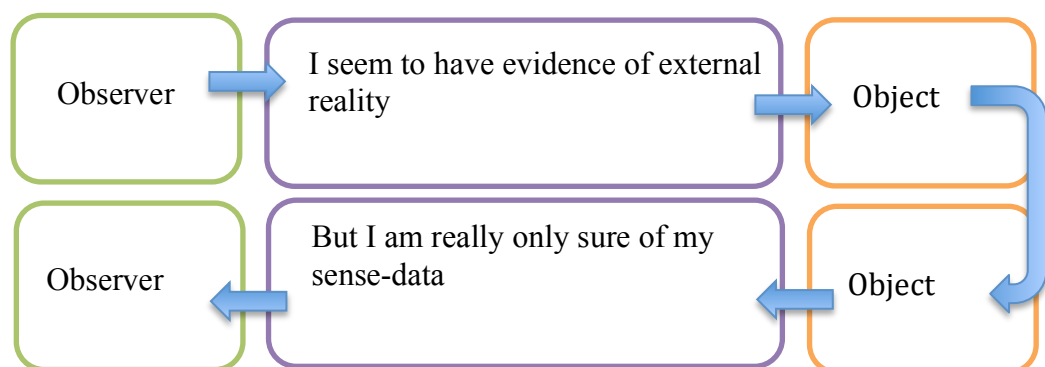


Figure 5: A representation of N.T. Wright's (1992, p.35) phenomenologist position

For the phenomenologist, the interest in reading the parable is not found in the historical setting, though they realise it has one, but in what the text says to them at this moment in time. As a consequence, their reading of the text potentially lacks credibility or public relevance. This is because what the text says to them may have little or no relevance to anyone else. The impact

of the reader in the interpretation of the text is a key factor in the ‘reader-response theory’. It acknowledges the active role of the reader in the interpretation of texts. Thiselton explains the reader-response theory in this way:

At its simplest, [the reader-response theory] depends on the axiom that a reader, or community of readers, ‘completes’ the meaning of a text. It rests on the assumption that even if it may speak legitimately of an author’s intention, that intention is not fulfilled until a reader (or readers) appropriates the text. The text, as the ‘sender’ of a message or other content, remains a potential until the reader actualises it. The text remains an abstraction until it is interpreted and understood by its reader (Thiselton, 2009, p.306).

This theory also recognises that the reader actively contributes something to the meaning of the text. Within the context of Scripture, a parable is an example of a Biblical text that a reader’s response ‘completes’, because a parable is what Thiselton (2009, p.307) refers to as an ‘open text’. However, some Biblical texts are ‘closed’ because their meaning is not open to a range of reader-responses as the original historical intention of the author could become distorted (Thiselton, 2009, p. 306). In her discussion of parables, Wittig (1977) makes use of this idea in her *Theory of Multiple Meanings*. She suggests that the unstated elements within parables invite the reader or hearer to fill in the gaps and apply their own meaning. She describes parables as a “duplex connotative system in which the precise significance is left unstated” (Wittig, 1977, p.84). However, Johnson (1990, p.10) expresses the notion of the ‘author’s intent’ which is the intended meaning contained within the text. He contests this notion of multiple meanings arguing that in His parables, Jesus often provided His intended meaning by offering an interpretation, as found in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 4:1-20).

c) Critical Realist Position:

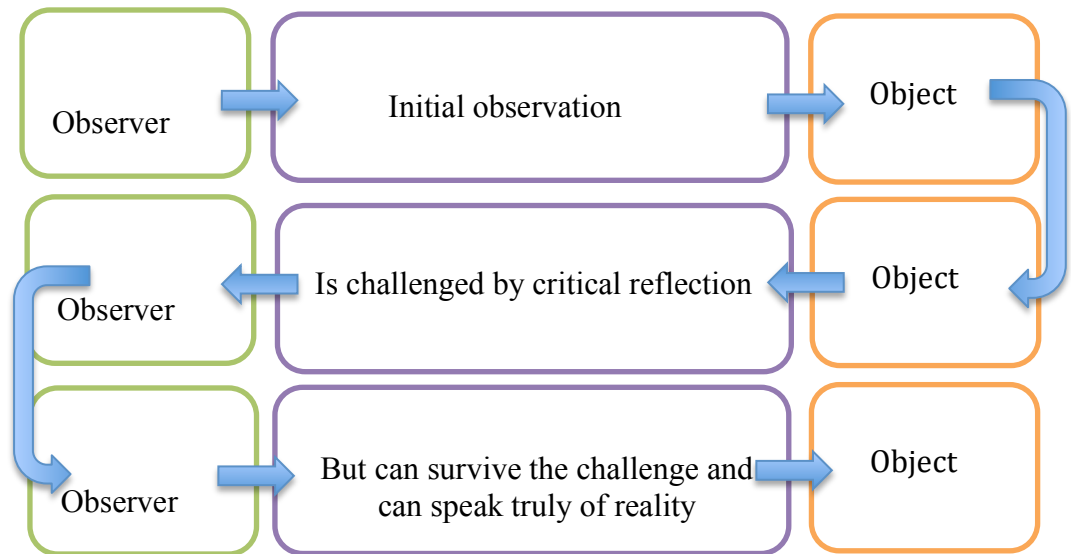


Figure 6: A representation of N.T. Wright's (1992, p.36) critical realist position

This shows the process of 'knowing' as a way of:

Acknowledging the *reality of the thing known*, as *something other than the knower* (hence 'realism'), while also fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of *appropriate dialogue or conversation between knower and the thing known* (hence 'critical'). This path leads to critical reflection on the products of our enquiry into 'reality', so that our assertions about 'reality' acknowledge their own provisionality. Knowledge, in other words, although in principle concerning realities independent of the knower, is never itself independent of the knower (N.T. Wright, 1992, p. 35).

In contrast, and forging a middle ground between the two, is the critical realist reading of a parable. This places the reader in a position of being aware that they approach the text with a point of view that is influenced by their basic worldview. When considering a Biblical text, critical realism offers three defining features. Firstly, from an ontological perspective, the process recognises that there is an external truth that is being communicated

by the author of the text. I referred to this earlier as the ‘author’s intent’ (Johnson, 1990). In the case of the Bible, the critical realist reader approaches the text as God’s authoritative word. “Therefore the text remains in control interrogating and constraining the reader in their role of enquirer” (Thiselton, 2009, p.8). Secondly, the notion of epistemic relativism is evident because critical realism recognises that any access to the truth is always mediated through human interpretation and is therefore subjective. As such, critical realism recognises that our knowledge is limited but it does have the potential for growth and development in the future. For the critical realist therefore, the notion of a purely objective reading of the text is naïve and impossible. Thirdly, when the truth contained in the text is discerned, a judgement by others needs to be made about the validity of the interpretations that are being offered. Not all accounts of reality are of equal value and some interpretations will be deemed more valid than others. This is referred to as judgemental rationality (see pp.54-5) and is important when reading a text like the Bible as a means to suggest new meanings in new contexts. Archer *et al.* comment on the importance of judgemental rationality as being the main reason why:

Christians themselves, who for reasons deriving from judgemental rationality, resist literalist readings of the Bible; who reject narrow, exclusivist understandings of salvation; who notice that the manifest evil in the world is incompatible with any straightforward understanding of God as both all good and all-powerful (Archer *et al.*, 2004, p.15).

The reader will be very aware that there are other stories and other views of the world that may challenge their own interpretation, which they believe to be true, as well as those that may affirm it.

There is also an appreciation that the story has a historical context that is perhaps difficult to interpret but is nevertheless something that remains possible despite the passing of time. The term ‘history’ can be used in two different ways: firstly to refer to actual happenings; secondly to refer to what has been written about things that have happened in the past in the

real world (N.T. Wright, 1992, p.81). History involves the study of aims, intentions and motivations. All historical writing is handed down to us through what N.T. Wright (1992, p.86) describes as a ‘spiral of knowledge’ involving a process of interaction between interpreter and their source material. This is made more complex when considering a text like the Bible; as for the Christian there is the assumption that it is in some sense *authoritative*. A theological reading of a Biblical text should therefore aim to enhance rather than bypass a historical reading by seeking to: “move from the ‘outside’ of an event to the ‘inside’ by a process of reconstructing the worldviews of people other than ourselves” (N.T. Wright, 1992, p.121). In this process the reader acknowledges their Christian worldview which: a) provides the *stories* through which human beings view reality; b) provides an interpretation for the stories in such a way that they answer the basic questions of human existence; c) enables the stories and the answers they provide to be expressed in cultural *symbols*, in the form of artefacts and events like family gatherings and the celebration of festivals; d) entails *action* or *praxis* (N.T. Wright, 1992, pp.123-4). For the Christian theologian, a concern for the historical context within Biblical interpretation is key for, “words about the past and the future must alike be used in the service of truth of every sort” (N.T. Wright, 1992, p.136).

N.T. Wright (1992, p.36) expounds the second and third stages of this critical realist position (Figure 6) by explaining that critical awareness reveals three things about the process of knowing which challenge naïve realism and positivism. The naïve realist position being the notion that it is possible to perceive reality through our senses taking little or no account of bias or error. A critical realist perspective of objectivity recognises that it is only possible for the human observer to look from one point of view. Secondly each observer will interpret the information received through the lens of their worldview and their location. Thirdly, and for N.T. Wright most importantly, the communities to which the observer belongs will influence the lenses the observer uses and the way in which they interpret what they see. The place of neutrality and objectivity in the way knowledge is acquired within critical realism does not feature in the way it does within positivism. Rather, critical realism seeks to establish a form of knowledge

that is open to the possibility of transition and change. This is because for the critical realist, knowledge is culturally situated and therefore “a person’s worldview serves as a grid through which hypotheses are formed and data evaluated” (N.T Wright, 1992, p.37).

In this research, it is St. John’s account of the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ that are the documents of interpretation. I fulfil the role of observer as the researcher applying a critical realist reading of the text. Whilst I will approach the text with a particular worldview and a particular set of educational questions, the historical Biblical text is likewise expressing a worldview (two horizons). A critical realist reading of a text is different from that of a hermeneutical positivist (Figure. 4), who believes that through applying the right critical method, the true meaning will be discovered. It is also different to a phenomenologist stance (Figure. 5), which emphasises the importance of what the text says to them. This is because they believe that it is impossible to discover the real meaning of the text. In describing the critical realist approach to a text (Figure. 6), N.T. Wright proposes that:

A critical realist reading of a text will recognise, and take fully into account, the perspective and context of the reader. But such a reading will still insist that, within the story or stories that seem to make sense of the whole reality, there exists, as essentially other than and different from the reader, texts that can be read, that have a life and a set of appropriate meanings not only potentially independent of their author but also potentially independent of their reader; and that the deepest level of meaning consists in the stories, and ultimately the worldviews, which the texts thus articulate (N.T. Wright, 1992, p.66).

In the light of this, N.T. Wright proposes a modification of the critical realist position that takes into account the impact of stories and narrative on the way people construct their worldview. In recognising that

‘story’ provides a framework for the way we experience the world, Wright also notes that in addition stories have the potential to provide a means by which views of the world may be challenged and changed (Figure. 7). N.T. Wright suggests that it is therefore more appropriate to talk of knowledge as being ‘public’, believing that the notion of dividing knowledge into ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ forms of knowledge is misleading. He suggests a more appropriate terminology involves talking about ‘public’ and ‘private’ knowledge, but he is equally keen to counter the notion of Christianity being in any sense private knowledge.

Many people in the modern world regard Christianity as a private worldview, a set of private stories. But in principle the whole point of Christianity is that it offers a story, which is the story of the whole world. It is public truth (N.T. Wright, 1992, p.44).

I will now move on further into the methodology and consider my chosen theoretical perspective of contextual Biblical hermeneutics.

3.2 Theoretical Perspective – Contextual Biblical hermeneutics

In this section we will consider a) the overall importance of context in Biblical hermeneutics with particular reference to Thiselton’s ‘two horizons’ (1980; 1992) and N.T. Wright’s ‘five act’ hermeneutic (1992), before focusing specifically on b) the ‘praxis model’ of contextual hermeneutics (Bevans, 2012). We will then consider c) a hermeneutical model proposed by Kennard (2013), which he calls a ‘Thiselton-Ricoeur Hermeneutic’ (Figure. 9). I will then seek to d) explain my reasons for combining Bevans’ praxis model with Kennard’s Thiselton-Ricoeur hermeneutical approach (Figure. 10) for the purposes of this research.

3.2.1 Biblical hermeneutics

The theoretical perspective informing the methodology for this research is contextual Biblical hermeneutics. In choosing this theoretical perspective I am seeking to recognise the importance of context in terms of the text itself and the context or worldview of the interpreter, which in this

case is me. The importance of context or worldview was discussed within the critical realist epistemology and this also plays an important part within hermeneutics. The focus for this thesis determines that the text for consideration is the resurrection account in the Gospel of St. John Chapters 20 and 21. Biblical hermeneutics is concerned with: “how we read, understand and handle texts, especially those written in another time or in a context of life different from our own. Biblical hermeneutics investigates more specifically how we read, understand, apply, and respond to Biblical texts” (Thiselton, 2009, p.1).

When considering the critical realist perspective of how knowledge is created I became aware of the importance of taking into account the worldview of the text and the reader. Similarly, in matters of textual understanding, there needs to be some recognition that there is no such thing as a neutral standpoint. When we consider the horizon of the interpreter (Thiselton, 1980; 1992), or in this case researcher, there will always be some element of pre-understanding because the interpreter approaches the text with assumptions based on previous knowledge and experiences. Similarly, when considering the horizon of the text it must be acknowledged that this too has been shaped by the writer’s pre-understanding and bias at the time it was written, and so is similarly value laden. It is not enough therefore for the researcher to simply assume that the writer’s experience validates the truth of the text. This is referred to by Thiselton (1980, p.29) as the ‘two horizons’ and describes the interaction that takes place between the text and the interpreter, leading to the interpreter’s own horizon being expanded. Thiselton seeks to acknowledge that because of the differences in the historical tradition of the text, and that of the interpreter, the two horizons can never be totally identical. However, there does exist the potential for the two horizons to become very close and in this way the Bible can be as relevant today as it was when it was first written.

At this point it is useful to turn to N.T. Wright’s proposal of a ‘five act’ hermeneutic which he uses to support the notion that:

The Bible itself offers a model for its own reading,
which involves knowing where we are within the

overall drama and what is appropriate within each act. The acts are creation, 'fall', Israel, Jesus, and the Church; they constitute the differentiated stages in the divine drama which Scripture itself offers (N.T. Wright, 2013, p.122).

Wright's 'five act' hermeneutic proposes a view of the Bible which recognises our relationship with it as an overarching narrative. In order that we understand Scripture and our relationship to it more fully, he suggests that we move away from the notions of the Bible being a set of 'timeless truths' on the one hand and a fuel for devotion on the other (N.T. Wright, 2013, p.123). The 'five act' hermeneutic encompasses the importance of the interaction of the two horizons mentioned earlier. It also highlights the significance of context in maintaining the integrity of the Biblical narrative. He develops this model using the example of a play by Shakespeare. The first four acts are in place but the majority of the fifth act is missing. Actors are chosen to improvise a fifth act in a way that is consistent with what has gone on before but which shows development in line with the story thus far. The first four acts providing the framework for the fifth and final act. In relating this to the Christian story and the authority of Scripture, Wright maintains that we are currently living in the fifth act, the time of the Church. The previous acts are in place: creation; 'fall'; Israel; Jesus, and part of the fifth act is intact, that of the New Testament and the establishment of the post-Easter Church. "The New Testament is the foundation charter of the fifth act" (N.T. Wright, 2013, p.125). As such we have a somewhat ambiguous relationship with the previous four acts, which compels us to act in an appropriate manner for this moment in the narrative. Our role is to maintain the continuity of the story on the one hand, but on the other be open to an element of discontinuity that allows for the possibility of new things to happen. This he argues can only be achieved through a commitment to reading the Bible contextually, as well as an appropriate acknowledgement and understanding of the impact that the reader's context will have on the way Scripture is read.

In the light of this we will now consider the hermeneutics of contextual theology in general before considering the praxis model in particular.

3.2.2 Contextual theology

As we have seen contextual theology takes into account the faith experience of the past as it is recorded in Biblical tradition and also the individual and collective experience of the present context. In doing so contextual theology acknowledges a number of different realities. Firstly, it recognises the experiences of life that impact upon an individual or group in terms of the way they might either limit or enhance their potential to experience God. Secondly, it acknowledges that experience of life is only possible within the context of culture in all its richness and diversity. In contextual theology an understanding of either the religion followed, or the way in which secularism has influenced the values and customs of a particular religious tradition, is vital. Thirdly, it recognises that social location can be a limiting factor on the one hand but it can also enable the detection of defects or positivity in the tradition. This includes whether one is male or female, rich or poor as these can determine whether a person is at the centre or margins of society. These factors can also dictate the way an individual or group experience the present context. Lastly, context acknowledges the reality of social change in so far as no tradition or culture stands still (Bevans, 2012).

At this point it is worth noting that Bevans (2012, pp.12-15) identifies some key Christological features to support his model of contextual theology. Firstly, at the heart of the Christian faith is the incarnation (St. John 3:16). God became human (St. John 1:14). Jesus Christ was born at a particular time, in a particular place and within a particular culture. The task of contextual theology is to continue to remain faithful to the Gospel in making God known and relevant though the changes of time and space. Secondly, God is a sacramental reality. Human beings can encounter God in Jesus Christ through real objects like the pouring of water at baptism, sharing the bread and wine in the Eucharist, the anointing with oil for healing, reconciliation and equipping for ministry. The task of

contextual theology is to reveal God's sacramental presence in the world through the ordinary things of life and show them to be extraordinary. Thirdly, the change in the way divine revelation is interpreted since the Second Vatican Council that took place between 1962-65. This is widely thought of as the most significant event for the Roman Catholic Church in the modern era. It was called by Pope John XXIII in order to update the Church and restore unity (The Second Vatican Council, 2011). After Vatican II, revelation was still understood as God's complete self-revelation in Jesus Christ, but there was also the recognition that divine revelation also involved an interpersonal relationship with God. From a Christian perspective this illustrates the importance of context in the way God reveals Himself to men and women and the way His creation experiences the Creator God. Another consideration for Bevans (2012) is the catholicity of the Church, which refers to the all-inclusive nature of the Christian community. For contextual theology this is important for it shows that the Christian Gospel by its very nature is required to prosper in every part of the world and in every cultural context. Faith must take root and grow within culture. Finally, there is the doctrine of the Trinity that lies at the heart of Christianity. This is a practical expression of how God lives in relationship, the three persons of the Trinity in communion and dialogue with each other. Christian theology therefore needs a contextual focus because God is contextually present in the world today.

In recognising the importance of the cultural context in this way, contextual theology seeks to move away from the dominant Western classicist notion of culture towards one that is empirical. Lonergan describes the all-embracing nature of Western classicist culture in this way:

It was a normative notion of culture that stressed values not facts, was universal, and was a set of ideals to be imitated, of eternal truths and universally valid laws. From the classicist point of view, particular circumstances are incidental; normative rules and truths work for all people in all situations. Other cultures were not valued; all others were expected to give up their own culture in favour

of the more advanced and universally accepted culture of the West (Lonergan, 1972, pp.301-2).

This focus on the importance of context enables culture to be understood as a set of relevant experiences and values that inform life rather than as something that is universally accepted. An empirical interpretation of culture has implications for theology as a whole, requiring it to take the impact of culture and cultural change seriously in order to effectively communicate the Christian faith.

However, whilst these are clearly positive reasons for supporting the inclusion of contextualisation in theology there is another side of the argument. There is a danger that in combining Christianity and culture the resultant pluralism can compromise basic Christian principles. Therefore, whilst it is important that contextualisation is taken seriously, theology has to guard against diminishing the Judaeo-Christian tradition as expressed in Scripture and the tradition of the Church. This point is made by Hesselgrave & Rommen thus:

From this point of view Christian contextualisation can be thought of as the attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, Word and will of God in a way that is faithful to God's revelation especially as it is put forth in the teachings of Holy Scripture, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts...The adequacy of an attempted contextualisation must be measured by the degree to which it faithfully reflects the meaning of the Biblical text (Hesslegrave & Rommen, 1989, pp.200-1).

Having briefly considered the importance of contextualisation in theology we will now turn our attention to my chosen model in the construction of a contextual theology, namely praxis. Although the praxis model has primarily been linked with liberation theology, Bevans (2012)

proposes a wider application by seeking to prioritise the past and present contextual understanding of Scripture leading to intelligent action as its outcome.

The praxis model is not concerned so much with a particular theme but rather a particular method summed up as “seeing analytically, judging theologically, and acting pastorally or politically, three phases in one commitment in faith” (Elizondo & Boff, 1988, p.12). When viewed in this way the praxis model has the potential for a much wider contextual application. The term praxis has become synonymous with *practice* or *action* but in reality it is a technical term that has its roots in Marxism, the Frankfurt school (Habermas) and in the educational philosophy of Paulo Freire. For Freire praxis involves action informed by, and linked to, certain values. This acknowledges the potential for education to open up new possibilities for change and growth.

Education makes sense because women and men learn that through learning they can make and remake themselves, because women and men are able to take responsibility for themselves as beings capable of knowing—of knowing that they know and knowing that they don't (Freire, 2004, p.15).

Within the praxis model divine revelation is recognised as the presence of God in and through history, in everyday events, in the structures of society, in oppressive situations particularly those involving the poor, the outcast and marginalized members of society as a whole. In addition to God being present however, there is also the recognition that God calls people of faith to share in his mission of redemption. “As a theological method, the praxis model is by its very nature wedded to a particular context” (Bevans 2012, p.77). In this research, theology is expressed through a critical reflection within the context of Christian education, in particular the setting of a Church of England Primary School.

Practitioners of the praxis model believe that in this concept of praxis they have found a new and

profound way to do theology, a way that, more than all others, is able to deal adequately with the experience of the past (Scripture, tradition) and the experience of the present (human experience, culture, social location and social change)...The key presupposition of the praxis model is the insight that the highest level of knowing is intelligent and responsible doing. While, for more traditional ways of doing theology, theology might be described as a process of 'faith seeking understanding', the praxis model would say that theology is the process of 'faith seeking intelligent action' (Bevans, 2012, pp. 72-3).

In a similar manner to that of the action research cycle, the praxis model follows a circular or spiral movement. Committed action is usually the first step in the cycle but in theory one could join the cycle at any point. The second step involves critical reflection on the action taken and of the actual situation or context. A return to Biblical and Christian tradition then follows in step three before the cycle begins once more with committed and intelligent action (praxis) as illustrated in Figure 8. The influence of critical realism within the cycle lies in the potential for theology to speak contextually in a reasonable way so that the liberating voice of the Gospel can be heard in all aspects of society (Van Huyssteen, 1989). Similarly, Louw (2014, p.104) describes the manner in which "critical realism tests the validity of texts within contexts by means of thorough exegesis in order to detect the meaning of life, and the significance of believing and hoping." There is also the possibility for considering the praxis of God within the cycle for as Bevans points out:

God's presence is one of beckoning and invitation, calling men and women of faith to locate God and cooperate with God in God's work of healing, reconciling and liberating. We best know God by acting in partnership with God (Bevans, 2012, p. 75).

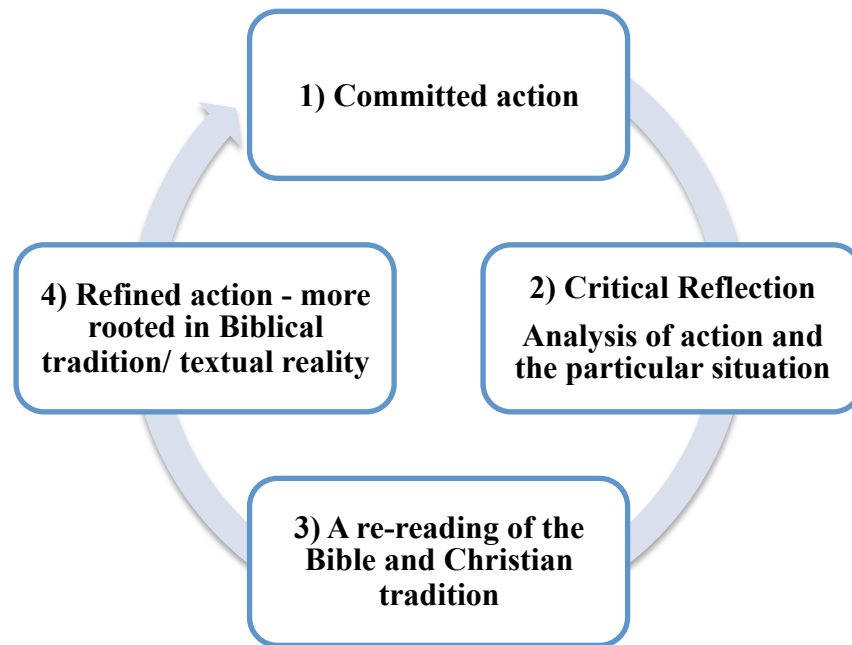


Figure 7: A representation of Bevan's Praxis Model (2012, p.76)

3.2.3 Thiselton-Ricoeur Hermeneutic

We will now move on to consider a hermeneutical approach offered by Kennard (2013), which he refers to as a 'Thiselton-Ricoeur Hermeneutic'. Although requiring some adaptation to fit in with the praxis model of contextual theology, which will be explained later, this approach supports my epistemological and ontological standpoint as well as my theoretical perspective. Kennard uses a critical realist epistemological approach using a hermeneutical spiral similar to that put forward by Thiselton:

Understanding follows a spiral (more accurately than a circle) in a further sense. To begin with, the interpreter brings his own questions to the text. But because his questions may not be the right ones, his initial understanding of the subject matter is limited, provisional, and liable to distortion. But this provisional understanding, in turn, helps him to revise his questions and ask more adequate and appropriate ones. These now secure a better understanding of the text. The process continues until he is in a position to ask questions which have

clearly been shaped by the text itself; so that he achieves a progressively more adequate understanding of its subject matter (Thiselton, 1973, p.93).

Kennard (2013) proposes a hermeneutical model that involves three levels operating simultaneously. However, he also chooses to express the model as three distinct levels of hermeneutic in order to prevent what is described as a premature fusing of the ‘two horizons’ (Thiselton, 1980; 1992) with a subsequent “loss of textual truth in the flood of our own context” (Kennard, 2013, p.177). The existential aspects of Kennard’s hermeneutic are based on “Ricoeur’s understandings in a context of dissatisfaction with existential reader-orientated approaches” (Kennard, 2013, p.176). Although Kennard does not explicitly link his three levels with Ricoeur’s hermeneutic it appears that there is some correlation. Ricoeur called his hermeneutic method of understanding and interpreting texts the *hermeneutic arc*: the first being *explanation*, the second *understanding* and the third *appropriation* (Ghasemi *et al.*, 2011). At the initial ‘explanation stage’, the reader seeks to establish the basic meaning of the text through an internal subjective connection with the text and the reader’s world. The second ‘understanding stage’ involves a more objective reading of the text that seeks to minimise the subjectivity of the explanation stage through more rigorous interpretation. This reflective process is designed to link the world of the writer and the world of the reader so that an ‘appropriate outcome’ expands the horizon of the reader at the third stage of the hermeneutic arc. Huskey describes Ricoeur’s approach thus:

Readers will approach the text with their own assumptions, but must be willing to test them and be prepared to replace them with a new and better understanding. Finding hope in Biblical texts entails expecting certain things from the text, but also a willingness to have one’s expectations overthrown by new ones. It also entails a realisation that the text expects much from its readers (Huskey, 2009, p.105).

Kennard (2013) incorporates Ricoeur's hermeneutic arc into his approach. Level one is existential and seeks to maintain textual truth within the reader's own context. The reader feels placed in the story or passage through a range of common threads within it, including shared experiences, contextual similarities and relationships. Other scholars have described this process as an "appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known" (N.T. Wright, 1992, p. 35) or a dialogue involving a "genuine engagement of the interpreter with the text" (Dunn, 2003, p.124). Kennard (2013) also stresses the imperative for the text to be allowed to set its own agenda, for otherwise he suggests it is questionable whether the voice of the text is being heard at all. This existential element is an important part of the hermeneutical process. However, it does not have the critical quality necessary for academic validation of the text that comes in at the second level. Level two therefore presents a critical approach to the text switching between contextual overview and textual particulars in seeking to clarify the meaning of the text (Kennard, 2013, p.180). The aim at this stage of the cycle is to understand the author's intended meaning and application for the first readers of the text in its original context. Whilst the Bible contains a great deal of contextual information the use of extra-textual contextual information can be found in other sources that are useful for the modern reader interpreting the text. Any interpretation should naturally reflect the complexity in the text. At the same time the interpretation must recognise in a critical realist way that our knowledge of the textual data is partial but can nevertheless be true, or contain an element of truth, given our limited capacity to know it. At Level three in the cycle the interpreter becomes involved in considering and comparing other contexts (in a critical realist manner) as a result of the interpretations that have occurred at Level two. The aim is to recover the meaning in the original text to the extent that it now includes the interpreter. This will involve adapting the original existential assumptions or understandings that may have subsequently proved inappropriate through a hermeneutical engagement with the text. This becomes the *authoritative textual meaning* for the interpreter and this is often called the *significance*. The interpretation should demonstrate a rational and reasonable correlation between the original meaning of the text and its new application. Kennard highlights the importance of retaining as

much of the original context as possible because the text is in danger of being “kidnapped by the reader’s context into multicultural language games and so loses all but a few strands of truth along the way” (Kennard, 2013, pp.176-7).

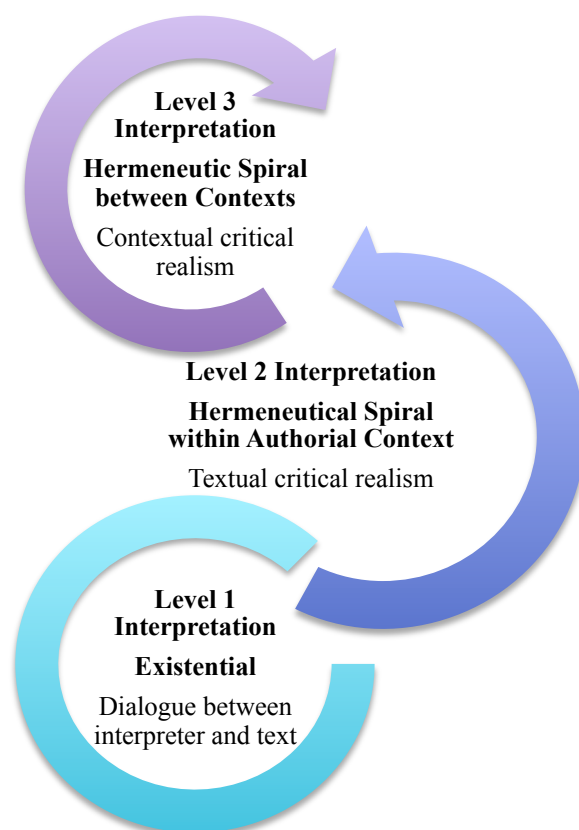


Figure 8: A hermeneutical approach offered by Kennard (2013)

Figure 8 above shows Kennard’s Thiselton-Ricoeur Hermeneutic that uses Biblical interpretation in such a way as to retain as much of the original meaning of the text within the new context to inform the interpreter. However, I do not believe that Kennard’s approach makes clear what the resulting action, if any, might be. It appears that the cycle or spiral remains at a contextual level of interpretation and that there is no expectation in terms of subsequent action. In summary, although the critical realist Biblical hermeneutic used by Kennard’s approach aligns with my own epistemology, ontology and theoretical perspective, it seems to stop short of applying the outcome of the Biblical analysis as the basis for informed action. In seeking to rectify this I have therefore combined Kennard’s approach with Bevan’s praxis model (Figure. 10) and this will be explored further in the method section of the methodology. In addition, I have added reflection on praxis at

the first stage, as this seems to be an important element within my combined approach.

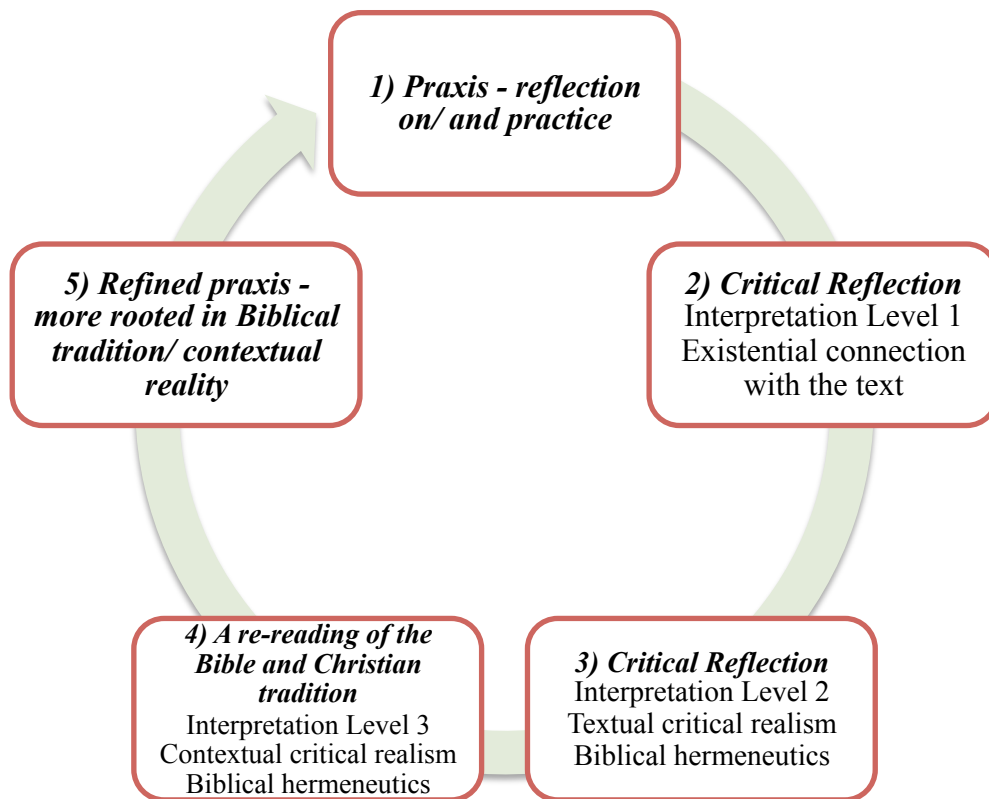


Figure 9: A representation of *Bevan's Praxis model* combined with Kennard's Thiselton-Ricoeur hermeneutic approach

3.3 Research design

In this section I propose to demonstrate the process that I will engage in to discover whether the resurrection appearances within St. John's Gospel support a theological vision for Christian education that has the potential be translated into educational practice. As outlined above my research design will be based on an approach that uses an epistemology informed by critical realism embedded within contextual Biblical hermeneutics.

The combined Bevan's & Thiselton-Ricoeur praxis hermeneutic approach is outlined below. In line with Groome I have chosen to use the term 'approach' because it has "the possibility of pointing toward and questioning the underlying outlook and disposition that the initiator brings to the enterprise" (Groome, 1980, p.137).

3.3.1 Phase 1: Praxis (reflection on/and practice) (Figure. 9)

Within the praxis model there are several key presuppositions. The first is the notion of God's revelation in history through the events of everyday life and the influence of this Christian reality on theological understanding. A second presupposition is that all people of faith are called to do theology through reflective action. According to the praxis model faith is about *doing the truth* (Sobrino, 1975) and therefore committed action is the first step in praxis theology leading to the formation of questions about the praxis. Although the focus in this first stage of the methodology within the praxis model is committed action this does not mean that there is an absence of reflection. Reflective praxis leading to further questioning describes the approach and I have therefore adapted the first phase in my approach to explicitly reflect this. Describing praxis, Louw states:

Praxis thinking is not in the first place about practical actions, but is concerned about the idea that drives the process and the intention that determines the outcome of the action or intervention. Ideas drive, draw, and thus determine the quality of the dynamics...Translated into theological terminology praxis has to describe the acts, mode of operation and intention of God's involvement with human beings. A spiritual praxis should thus help to disclose and describe potentiality, possibilities and significance. In this regard, it should thus function as a beacon of hope and sign of divine intervention (Louw, 2014, p. 92).

3.3.2 Phase 2: Critical Reflection (Interpretation Level 1/ existential connection with the text) (Figure. 9)

This second phase in the praxis model involves developing a theory based on an analysis of the outcome of the action and of the particular context in which one is placed with reference to the Bible and Christian tradition (Bevans, 2012). At this stage we combine this with Level 1 of the Thistelton-Ricoeur hermeneutic that involves an existential connection with

the Biblical text. In engaging existentially with the Biblical text the interpreter enters into what is described by N.T. Wright (1992) and Dunn (2003) as a dialogue with the text that seeks to understand its intended meaning. Dunn emphasises the importance of the intended meaning in stating that: “Unless the text is, at least in some sense, allowed to set its own agenda, it is questionable whether it is being heard at all” (Dunn, 2003, p.124). This initial existential connection is designed to “prompt a shared passion and motivation to understand the text and work it out into life” (Kennard, 2013, p.178). Although this level does not contain the authoritative elements of Biblical exegesis that the praxis model desires, from a hermeneutical perspective it does contain authentic connections between the two horizons. The response of the reader is an important element within the hermeneutic cycle for it recognises that, “there is neither an absolutely objective meaning ‘in’ the text, nor an absolutely subjective meaning imported to the text by the reader” (Dunn, 2003, p.125). However, to base any proposals for practice on this first existential reading of the text would render them lacking in credibility. Therefore, I need to move on to the critical realist qualities found in the second level of the approach.

3.3.3 Phase 3: Critical Reflection (Interpretation Level 2/ textual critical realism/ Biblical hermeneutics) (Figure. 9)

This third phase in the cycle more adequately addresses the critical reflection required in the praxis model concerning the analysis of context and rereading of the Bible and Christian tradition. There is a transition from Level 1 to Level 2 which moves away from a subjective or existential focus on the reader’s context and life to one that focuses on the textual particulars found in consideration of the author’s context. In Kennard’s view this is a critical realist approach in which the interpreter or reader moves between ‘contextual overviews and textual particulars’ to recover the accounts of the witnesses, in this case the Gospel writer St. John, appreciating as fully as possible his theological perspective (Kennard, 2013, p.180). At this stage in the process it is important to emphasise that it is the Biblical text that has authority so mirroring the literary-critical approach. Although other sources including the historical processes involved in the composition of the text, redaction criticism and the like remain important as vehicles for supporting

an accurate interpretation, it is the characterisation, plot, narrative structure, language and symbolism of the literary-critical approach that are of most significance. Although, we may have an authoritative textual statement from the author, as with St. John, telling the reader their purpose for writing, we cannot assume that we have the whole picture. A Biblical text contains many complexities and therefore any interpretation offered should reflect this. Reference to textual support through theological Bible commentaries, cross-referencing with other historical sources and the like will enable a comparison of interpretations with that of the reader's own. This is key to ensuring that contradictions do not limit the validity of the interpretation and the subsequent application that is being offered.

3.3.4 Phase 4: Critical Reflection (Interpretation Level 3/ Contextual critical realism/ Biblical hermeneutics) (Figure. 9)

In the fourth phase of the cycle we remain within the critical reflection phase of the praxis model and move into the third phase of Kennard's Thiselton-Ricoeur hermeneutic that involves moving from the horizon of the text to the horizon of the reader. Informed by the textual interpretation within the authorial context, the interpreter now applies their authoritative interpretation to another context in a critical realist manner. Once again comparisons of similarities with the original context is a prime concern. In describing this process Kennard states that:

The goal is to recover the meaning in the text to the extent that it includes me. This becomes the authoritative textual meaning for me as my interpretation and application. Such an interpretation applied to my context is also often called the significance. The critical realist significance progressively: 1) excludes any of my assumptions, understandings and possibilities which are inappropriate to the text, and 2) includes in me those assumptions, understandings and possibilities which are appropriate to the text. This critical realist hermeneutical moves through successive paradigms, which try to frame the authorial contextual

interpretation and application to my context as its significance (Kennard, 2013, p.188).

This contextualization process is designed to enable the interpreter to state their interpretation succinctly and in doing so to show that there are similarities between the original context and that of the interpreter. Wright's 'fifth act' metaphor offers key guidance at this stage in the model in emphasising the responsibility upon the interpreter to maintain the continuity of the story, whilst also exploring the potential for new expressions. Applying this in my context will therefore involve me in reaching a point of finding the authoritative textual meaning for me. The significance of this authoritative textual meaning can then be applied to my chosen context, which is that of finding a theological vision for Christian education that has the potential to be translated in Christian practice. If there is a high degree of correspondence between the similarities of the original readership and my significance then it will be possible to move on to the final stage in the cycle, refined action more rooted in Biblical tradition and contextual reality. Vanhoozer discusses the author's 'intended' meaning that can be known and the potential for 'many' significance in terms of being 'extrinsic' to the meaning. He qualifies this by acknowledging that correct interpretation "must remain an eschatological hope: in this life, we cannot always know what we know" (Vanhoozer, 1998, p.303). This fourth phase informs the final phase of 'refined praxis more rooted in Biblical tradition and contextual reality' (see Figure. 9). In effect it is the first step of another cycle that becomes a spiral of critical theological reflection that transforms praxis.

This outlines my theory of Christian learning that I will now apply in considering how the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ in St. John's Gospel might provide a theological vision for Christian education.

3.4 Method (Document Analysis)

This theoretical piece of research involves personal study and critical reflection as a response to my chosen research question. The ethical issues are minimal as there is no one else involved in the research process.

My method involves the use of document analysis. The main text for analysis is the Bible with particular reference to the resurrection appearances in the Gospel of St. John. With so many different modern translations available it is perhaps difficult to know which version to use. I have chosen to use the Revised Standard Version (Second Catholic Edition 2006), as this is the version of Scripture that is used in my own Church and so supports the Anglican Catholic tradition of which I am a part. This seems to be supportive of my task of considering the Biblical text as a historical and authoritative source of knowledge and an important factor in recognising that the text offers its own horizon. Other sources, including Bible commentaries and other historical sources, will be used to learn about and reflect on the Gospel writer's context and particular motivation when writing his Gospel for a wider and more public readership. As part of this, I will also consider why certain resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ appear in St. John's writing and not in the Synoptic Gospels. McCulloch also mentions these important aspects in recognising the need to:

Try to understand documents in relation to their milieu, or in other words the *text* to its *context*. It is necessary to find out as much as possible about the document from internal evidence elicited from the text itself, but it is no less important to discover how and why it was produced and how it was received. Documents are social and historical constructs, and to examine them without considering this simply misses the point. For the same reasons, documents need also to be understood with reference to their *author/s* and to what they were seeking to achieve, in so far as this can be known (McCulloch, 2004, p.5). (Italics mine)

In addition, theologians who link the resurrection accounts with an expression of hope will also inform the Biblical analysis and reflection at each phase of the approach. These include: Macquarrie (1978); N.T. Wright (1992, 2003, 2007, 2013); Polkinghorne (2002); Dunn (2003); Gooder (2009); Marcel (2010); Byrne (2014); Williams (2014); Wilson (2016).

The methodological process I have chosen involves, as outlined earlier, a literary-critical approach to offer an interpretation of the Gospel narrative of St. John Chapters 20 and 21. This includes other historical sources, various theories of authorship and Biblical commentary, for as we have already mentioned these can be an important source of contextual knowledge useful for critical interpretation. It is also important that there is an intentional focus on studying the text as a unified entity. Of most interest in constructing meaning will be aspects of characterisation and narrative structure, use of language, themes and symbolism. From a theological perspective the intention of this methodological approach is to enable the text to be viewed as revelatory, in addition to recognising the importance of the historical events that the text records. This is noted by Schneiders who states that: “Our interest is not in what St. John the Evangelist intended to say but in what the Gospel of St. John actually says” (Schneiders, 2013, loc.202). If the text itself is given to be the locus of revelation then the interaction between the text and the reader becomes hermeneutically very important. In addition to taking into the account the horizon of the text and the author’s intentions, the document analysis will also involve my existential connection with the text in the form of an initial, subjective response to the text (Phase 2). In order to make the outcomes credible however, the horizon of the text and the researcher must be informed by critical realism and Biblical hermeneutics as outlined in the methodology.

Chapter 4: Applying the Research Design

Throughout Chapter 4, I will be applying each of the five phases of my approach to the educational context of a Church of England Primary School. Phase 3 of the approach requires that the Biblical text is the central focus of attention and therefore a detailed analysis of St. John's resurrection appearances is included. This is necessary in order that the authority of the text is recognised. The interpretation will then be applied in Phase 4 when the focus switches from the horizon of the text back to that of the interpreter in order to consider how the Biblical analysis might impact on the practice of Christian education expressed through the life of a Church of England primary school.

An appropriate inspiration to this journey through St. John's resurrection accounts comes from N.T. Wright's commentary that alludes to the open-ended nature of St. John's Gospel. This makes it ripe for new interpretations and practical application of the truths contained within it that are appropriate for new contexts.

St. John's two Easter Chapters rank with Romans 8, not to mention the key passages in the Corinthian correspondence, as among the most glorious pieces of writing on the resurrection. John and Romans are of course utterly different in genre and style. Instead of the tight argument and dense phraseology of Paul, we have John's deceptively simple account of the Easter events, warm with deep and dramatic human characterisation, pregnant with new possibilities. Instead of the QED, or the bracing 'Therefore...' at the end of a long and gritty Pauline argument, we have St. John's disturbingly open-ended final scene: 'What is that to you? Follow me.' The Gospel ends with new-found faith all right, but it is faith that must now go out into a new world, a new day, and attempt new tasks without knowing in advance where it will all lead (N.T. Wright, 2003, p.662).

As I move on to consider the resurrection appearances, it is worth noting that for St. John resurrection is not simply a metaphor for the present spiritual life. In claiming that He is the ‘resurrection and the life’ (11:25), Jesus opens up several layers of meaning for reinterpretation. Most importantly, there now exist new possibilities for life in the present age.

4.1 Phase 1: Praxis (reflection on/and practice)

My approach begins with a reflection on educational practice and the part that theological reflection plays within the practice. The particular focus is on Christian hope, which appears as a contemporary emphasis within Christian education. Following the publication of *The Church of England Vision for Education* (Church of England Education Office, 2016) the Archbishop of Canterbury indicated his belief that Church of England schools can help shape a ‘hopeful’ society:

As teachers across the country well know, the education of children, in Church and non-Church schools, is taking place against a backdrop of deep uncertainty and rapid change. This is a time of hope in the midst of uncertainty, of a hopeful expectation that education in a Church of England setting will contribute to a society founded in hope. The challenges are certainly severe, but they can be overcome (Archbishop of Canterbury, 2016, p.1).

Although not defining what he means by hope, he appears to be referring to it as an illuminating beacon shining in the midst of the darkness of change and uncertainty.

In reflecting on my time as an educationalist I am seeking to draw on a range of experiences and roles within both community and Church schools. In addition, I recognise that my academic achievements in later life stem from my Christian conversion informing a view of Christian hope. This experience drawn from my own life serves to illustrate the place of Christian hope, and the role of education, in opening horizons that had previously seemed closed and beyond the realms of possibility. This links

with the point I made earlier when quoting from Freire (2004, p.15), that through education people become equipped to take responsibility for their own lives, making and remaking themselves. Similarly, Polkinghorne describes this aspect of hope from a Christian perspective:

For the Christian, hope arises out of endurance in the face of adversity, based on trust in the love of God (Romans 5: 3-5). Hope is essentially moral in its character, for it is a good future for which we may dare to hope. If this is the case, we should be prepared to work for what we hope for. Of course, human striving cannot bring about our ultimate destiny, for that lies in the hands of God, but spiritual formation can fit us for what that final destiny is hoped to be. Moreover, to the extent that hope is partially realisable within present history, it is a realisation that has to be striven for (Polkinghorne, 2002, p.30).

However, it is also important to stress that Christian hope is not limited to the dimension of personal faith but extends to the experience of life in all its fullness, and to the hope of a collective existence with God and others, both now and in the future. Of prime consideration in this study is the way in which a theological and Biblical praxis of Christian hope, based on the resurrection appearances in St. John's Gospel, can support a Christian vision for education in the context of a Church of England primary school.

In an educational context, any vision is designed to set out the school community's shared goals and aspirations for the future. It is a vehicle for the community to reflect on its core educational aims, operational objectives, purpose and hoped for outcomes. School leaders have the responsibility of ensuring that the strategic development of the school aligns with its vision, informs decision-making and everyday actions. As referred to in the introduction, during my first year as headteacher of a Church of England Primary School I carried out a consultation involving all stakeholders. The purpose was to find a core set of values that the school

and wider community felt were important for its corporate life. These were Biblically underpinned and had an overarching vision statement of ‘A Caring Community, Alive with Learning.’ On reflection this vision was possibly not aspirational enough, for whilst the school was inclusive, supportive and welcoming, the academic rigour and subsequent improvement took much longer to realise. It was also not theologically informed, for it lacked a clearly articulated Christian dimension and so could equally be applied to the context of a Community School. As such, the vision did not set high-level goals for the future and as a consequence the hoped for results were slow to materialise. This illustrates the importance of getting the right educational vision for the context of the school. Therefore, the relevance of the research question becomes more evident: *How might the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ in St. John’s Gospel inspire a theological vision for Christian education?* The outcome of this research has potential implications for the corporate life of the Church school and its individual members, which will be explored further before final conclusions are eventually made.

Before moving on from Phase 1 of this approach to explore hope as a consequence of the resurrection appearances, I will look briefly at how hope has been applied in the setting of education. Although not commenting on hope in a specific Christian context, Birmingham suggests that it is a disposition prevalent within the teaching profession, “Like the air we breathe, hope is essential for teaching.” She goes on to acknowledge that:

Although hope for the future is a foundational motivation for education, the role of hope in teaching has not drawn much academic attention. The much-studied cognitive and behavioural activities of teaching are treated as though they operate independently from dispositions and other affective states...Teachers are familiar with a range of hope, from the light-hearted hope of potential aroused by new pencils, new notebooks, and a small child on the first day of school to the activist militant

kind of hope that arises, strengthens and defies
adversity (Birmingham, 2009, p.27).

This picture of hope indicates that pedagogy is in essence a hopeful activity. As such, pedagogy of hope has the capacity to liberate the authoritative voice of a teacher, so enabling them to become an agent for reflectiveness and democratic change. However, a theological interpretation of hope offers more than an individual or corporate character trait, or moral virtue manifested among the teaching profession. Hope can be a difficult concept to fully comprehend, particularly if, as Birmingham suggests, it only “becomes visible in its absence” (Birmingham, 2009, p.34). This absence of definition or practical expression is similarly commented on by Jacobs who points out that, “There is no real sense of what hope actually is or how a fully developed and theorised conception of hope might help us in our work as educators” (Jacobs, 2005, p.784). This is an important consideration for this research. I believe it is relatively straightforward to portray hope as a tangible outcome of the resurrection if one concentrates on it as a deeply Christian experience and one that is beneficial to the world as a whole (John 3:16). However, Christian hope also needs to be considered critically in order that it has some theoretical rigour. As Macquarrie points out this is vital so that hope “can remain healthy and be prevented from lapsing into optimism and other aberrations that its intellectual side criticises” (Macquarrie, 1978, p.15). Jacobs expresses this in an educational context when stating that: “For hope to be of use to us as educators, we need to see that it, like education, is intellectual, critical and reflective...That is, hope necessarily involves praxis” (Jacobs, 2005, pp.798-9).

4.2 Phase 2: Critical Reflection (Interpretation Level 1/ existential connection with the text)

In the next phase of my approach I will reflect on educational praxis within a Church of England school in a broad context in relation to the resurrection appearances in the Gospel of St. John with a particular focus on the place of hope. Macquarrie comments on the vulnerability of hope:

Easter is the extension and deepening of the hope
already encountered in the self-giving death of

Christ - the hope that love is stronger than death and will eventually triumph. Easter is the day of the Son not in the sense that through an almighty intervention of the Father the darkness of Good Friday has been scattered and its agony abolished, but that through the agony the Son has emerged as the living centre of a new life and new hope for all mankind...But it is also one of the most fragile items in Christian faith, reminding us again that hope itself is fragile and vulnerable (Macquarrie, 1978, pp.68-69).

There is a sense in which education, as a consequence of the speed of change is similarly vulnerable. This fragility of hope provides an insight into the potential for the events of the resurrection to underpin a Christian vision for education. Whilst the outcome of the resurrection can be viewed as God's ultimate victory over death, from a human perspective the realisation of what this momentous event meant took time to unfold in the hearts and minds of Jesus' disillusioned followers. For example, the early visitors to the tomb failed to appreciate the significance of what they saw with their own eyes (20:3). Similarly, in the educational context of a Church school there is a sense in which the significance of resurrection hope can remain unrealised in the daily life of the community. For example when the strategic decisions made by school leaders is not informed by a Christian understanding of hope then disillusionment could be the outcome. In John's account of the resurrection hope, when it is realised, is empowering and centres on the transforming presence of the risen Christ to Mary Magdalene, Thomas and the other disciples. This research explores the potential for this same empowerment and transformation to take place within the context of a Church school. Louw articulates this as:

The faithfulness of God is illustrated and exemplified by the truth of the Gospel, namely the salvific event of the cross and the spiritual empowerment of people by means of the

resurrection. Christian hope is in essence resurrection hope (Louw, 2016, p.132).

The quality of the corporate life of a Church school as a social community is also an important factor in supporting its development as a place of human flourishing. In education, this flourishing can be directed towards academic achievements, meeting individual targets, improving levels of attainment and rates of progress, etc. Although not specifically linking hope to the resurrection, Marcel offers insight into the social and communal aspect of hope:

Hope is only possible on the level of the *us*, or we might say of the *agapé*, and that it does not exist on the level of the solitary *ego*, self-hypnotised and concentrating exclusively on individual aims. Thus it also implies that we must not confuse hope and ambition, for they are not of the same spiritual dimension (Marcel, 2010, p.4).

Agapé, or sacrificial love, is a feature of St. John's Gospel as a whole as well as being evident in the resurrection narratives. The corporate nature of this love is evident in St. John 3:16 which portrays God's love for the world as a whole as motivating His sacrificial gift of Jesus Christ. Whilst there is a focus on God's love for the world, much of the theological emphasis in St. John's Gospel narrative is expressed through Jesus' human love for His followers and friends, which in turn exemplifies God's divine love for the world (13:1). Bauckham also writes of this aspect: "In Jesus' love for his friends God's love took human historical form in order to embrace the world" (Bauckham, 2015, loc.1525). Jesus Christ, as suffering servant, exemplifies the selflessness of love in His relationships with others, obedience to His Father and supremely in His Passion. Through his narrative, St. John also shows the love of God towards His Son, which supports Jesus throughout His ministry, death and resurrection (3:35). Jesus is also aware of the Father's love: "The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again" (10:17). Most importantly the research illustrates the importance of love in the events of the resurrection. This

suggests that sacrificial love should be evident in the corporate life of a Church school community. Linking this to hope as an outcome of the resurrection as portrayed by John in his Gospel, this love in action should be evident in the quality of the relationships between members of the school community.

Another feature of the resurrection that strikes me as I connect with the Biblical text is that Jesus still bears the marks of crucifixion suggesting that resurrection and suffering are, so to speak, two sides of the same coin. St. John focuses on this aspect of Jesus' appearance in His meeting with the disciples behind closed doors (20:19) and His later appearance to Thomas (20:27). It is remarkable that in both appearances Jesus' greeting to them is one of, 'Peace be with you' (20:19; 26). Having suffered crucifixion, abandonment and betrayal Jesus displays no resentment towards them. He perhaps understands their isolated and fearful state of mind, their vision of God lost, along with their expectations and future hopes. Although writing about a different context to education, Simon comments on the resurrection as "incorporating suffering and pain into a new perspective on life. Resurrection faith does not retreat from the reality of suffering, but confirms the tragedy of suffering" (Simon, 1967, p.101). In an educational context, the challenge is similarly to demonstrate the part that resurrection hope can play in the lives of pupils and their families when tragedy strikes, when dreams remain unrealised and humanity is disfigured through suffering. In addition, educational praxis focused on a practical expression of a Christian view of resurrection hope will also find expression through collective worship, the prayer life of the Church school and the impact of the Christian ethos. I turn once more to Louw who asserts resurrection as affirming and reframing life in this way:

Life is not necessarily *negative* (pessimistic stance);
life is not necessarily *positive* (optimistic stance).
Life is *realistic*: full of contradictions and
paradoxes. But it can be lived through the Spirit of
the resurrection in hope (Louw, 2016, p.343).

This is a particularly useful understanding of life and demonstrates how the hope of the resurrection can influence the way life is experienced. Leaders in Church schools, particularly theologically informed headteachers, as well as classroom practitioners, have the potential to become realistic symbols of hope for their community through their attitude and constructive actions. As headteacher of a Church school I was aware of the need to model the school's Christian values as positively as I could, but reflecting back I did not specifically utilise a critical realist understanding of hope as outlined by Louw above. By this I mean that the narrative of the school's everyday life was not consistently articulated in the light of resurrection hope. I will return to this following the next stage in the approach that is designed to critically reflect on the Biblical context of the resurrection account in St. John's Gospel.

The next stage moves away from a subjective or existential focus on my experience, educational context and praxis to one that focuses on the textual particulars found in the author's context. In Kennard's view this is a critical realist approach which seeks to recover the accounts of the witnesses, in this case the Gospel writer St. John, appreciating as fully as possible his theological perspective. At this stage in the process it is the Biblical text that has authority and this is reflected in the document analysis that follows.

4.3 Phase 3: Critical Reflection (Interpretation Level 2/ textual critical realism/ Biblical hermeneutics)

By way of introduction to this next stage, it is worth noting that in his translation of the Bible King (2004) suggests that Jesus' first words uttered in St. John's Gospel (1:38) are important in guiding any reading of St. John's Gospel. Having been baptised by John the Baptist, Jesus is aware that Andrew and his brother Simon are following Him. Turning around Jesus asks them, "What do you seek?" These words are then followed by His invitation to "Come and see". This concept of seeking is important within the gospel. For example, John records Jesus asking those who have come to seize Him in the garden of Gethsemane, "Whom do you seek?" (18:4), and this same question is asked of Mary outside the empty

tomb (20:15). King indicates that these two sayings “should leap from the page at us, and accompany our reading of the Gospel” (King, 2004, p.207).

To guide this element within the approach I propose where appropriate to focus on different aspects of the text including narrative structure, use of language, symbolism themes and characterisation to identify the motif of hope underpinning and informing a theological vision for Christian education.

4.3.1 St. John 20:1-10: The resurrection of Jesus

Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. (20:9)

Mary visits the tomb (20:1-2): Whilst all four Gospel writers record that Mary Magdalene visited the tomb on Easter Sunday morning and found it empty, St. John is the only Gospel writer who has her coming alone. This provides the backdrop for an intense focus on her grief that is not present in the other accounts. “Mary’s depth of experience enables us to feel both the desolation at the beginning and later the overpowering joy of rediscovery and awakening” (Lee, 2002, p.224). She comes early in the morning on the first day of the week while it is still dark. St. John offers no reason as to why she has come. It is perhaps that she comes simply out of love to grieve the loss of Jesus. The fact that it is still dark is perhaps a symbolic and apt description of Mary’s faith in these moments of loss. In these moments she stands alone in the darkness, grieving and without hope in the midst of incomprehension and unbelief. Mary is completely unaware of the momentous event that has already taken place and the transforming impact that the knowledge of Jesus’ resurrection will bring to her own life and to others.

The Gospels of Mark and Luke indicate that the women had brought aromatic oils to anoint the body of Jesus. Matthew suggests that they came to simply see the tomb, for he alone indicates that the tomb was guarded and the women would therefore not have been allowed to enter. Tradition indicates that Jesus’ body had been fully prepared for burial on the Friday.

The custom of mourning at the burial site is mentioned in St. John 11:31. It was the Jewish custom to visit the burial place of a loved one for three days after the body had been laid to rest. This was because it was believed that the spirit of the dead person stayed close by for three days before finally leaving once the body became unrecognisable due to decay. The followers of Jesus could not visit the tomb on the Sabbath as to do so would mean breaking the law, so in St. John's account Mary comes very early on the Sunday morning. The Greek word used for early is *proi*, which is the technical term for the last of the four watches of the night lasting from 3.00am to 6.00am. St. John writes as if the reader knows about the stone, even though he makes no previous mention of the tomb being sealed. In addition, St. John gives no indication about how he thinks the stone has been moved. Mary apparently makes no attempt to enter the tomb or even to look inside. This is presumably because she interprets the fact that the tomb is open as signifying its emptiness, which she interprets as meaning that the body of Jesus has been stolen. This is a logical conclusion, for tomb robbery was a prevalent crime at this time. In response to her upsetting and problematic discovery Mary ran to Peter, who in spite of his denial still appears to be the leader of Jesus' followers, and to the disciple whom Jesus loved. Her sense of loss is evident in the manner in which she reports that the tomb is open and assumed to be empty: 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him' (20:2). Byrne (2014, p.329) suggests that Mary uses the plural 'we' to communicate that the problem is not just Mary's, for the apparent loss of Jesus' body affects all the disciples. Commenting on the way in which this sense of loss experienced by these early visitors to the tomb was gradually transformed into resurrection hope Hull writes that:

Loss is the loss of something, which makes possible the emergence of creativity out of nothing...creative thinking must be described as being transcendent rather than experiential. It is experienced as the creative thinking of God about humanity. The stories of the resurrection appearances of Jesus are the outstanding symbols of this strangely creative place

beyond despair. The empty tomb is precisely an encounter with emptiness...There was nothing (Hull, 1992, p.200).

It seems likely that St. John did not introduce the Beloved Disciple onto the scene only to have him come to the conclusion that Mary was right and Jesus' body had indeed been stolen. The greater speed of St. John in reaching the tomb ahead of Peter is attributed by Brown (1970, p.985) to the age of St. John as being younger than Peter. However, it may also be that St. John is trying to subordinate Peter as mentioned earlier. Byrne suggests that: "The ensuing 'race' shows both anxiety and deep residual love for the Master they have lost...the faster running of the disciple stems from a greater degree of love" (Byrne, 2014, p.329). It would seem that there is now sufficient daylight for St. John to peer into the tomb and see the linen cloths lying on the ground. However, he like Mary does not enter the tomb. Whether this was because he was surprised, afraid, or simply did not wish to become contaminated by touching the corpse is open to interpretation. However, these suggestions would seem somewhat contradictory to the idealised portrayal of him in the Gospel as a whole. In St. John's Gospel, it is only Peter and the Beloved Disciple who enter the tomb, whereas in Mark and Luke it is the women who enter. Peter's entry into the tomb enables him to see first-hand what perhaps the Beloved Disciple had failed to notice from peering in. The linen cloths are lying on the ground as the Beloved Disciple saw them but also the cloth that covered Jesus's head, known as the *soudarion*, was rolled up in a place separately by itself. St. John enters after Peter and the Gospel writer records that 'he saw and believed' (20:8). This could mean that his realisation that the tomb was empty results in St. John becoming the first person to believe in the resurrection. It could also be interpreted to mean that he was simply at this point convinced that Mary Magdalene had been speaking the truth when she said that the body of Jesus was no longer there. However, this would seem somewhat of an anti-climax if this were the correct interpretation of what St. John means. However, the statement that follows would appear to indicate that St. John's pronouncement is based on spiritual insight rather than simply to confirm Mary's discovery, "for as yet they did not know the Scripture, that he must

rise from the dead” (20:9). Although the possibility of the body being stolen is a plausible consideration for the disciples on their arrival at the tomb, it seems that St. John’s interpretation is more enlightened. He sees that the grave clothes are not disarranged but lying there still in their folds. This indicates that the clothes had not been taken off in a hurry and indeed if the body had been stolen, would the perpetrators have bothered to take the time to undress the body of Jesus. For St. John this is a moment of enlightenment. He is the first person to understand and believe. Of Peter’s faith, St. John remains silent at this point. St. John describes the disciples as going back home though he makes no mention of their state of mind. There is a suggestion that the real purpose of this verse is to get the disciples off the scene and leave the stage to Mary Magdalene. However, another important consideration is that the disciples were more at risk of being seen by the Jewish authorities once daylight came and therefore keen to return to a place of relative safety.

The placing of the *soudarion* in the empty tomb is pivotal in the Beloved Disciple coming to believe in the resurrection. Byrne (2014, p.330) draws attention to this detail to contrast Jesus’ resurrection with the raising of Lazarus (11:1-44). This miracle also contains Jesus’ words concerning resurrection, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die” (11:25). St. John records that: ‘The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth’ (11:44). This was a ‘sign’ that St. John recognises. It indicates the vast difference between Lazarus’ resuscitation and return to life and the resurrection of Jesus, who had been raised to a new and transformed life. Whereas Mary Magdalene, Peter and later Thomas, along with the other disciples come to faith when they have met the risen Jesus, this disciple believes on the evidence of a sign. This is indicative for the generations of believers to follow, who similarly will not see Jesus but will believe because of the many signs recorded in the Gospel (20:30-31).

Theologians, Biblical scholars and commentators have written much about the significance of empty tomb in relation to the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ. I believe that it is necessary for understanding

the mystery of the resurrection appearances that follow, for without the empty tomb support for a physical resurrection is sapped of strength and validity. Norman argues that: “without the empty tomb narratives there is no link between his death/ burial and his resurrection from the dead” (Norman, 2008, p.791). Similarly, Williams notes the importance of the empty tomb in “guaranteeing that when the community encounters the mercy and calling of the risen Lord, it interprets his risen-ness in a certain way” (Williams, 2014, p.97). However, at this point in the narrative the empty tomb alone does not enable those encountering it to initially conclude that Jesus has risen from the dead.

Christianity stands or falls within the reality of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God. In the New Testament there is no faith that does not start with a *priori* of the resurrection of Jesus...A Christian faith that is not resurrection faith can therefore be called neither Christian nor faith...It is the remembrance of his resurrection that is the ground of the inclusive hope in the universal future of Christ (Moltmann, 2002, p.152).

It is difficult to equate the empty tomb with hope prior to resurrection belief, but some commentators seek to do so. For example, Reynolds describes it as representing, “a confrontation with suffering that does not identify it as redemptive *per se* but rather allows one to envision pastoral praxes of accompaniment that promote the cultivation of communities of memory and hope” (Reynolds, 2016, p.55). Similarly, Schüssler Fiorenza, suggests that, “the empty tomb interrupts theological tendencies to view the cross in soteriological isolation and thus to regard suffering and obedient self-sacrifice as redemptive, salvific and revelatory of a higher, more important reality” (Schüssler Fiorenza, 2015, p.125). In reality, the tomb was not empty for the grave clothes remained. The stone was rolled away, not to let Jesus out but to enable those first visitors at the tomb to view the signs of the unseen action of God in raising Jesus from the dead. The failure of those first visitors to comprehend or make sense of

what has happened is perhaps an indication of their grief stricken and fearful state.

4.3.2 St. John 20:11-18 Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene

Jesus said to her, 'Woman why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?'
(20:15)

Mary of Magdalene is the prominent character in St. John's narrative account. She is depicted as standing outside the tomb weeping and eventually summons up the courage to look inside. Byrne makes note of the emphasis that St. John places on Mary's emotional state especially on her weeping, which is mentioned twice in verse 11 and then again in verses 13 and 15. He describes this scene as "possibly one of the most poignant and heart-warming in the entire Gospel." He also makes the link to Jesus' prophecy at the Last Supper: "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice: you will be sorrowful but your sorrow will turn into joy" (16:20). The despair that Mary Magdalene feels in these moments robs her of any sense of hope (Byrne, 2014, p.331).

Like the two disciples Peter and St. John, Mary now looks inside the tomb. However, unlike Peter and St. John she does not see the grave clothes but two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been. This suggests that there was far more to the open tomb than Mary had at first thought. In her grief she was slow to grasp the heavenly explanation of the emptiness of the tomb. Schüssler Fiorenza describes how:

Within the space of the empty tomb, the ultimate meaning of suffering and pain is woven together with the gentle hope reaffirmed by Christ's resurrection. The empty tomb that Mary Magdalene encounters can be understood as an ambiguous and imaginative 'open space'. The empty tomb bears the capacity to hold in tension the presence and absence of the resurrected Christ, the grief and hope of Mary Magdalene, her desire to dwell with the lost and the necessity of continuing to live (Schüssler Fiorenza, 2015, p.125).

No explanation is given concerning the presence of the angels, though St. Augustine suggests that their positions at the head and the other at the foot of the place where Jesus' body had lain symbolise the preaching of the gospel from beginning to end. The early Church father St. Gregory the Great suggests that they are symbolic of the two testaments (Elowsky, 2007, p.342). St. John records that the angels ask Mary why it is that she is crying to which she replies that it is because, "They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have laid him" (20:13). Their question indicates that this is no occasion for tears but celebration. She then turns round and sees Jesus but in her grief stricken state she does not realise that it is He. He repeats the angel's question adding a second, "Whom do you seek?" (20:15). Thinking that Jesus may well be the gardener she asks to be told where He has put the body so that she can take it away. A symbolic interpretation on Mary's assumption that He is the gardener is put forward by two of the early Church fathers, St. Jerome and St. Gregory the Great. They suggest that in a spiritual and symbolic sense Jesus was a gardener who had planted the fruitful seeds of virtue in her heart by the force of His love (Elowsky, 2007, p.346). It would seem that there is nothing unusual about Jesus' appearance, even though Mary does not recognise Him. She calls Him 'Sir' (20:15) when she thinks He is the gardener perhaps because she is asking Him a favour. It is only when Jesus says her name that Mary realises it is He and she responds by calling Him, 'Rabboni' which means teacher (20:16). Mary recognised Jesus by His voice, as the sheep recognise the voice of the Good Shepherd, "When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers" (10:4-5).

The importance of this encounter is encapsulated in Jesus' uttering Mary's name. As well as the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, it reminds me of the words of the prophet Isaiah (43:1), "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, you are mine." Mary does not belong to the group of disciples who had betrayed and deserted Jesus in His passion but she does have a unique past and life story that involved a special relationship with Jesus. She was one of the women who had known God's forgiveness and love as she stood at the place of crucifixion. In this

moment Mary's relationship with Jesus was restored and her identity was once more affirmed. Osiek states that: "the empty tomb narrative is an epiphany story. For it is the women's story, and they are the protagonists, for the story is about how they are changed, just as surely as Acts 9:1-19 is about how Paul is changed" (Osiek, 1997, p.116). In a similar manner, Williams comments on the meeting thus:

Here, with rare intensity and economy, St. John unites for us the moments of recognising (or remembering) self and recognising (or remembering) God. The crucial instant in which the stranger, who appears to have robbed or deprived or diminished is revealed as saviour in the utterance of the particular and personal *name*. Mary is offered her name, her identity, which specifies her as the person with a particular story. And in this context, the utterance of the name re-establishes a relationship of trust and recognition. Mary suddenly sees the stranger as the one who has in the past called her by name, accepted and affirmed her identity (Williams, 2014, p.38).

Although not explicit in the text, there is the suggestion that Mary in response reaches out to touch Jesus, to hold him once more as a physical living person. This is followed by a command from Jesus that Mary should not to hold on to Him, a reference to His Father and His ascension, and the requirement that Mary should tell the other disciples. There is a suggestion that Jesus realises that Mary assumed that she could once more enjoy the relationship she had with Him prior to His crucifixion but Jesus was seeking to move Mary's thinking on to a higher and more spiritual plane. "Mary's intense grief and her desperate search for his body have shown the depth of her love for him in the old way" (Byrne, 2014, p.333). His revelation of Himself to her in His resurrected form means that life is changed forever and things can never be the same again. She is given the role of taking the message of His resurrection and ascension to His Father in heaven to the

disciples. Reynolds comments on the part that hope plays in Mary's encounter with the risen Jesus:

The empty tomb, the site of death and loss, becomes at the same time the site of re-membrance, recognition, re-incorporation... Mary's transformation from despair to suspicion to recognition to hope is an essentially embodied and relational transformation: she stands outside, bends over, looks: she weeps; she listens, speaks, turns, is recognised and recognises. It is then that she proclaims to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord" (20:18) (Reynolds, 2016, pp.57-8).

It is interesting that St. John gives Mary of Magdalene the honour of the first resurrection appearance. In the Middle East at that time a woman's testimony in court was heavily discounted and women generally were not regarded as reliable witnesses (N.T. Wright, 2003, p.608). It would seem unlikely therefore that St. John would attribute this to Mary of Magdalene unless it was what actually happened, for it would hardly add credibility to his account. Unlike the other characters that feature prominently in St. John's appearance stories, Mary is not one of the many characters who speak in the earlier Gospel narratives. St. John does not attempt to link her with the woman taken in adultery (8:2-11) or as the woman called Mary who anointed Jesus' feet (12:1-8). Mary Magdalene first appears as a witness to the crucifixion (19:25) before taking centre stage as the first to see the resurrected Jesus (20: 1-18) Dunn (2003).

It is perhaps a human failing that we do not always see that which is right in front of us. Commenting on this as a common thread running through the resurrection accounts Polkinghorne notes that, "Despite the variety of circumstances and detail, there is a surprising common thread in these gospel accounts. This thread is that it was difficult to recognise the risen Christ" (Polkinghorne, 2002, p.71). Commenting on St. John's divine perspective and the need to make more of our spiritual insight, Gooder states that:

St. John's Gospel teaches us the importance of retraining our sight to see the world not as it appears to us, but as it appears to God – a world that to us can seem cruel and hopeless, but to God is one that calls for love and transformation. Our eyes, the sense that many of us rely on more than all the others, can be incredibly unreliable, or at least what our brain does with what we see can be unreliable (Gooder, 2009, p.55).

This would suggest that there is an important role for spiritual formation, not only in preparing for the Christian's eschatological hope of a future with God but of achieving a partial realisation of that hope in the present moment. Polkinghorne refers to this in stating that "true hope arises from the death and resurrection of Christ. Earthly expectations miss the point, for they neglect the significance of the unseen realities on which true hope actually rests" (Polkinghorne, 2002, p.88). In the context of this resurrection appearance to Mary Magdalene, the seed of Christian hope stems from a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Marcel commenting on the close connection between the soul and hope writes that:

Hope is for the soul what breathing is for the living organism. Where hope is lacking the soul dries up and withers; it is not more than a function, it is merely fit to serve as an object of study to a psychology that can never register anything but its location or absence (Marcel, 2010, p. 5).

The spiritual impact of Mary's encounter with the risen Jesus demonstrates a spiritual awakening of the soul from its dark night. This is an aspect of hope that will be repeated throughout St. John's resurrection account. As a theological virtue hope involves the pursuit of a spiritual understanding which values the possibilities within the present moment. It also takes account of the sufferings and mistakes of the past and the yet unseen promise and expectations of the future. This pursuit of spiritual understanding links with the concept of 'seeking' referred to earlier by King

(2004). As well as accompanying our reading of the Gospel as King suggests, there may be a sense in which hope is similarly something that has to be sought after.

4.3.3 St. John 20:19-29 Jesus gives the disciples the power to forgive sins

Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. (20:21)

The disciples having been told by Mary Magdalene that she has seen the Lord now see Him for themselves. On the one hand the disciples may have believed what Mary had told them, but it is also conceivable that they wondered why Jesus had not fulfilled His promise to meet them in Galilee (Mark 16:7; Matthew 28:16). However, the Feast of Unleavened Bread is still going on, so it is very unlikely that any of them would have contemplated leaving Jerusalem for Galilee at this particular moment in time. Whatever their feelings, the suggestion that they are behind closed doors for fear of the Jews, would seem to indicate that her report had made little positive impact upon them.

St. John records that it was evening and the doors were closed for fear of the Jews. Jesus does not delay in comforting the disciples with His presence. Although Mary's report of the resurrection had given them a glimmer of hope, their hearts and minds were still in a potentially dark place where grief and sadness at their loss were still the dominant emotions. St. John Chrysostom suggests that the reason Jesus appears to the disciples in the evening is because this is probably when they would have been most fearful (Elowsky, 2007, p.356). The apocryphal Gospel of Peter verse 26, mentions that the Jewish authorities had been searching for the disciples on the grounds that they were wrongdoers who had tried to burn down the Temple. "But I with the companions was sorrowful; and having been wounded in spirit, we were in hiding, for we were sought after by them as wrongdoers and as wishing to set fire to the sanctuary." Alternatively the disciples may have simply remained inside to mourn. Whether the doors were closed as a barrier to the Jews or to enable St. John to show that Jesus' resurrection body could now pass through solid objects is open to

interpretation. Central to St. John's stress on the characteristics of Jesus' resurrection body is that by focusing on the wounds of Jesus he is able to establish continuity between the crucifixion and the resurrection. The risen Lord who appears to the disciples was the same Jesus who died on the cross.

In his commentary Brown (1970, p.1019) makes a possible connection between the Christian custom of celebrating the Eucharist on a Sunday, and the manner in which St. John highlights the beginning of these scenes involving Jesus' appearance to His disciples in Chapter 20. St. John records both as taking place on the first day of the week. In addition, Barrett (1978, p.477) sees traces of a liturgy in St. John 20:19-29 featuring: the assembling of the disciples on the Lord's Day; a blessing of 'Peace be with you'; the Holy Spirit descending on the worshippers; the word of absolution is pronounced; Jesus is present bearing the marks of His crucifixion; He is confessed as Lord and God. If correct, then this he argues is the first indication of the Christian observance of Sunday as the Lord's Day being linked to the resurrection. However, Brown (1970) also gives credence to the possibility that Jewish Christians meeting in their homes to celebrate the Eucharist would have done so in the late evening on Saturday. Placing Jesus' appearance to Thomas exactly one week later further supports the notion that there is at least some symbolic relevance to the timing of both these appearances on the first day of the week.

It is interesting to note that Jesus twice repeats the words, 'Peace be with you.' He first says these words as He enters the room and stands among them and then the greeting is repeated after He has shown them His hands and side. In one sense this is a conventional Semitic greeting that Jesus shares with the disciples. In a deeper sense Jesus is communicating peace in a seemingly more profound way than it has been offered before. 'It is not merely a wish 'Peace be with you'; it is a declaration 'Peace is with you', (Brown, 1970, p.1021). In showing them His hands and His sides as He bestows His peace upon them Jesus links peace to His sacrificial death on the cross that is motivated by love. Jones comments on the words of Jesus' greeting: "that such words could come from so broken a body is truly a wonder, and it is a word of hope for us especially when we are wounded" (Jones, 2009, p.41). St. Peter Chrysologus suggests that in repeating the

greeting Jesus wanted the tranquillity that He had first announced to their minds individually, to also be shared corporately (Elowsky, 2007, p.360).

The disciples response to Jesus' appearance in their midst is one of joy. Life is about to change for the disciples, for they are no longer to be fearful but must be prepared to continue Jesus' work of redemption. Jesus gives the disciples a command: "As the Father sent me, even so I send you" (20:21). He prepares the disciples for their future ministry by breathing His Spirit upon them, so giving them spiritual power to forgive sins. This power is given in equal measure to each one, to withhold God's forgiveness of sins from some and to grant it to others. This breath was to be the start of the Holy Spirit's influence and a precursor to the wind of Pentecost. "As bearer of the Spirit, the disciples are missioned to offer the world the reconciliation and eternal life won by the Son" (Byrne, 2014, p.336). In the same way that God breathed His life into Adam at the start of creation, so now God breathes His life into the founding of His Church. The implication being that what is happening here is a new creation.

This would indicate that hope involves the redemption of the past in order that the promises of the future, the new creation, can be fully realised. Polkinghorne states that:

If it is to be true and total, hope must look in both directions. One may ask where participation in such an all-embracing hope could find its setting in human life. Two important sources are our experiences of forgiveness and of joy, the one freeing us from the tyranny of the past, the other offering us a foretaste of the ultimate future (Polkinghorne, 2002, p.96).

The past cannot be changed but it can be re-interpreted, ignored or even denied. However, from a Christian perspective, wrongs from the past can only be redeemed through forgiveness. God's forgiveness is made possible through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist who on seeing Jesus coming towards him says, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away

the sin of the world”, refers to this aspect of the Godhead (1:29). Similarly, redemption of the past also involves the forgiveness of others who have hurt us and this is a costly exercise in overcoming the natural desire for some form of punitive revenge. Groome offers a shared praxis approach involving a constant remembering of the past.

The past certainly cannot be imposed upon the present as a final word. Rather, it is to be placed in a dialectic with the present. If the past is forgotten and left unreclaimed, it will determine and control our present. If it is critically appropriated, it can be emancipatory (Groome, 1980, p.176).

It would seem difficult to imagine that real joy could be fully experienced in the present without vindication of the past. Polkinghorne (2002, p.98) quotes Volf (2000, p.275) who expresses this as: “Joy lives from *the movement in time* qualified by an unperturbed peace between past and future in all presents.” Could this portrayal of Christian hope as living in each moment with God’s spiritual presence, made possible through the death and resurrection of Christ underpin a vision for Christian education? Is this the entirety of Christ’s peace that He shares with His disciples when He appears before them once more? This resurrection appearance indicates the importance of healing the past in order to live well in the present with the emphasis on the disciples’ future ministry of forgiveness. In addition, the impact of Jesus’ presence rather than His absence is clearly transformative (20:20). However, whilst these have implications for the past and present, it would seem that in themselves they do not encompass all that Christian hope involves.

In seeking further exemplification Paul uses the idea of a new creation when putting into words the Christian eschatological hope: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Polkinghorne (2002, p.84) describes “the cosmic scope of this new creation, no longer limited to human destiny alone.” Paul refers to this as a universal hope in Romans 8:19-23 giving in verses 24-25 a definition of Christian hope: “For in this

hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.” This is articulated in Jesus’ words regarding those who will not see Him, but who will believe following his appearance to Thomas to which I now turn.

Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them (20:26).

St. John’s account of Jesus’ appearance to Thomas would perhaps make little sense without the earlier appearance to the disciples when he was not present. Having the same core features, Jesus again stands amongst them, saying ‘Peace be with you’ (20:26) and shows Thomas His hands and His side (20:27). It is interesting that St. John does not describe Thomas putting his finger or hand into Jesus’ wounds. It would seem that seeing Jesus and hearing Him speak is sufficient for Thomas to make his confession of faith that goes far beyond that of the other disciples at this stage, ‘My Lord and my God!’ (Dunn 2003, p.851).

No other post-resurrection appearance pays such close attention to an individual’s attitude, as does Jesus’ appearance to Thomas. This is because, “Thomas has become the personification of an attitude” (Brown, 1970, p.1031). St. Gregory the Great suggests that it was no accident that a doubting disciple should be absent from the group when Jesus appears. “The unbelief of Thomas is more profitable to our faith than the belief of the other disciples” (Elowsky, 2007, p.367). However, not all modern commentators go along with this stereotypical presentation of Thomas. For example, Gooder (2009, p.58) points out that when Thomas’ three appearances in St. John’s Gospel (11:8, 11:16, 14:5) are taken collectively they show that far from believing too little, he actually is someone who “believes passionately, deeply and with the whole of their being.” On a positive note, when referring to Jesus’ response to Thomas’ request, the doubt Thomas expresses enables St. John to draw attention to the touchable make up of Jesus’ resurrection body. In a sense Thomas encompassed the unexpressed corporate doubt of the disciples. Through his characterisation of Thomas, St. John is able to address this theologically with the commands

of Jesus to: stop doubting and believe; confess Jesus as Lord and God, and bless those who have not seen and yet believe. This is an insight into the ever-widening horizon which has extended from Jesus' original appearance to the disciples; both with and without Thomas, to include those future generations of doubters and believers whom the disciples represent. The era of Jesus' appearances is drawing to a close and it was important that the community of believers were united before Jesus' return to God the Father. Williams also makes this point:

Thomas' failure is not in misunderstanding the nature of resurrection but in demanding a special, individual assurance of it: he wants a proof other than the testimony of the group of believers. Beyond the first, irrecoverable moment of encounter, it is essentially through the Church that the world comes to belief, not by any indefinite series of 'special' events: such seems to be St. John's point, a point entirely in accord with the themes of the Farewell discourses (14-17). A resurrection appearance designed to prove the reality of Jesus risen-ness, divorced from the establishing of the community's faith, can only be, at best, anomalous. If such a concession is granted to Thomas, it is presumably, in St. John's eyes, to complete the manifestation of the whole apostolic band, to re-establish the whole community of Jesus's friends (Williams, 2014, p.94).

The final statement of Jesus in this particular passage opens up possibilities for the future. "You have believed because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (20:29). The words of Jesus at this point are similar to the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10). A distinction is made between those whose faith is based upon their sight or first-hand experience of the risen Jesus and those future generations of Christians who will not have the benefit of this experience. The beatitude declares the blessedness of those who will have to base their belief on the

testimony of others and the teachings of the Church. It is of course for these future generations that the Gospel accounts were written.

In reflecting on these resurrection appearances to the disciples behind closed doors, as recorded by St. John, I am initially struck by the importance that first-hand experience played in changing perceptions. Earlier in the day Mary of Magdalene had become the first person to meet the risen Jesus. We have already commented on the impact of this encounter in moving Mary from a place of utter despair at the loss of Jesus' presence in her life to a place where her relationship with Him was once more restored. Mary had obediently carried out His instructions to, "Go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (20:17). It is perhaps surprising that we should find the disciples gathered together behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. It would appear that despite Mary's message they are transfixed in a state of loss because, unlike Mary, they have not had this first-hand encounter with the risen Jesus. We see this repeated in Thomas' refusal to believe unless he is given the same opportunity as the other disciples. Whilst Thomas had to wait eight days for his request to be answered, the meeting was once more transformative in moving Thomas from a place of loss and despair to one of hope, acceptance and recognition. Williams also notes this point in writing that:

The resurrection is not properly preached without awareness of the human world as a place of loss and a place where men and women strive not to be trapped in that loss. The 'converted' apostle preaches to, and in the middle of, this experience, and is constrained to see the beginning of conversion in every turning-away from the dead acceptance of loss. The world is a place of incipient conversion, in its restlessness and in its struggle for a truth and a home, for justice, restoration, fulfilment. Where men and women recognise truthfully the reality of pain, deprivation and oppression in the world (and in their own lives), and react with passion and engagement,

they have turned the void of lostness into a kind of unspoken, unformulable hope (Williams, 2014, pp.41-42).

Scripture supports the reasonableness of Christian hope communicated through the testimony of Biblical writers such as St. John. Encounters with the risen Christ were not simply affective, about turning emotional lows into emotional highs, but involved the disciples in critical reflection that informed both their future actions and their making sense of their experiences. As such, critical reflection engages both the rational and the affective capacities of the human person. Groome comments that:

In critical reflection on present action (praxis) the exercise of creative imagination is an expression of hope. Hope is what makes the real seem less real than it is, and the imagined more real than it is already. Only humankind has this ability for hope, because we alone can dream, envision, fantasise...Critical reflection then, requires the exercise of reason, memory and imagination...All three are necessary for attending the past, the present and the future (Groome, 1980, p.186-7).

He explains further how reason, memory and imagination function distinctly but also together. This is helpful for the purposes of this research. There is a sense in which Jesus, in each of His resurrection appearances, seeks to support the disciples in envisioning the future in the present. However, without imagination the future has the potential to become little more than a repeat showing of the past.

While the focus of attention for our memories is the past, we also need to call on our reason and imagination if it is to be a critical memory that reclaims the past in a new way (*forgiveness*). In bringing reason to the present and our imagination, we also need our memories to understand the

genesis of the present and our imagination if we are not to settle simply for what we find there (*new creation*). And as we use our imagination to envision the future, the images we use come out of our memory and are evaluated by our reason (*hope*) (Groome, 1980, p.187). (Italics mine)

Although there are further resurrection appearances to be considered, the documentary analysis appears to be moving toward Christian hope as a realised feature of life in the present, as well as the belief in a future state of blessedness experienced after death. Both elements are important, for without eschatological hope what sense can be made of a life that is tragically shortened, limited or distorted in this present age. Even if we have the good fortune to live to a ripe old age, there is still a sense in which we will have unfinished business on this earth so there must be more to hope for (Polkinghorne, 2002, p.99).

4.3.4 St. John 21:1-14 Jesus appears to disciples by the Sea of Tiberias

This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. (21:14)

St. John does specify why the disciples are back in Galilee. References in the Gospel of Mark (14:28) indicate that Jesus had told them prior to His crucifixion to return there and He would meet them. In addition, an angel had told them post resurrection that Jesus would see them in Galilee (Mark 16:7). The group consists of seven disciples, five of whom are named and two who are not. Peter is presented as taking the lead in deciding to go fishing and the rest follow. Some commentators see this act as: “an aimless activity undertaken in desperation or even apostasy” (Brown, 1970, p.1096). The resurrection of Jesus is still sinking in, they are reflecting critically on the meaning of it all.

That night they catch nothing, which is a graphic portrayal of how bereft they are without Jesus’ presence. They had done what they thought was the right thing but experience complete failure. However, the desperateness of their predicament has prepared the ground for them to learn

one of the central lessons of discipleship, that apart from Jesus they can do nothing (15:5). Jesus had taught them this lesson before, for the disciples had never been successful in catching fish without Jesus' help (Brown, 1970, p.1071). There is a suggestion that the fishing motif is a symbol of mission, which would support the idea that without Jesus the disciples are unlikely to be successful (Byrne, 2014, p.345). It is thought unusual by commentators that the disciples catch nothing as custom asserts that on the Lake of Galilee night fishing yielded a more prolific catch than during daylight hours (Ray, 2002, p.385). This was because the fish swam deeper in the centre of the lake during the heat of the day, coming up to the surface along the shore during the cooler hours of darkness

On this occasion the turning point came early in the morning, perhaps symbolizing the dawning of spiritual light. For St. John, symbols of 'light' and 'dark' are a feature of his writing (3:2; 3:19-21; 13:30; 20:1) and a key way in which he is able to draw attention to the difference that Jesus' presence made to a given situation. Jesus is described as simply standing on the shore with no details given as to how he arrived at the lakeside (21:4; see also 20:14, 19, 26). There is a suggestion in the text that Jesus appeared to the disciples suddenly. As in previous resurrection appearances, the disciples are not able to recognise him at first even though St. John records that they had seen Him twice before in His transformed appearance. The distance and the dimness of the light are possible reasons for their failure to recognise Jesus as He stood on the shore. However, this apparent difficulty of recognition does fit the thread running through St. John's account of the resurrection. On the other hand, we cannot be sure whether St. John is trying to indicate that there was something different about Jesus' body. Whilst there appears to be this on-going confusion in recognising Jesus post-resurrection, St. John nevertheless appears to be stressing in these descriptions both the continuity and discontinuity of Jesus' resurrection body.

It would appear that Jesus states the obvious in asking, "Children, have you any fish?" (21:5). Knowing full well that they had been unsuccessful there was perhaps a hint of irony in the question. Clement of Alexandria suggests that in addressing those who were already disciples as

children, Jesus indicates the importance of imitating the simplicity displayed by children (Elowsky, 2007, p. 379). Although this could be construed as Jesus behaving in a patronising or derogatory manner towards the disciples, this seems unlikely for at no point does He appear to be critical of their decision to go out on a fishing trip. However, the unsuccessful outcome is the means by which Jesus once more sets in motion their passage from a past that saw their lives reliant on nature's provision and their own common sense to a future life of faith in God. The Christian philosopher Ammonius makes the link between this directive from Jesus and His call to Peter and Andrew to leave their nets and become 'fishers of men' (Matthew 4:19). "Jesus told them to cast forth the word of the gospel on the right side of the boat. By the grace of the one who gave the order, the disciples drew in many" (Elowsky, 2007, p.379). Following His instructions to throw the net out to the right side of the boat they bring in a large haul of fish. The Beloved Disciple's words to Peter, "It is the Lord" was testimony to their new found understanding that when nature failed to provide for their needs, God would provide. The simplicity of Jesus' pedagogical approach was transformative for they saw the positive outcome of putting faith into action.

This is the second miracle recorded in the gospels involving a large catch of fish after a night of fruitless toil. The first is recorded in Luke 5:1-11 and occurred at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. This, the second miracle is recorded by St. John as taking place at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry. At this point the Beloved Disciple recognised Jesus and told Peter, who in turn put on some clothes because he was probably naked and jumped into the water. It is interesting that as in the empty tomb narrative (20:8) St. John was the first to 'see and believe' and in this final resurrection appearance he again is the first to recognise Jesus. One of the Early Church Fathers, St. John Chrysostom, notes the different temperaments and responses to Jesus from Peter and St. John. One was more fervent, the other more contemplative. While St. John is the first to recognise Jesus, it is Peter who is the first to come to Him (Elowsky, 2007, p.380).

When the disciples came ashore they saw that Jesus had lit a charcoal fire with fish cooking on it and some bread. He invited the disciples to add some of their freshly caught fish to the fire. Peter dragged the net ashore and

St. John records that there were one hundred and fifty three big fish in the net. Conjecture amongst Biblical commentators and theologians about the relevance of this exact number are vast. Adding her thoughts to significance of the number of fish caught, Gooder suggests that, we could be in danger of missing the obvious. Her point is that eight people could never eat so many fish so perhaps this last miracle is meant to be reminiscent of Jesus' first at the wedding in Cana. "We need to be careful not spend so long trying to work out the significance of the precise form of generosity offered that we forget to enjoy what has been given" (Gooder, 2009, p.61). Clearly there is so much in St. John's writing that is symbolic and meaningful that it was likely that St. John was seeking to give significance to the number. On the other hand, it could simply be that the number of fish caught was known because they were counted and divided amongst the disciples.

Jesus invited the disciples to come and have breakfast with Him. Verse 12 states that "Now none of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord." St. Jerome suggests that Jesus ate to prove the resurrection; it was proof for the disciples that what they saw was not a spirit but a body (Elowsky, 2007, p.380). Referring back to St. John's prologue (1:14) "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten Son from the Father", it becomes apparent that as an incarnational theologian, St. John is committed to portraying God in human flesh. It is therefore of paramount importance that his account of the resurrection should not be open to interpretation as an allegory or metaphor of spiritual experience (Wright, 2003, p.668).

The sacramental symbolism of this breakfast meal of fish and bread that Jesus shared with His disciples calls to mind many features of the Eucharist and the Last Supper. The words in verse 13 describe how "Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish." This description also resonates with the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand (6:1-15) where "Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted." A further connection is that both meals took place in Galilee. Cullmann (2012) supports this link between Eucharistic meals and

those eaten by the risen Jesus with His disciples. In addition, Brown (1970) indicates that early pictorial representations of the Eucharist found in iconography depict bread and fish, rather than bread and wine. Similarly, Williams comments on the important unifying and symbolic link between the various meals that Jesus shared with His disciples:

The risen Jesus eats with his disciples – in the Upper Room (Luke 24: 42-43), at Emmaus (ibid. 30-1), at the lakeside (St. John 21). At the most obvious level, this is a restoration of the memory simply of Jesus' table fellowship with the disciples during his ministry; but there are both verbal and 'pictorial' echoes of two specific incidents – the feeding of the multitude with bread and fish, and the Last Supper (Williams, 2014, p.3).

As somewhat of an afterthought St. John records that: "This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead" (21:14). This excludes the appearance to Mary of Magdalene, as appearances seem to be understood in terms of appearances to the disciples collectively rather than on an individual basis. In addition, Mary was not one of the original twelve disciples. As previously mentioned, there is a resemblance between this miraculous catch of fish and the first miracle of Jesus at the wedding in Cana as recorded by St. John "This, the first of his signs: Jesus did at Canaan in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him" (2:11). In both cases St. John refers to Jesus 'manifesting his glory' by meeting a need in a miraculous fashion, so providing a sign that in turn leads others to a deeper faith. "Both episodes feature a revelation of the divine that for believers of subsequent generations continues sacramentally under the form of bread and wine" (Byrne, 2014, p.348).

The importance of Jesus' incarnation and the experiences that the disciples shared with Him during His earthly life are prominent features in this section of narrative. There are evident links between the resurrected Jesus and the person that the disciples spent so much time with. There is

obvious recognition of Jesus on their part and this indicates that there is a real body to be seen. However, at the same time it was clearly not an ordinary body. Neutral observers do not see the resurrection appearances. Those He chooses to reveal Himself to are the only ones to see Him. Neither are the resurrection appearances self-induced by the disciples as they are generally surprised by Jesus' sudden presence with them, not expecting Him to be alive. It seems from a theological perspective there is nothing that can now separate Jesus from His disciples.

It is interesting to note the reference made earlier to the sacramental symbolism of this breakfast meal of fish and bread that Jesus shared with His disciples. It resonates with the Biblical accounts of Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-39; John 13:1-17:26), the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand (Matthew 14:13-21), and the Anglican and Roman Catholic liturgy of the Eucharist. This introduces a new aspect of Christian hope within the resurrection appearances, that of the communal or social nature of hope. Louw comments on the need for the consequences of the resurrection to be seen as much more than a subjective longing for everlasting life: "Resurrection hope becomes hope for a collective existence" (Louw, 2014, p.341). In appearing to His bewildered disciples, whether in Jerusalem behind closed doors, by the shore in Galilee or walking along a dusty road Jesus is able to restore their fellowship. As well as linking his understanding of hope specifically to the resurrection, Marcel (2010, p.4) also writes about the communal responsibility of hope as being "only possible on the level of the *us*." Marcel's definition of hope involves a communion between human beings and a relationship with God. However, for Marcel God is always slightly in the background acting as a foundation for this hope in communion with others alongside the material world which human beings inhabit. "A presence incarnated in the 'us' for whom 'I hope in Thee', that is to say in a communion of which I proclaim the indestructibility" (Marcel, 2010, p.60). The great importance that Marcel attaches to the social and communal aspects of hope are interesting when applied to an educational context. For example, Jacobs argues for "pedagogy to be understood in terms of working together toward the future in a relationship of praxis involving hope-in each other rather than hope-for

an individual desire” (Jacobs, 2005, p.786). This links closely with Marcel’s thoughts about the promotion of the individual over community:

I have no hesitation in saying that if we want to fight effectively against individualism in its most harmful form, we must find some way of breaking free from the asphyxiating atmosphere of examinations and competitions which our young people are struggling, “I must win, not you! I must get above you!” (Marcel, 2010, p.12).

Although not writing about an educational context per se, his thoughts are critical of the focus on individual achievement that is a feature of our current educational system. He prefers that rather than seeing *ego* as the author of originality, that there should be a return to the notion of gifts. As human beings we are guardians or trustees of these gifts carrying the responsibility for their fruitfulness in our lives (Marcel, 2012, p.13). A focus on communion then opens up the possibility for recognising that human beings have a shared responsibility towards each other and, as Jacobs (2005, p.790) suggests, helps to shed light on the relationship between availability, love, communion, dialogue and hope.

The experience of past, present and future which hope encapsulates are brought together in the sacraments of the Church. Within the modern Eucharistic liturgy those at worship proclaim that, “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.” Polkinghorne describes “holding together past, present and future in a sacramental moment in which the earthly congregation are participating in the everlasting worship of heaven. The bread and wine, that are elements of this creation are also the body and blood of Christ, elements of the new creation” (Polkinghorne, 2002, pp.100-1). A Eucharist in the context of a Church school expresses in a tangible way the presence of Christ in the midst of the school community, who is the source of hope for the school’s common life together. It also fulfils one of the aims of contextual theology, namely that of revealing God’s sacramental presence in the world (see p.63).

4.3.5 St. John 21:15-19 Peter is given a command

He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of St. John, do you love me? (21:17)

Dunn (2003, p.854) poses an interesting question about this scene featuring a dialogue between Jesus and Peter which asks, “Did St. John see this scene as simply an opportunity for Jesus to have a conversation with Peter?” The New Testament makes only two mentions a charcoal fire. Both occur in St. John’s Gospel. In the first, which occurs following Jesus’ arrest, Peter is depicted as standing with the slaves and servants outside the palace of the High Priest warming himself. In response to three questions that are put to him Peter denies being one of Jesus’ disciples. This episode concludes with the cock crowing as Jesus had predicted (18:17-27). In front of the second charcoal fire, whilst not making any explicit reference to Peter’s previous denial, Jesus asks Peter three times whether he loves Him more than these? This is a pivotal moment for Peter. In answering these questions, Peter experiences Jesus’ forgiveness; he is reconciled to Jesus and their relationship is restored; and finally he is re-created and his life is given a fresh purpose which is to fulfil God’s call to be founder of the Church. Forgiveness is a fundamental outcome of resurrection, not only for Peter, but also for all humanity. As such these are key moments of hope in Peter’s life. “There is the sense of past failure being wiped away and swallowed up in present love” (Byrne, 2014, p.348).

The resurrection reveals that God himself was at work directly in Jesus Christ making himself responsible for our condition, and fulfilling it by bearing the cost of forgiveness in himself. Forgiveness is not just a word of pardon but also a word translated into our existence by crucifixion and resurrection, by judgement and recreation (Torrance, 1998, p.61).

Two commentators, Brown (1970) and Ray (2002) suggest that Jesus may point to the haul of fish, the boats and nets, in a sense asking whether Peter loves Him more than his old way of life. In His subsequent

questions Jesus could be asking whether Peter loves Him more than he loves the other disciples or more than the other disciples love Jesus. Whatever the context behind the questions, the important outcome is that Peter, although hurt by Jesus' repeated questions, is able to reaffirm his love for Jesus and consequently be reconciled to Him. Jesus does not ask again after Peter is hurt. Although the hurt is based on being asked three times, it is also possible that he is hurt because he realises that his actions have given Jesus cause to doubt him (Brown 1970). A pastoral commission follows to "Feed my sheep" making Peter the shepherd of God's flock (21:17). Hooke writes that: "The divine love, that, knowing all, forgave all, sealed the forgiveness by committing to his care the flock which had been purchased at such a price" (Hooke, 1967, p.88). Ray notes how St. John is framing his Gospel to draw attention to the special calling of Peter: "The Gospel both begins and ends with the teaching that Peter held a special office, just as Jesus' earthly ministry begins (1:42) and ends (21:17)" (Ray, 2002, p.396).

It seems quite obvious that Jesus' three questions to Peter match exactly the number of times that Peter denied Him. Dunn (2003, p.845) notes that although this discourse between Jesus and Peter is set in the context of an appearance to the seven disciples, St. John's account of their dialogue is very personal and intimate in character. There is the suggestion that Jesus demonstrates love in its most understanding form in the manner in which He addresses His questions to Peter. Commenting on Jesus' question regarding Peter's love for Him, N.T. Wright highlights that:

There is a whole world in that question, a world of personal invitation and challenge, of the remaking of a human being after disloyalty and disaster, of the refashioning of epistemology itself, the question of how we know things, to correspond to the new ontology, the question of what reality exists of. The reality which is the resurrection cannot simply be 'known' from within the old world of decay and denial, of tyrants and torture, of disobedience and death (N.T. Wright, 2007, p.84).

However, as Gooder points out, Jesus is not calling for a response based on feelings alone.

In the ancient world, emotion was important, but not as important as action. Many times in the Bible, the command to love involves doing something. So, for example, in Romans 12:10 the command to love ('love one another with brotherly affection') is joined with a command to action ('outdo one another in showing honour'.) The same is true here: Peter is to show his love not by emotion alone but by caring for Jesus' lambs; he is to love Jesus by feeding and nurturing like a shepherd (Gooder, 2009, p.62).

Jesus then moves on and refers to Peter's martyrdom and his calling to follow Jesus in the suffering and imprisonment that he will experience. St. John makes the link with the imagery of the Good Shepherd, as being one who is called to lay down his life for the sheep (10:11). This follows the example of Jesus who hands over the role of shepherd not because of any special worthiness on Peter's part but to demonstrate that the choice of Peter is a practical expression of the way in which God works through the weak things of this world Brown (1970). His pastoral instruction to Peter to 'Feed my sheep' (21:17) "constitutes a ministry of hope founded on the forgiveness of the risen Lord" (Louw, 2014, p.354).

This passage contains an important and life changing exchange between Jesus and Peter. There is a sense in which this meeting is a practical expression of the potential impact of the resurrection to change all lives for the better. Although the narrative involves a dialogue between Jesus and Peter it is nonetheless a depiction of the hope that Jesus freely offers to every individual who has made the wrong choice or choices in their life. This hope becomes possible through God's mercy and forgiveness made tangible in Jesus' resurrection. In describing this Torrance states that:

It is in the resurrection of Jesus Christ that all God had to say about our forgiveness, and all that Jesus had said about forgiveness, became actualised in the same sphere of reality as that to which we belong. The word of pardon was fully enacted in our existence – that is why, once more, St. Paul could say that if Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead, then we are still in our sins, unforgiven and unshriven (Torrance, 1998, p.62).

This meeting between Peter and Jesus serves to further illustrate the manner in which Christian hope to be complete must look both ways. I commented earlier about the need to look back in order that the past may be redeemed. This involves forgiveness, which Peter experiences in these exchanges with Jesus. To be free from past restraints also involves the forgiveness of others who may have inflicted hurt. Jesus forgives Peter for his weakness of character in denying Him three times. As a consequence Peter is able to look forwards to a future that offers a promise of fulfilment.

4.3.6 St. John 21:20-25 Jesus and the Beloved Disciple

Jesus said to him, 'If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!'(21:22)

Again we have reference to the “Beloved Disciple” (21:20) which links back to the earlier account of the last supper (13:23). Despite Peter’s charge to, ‘Follow me’ (21:19) he was immediately distracted and wanted to know what would happen to St. John. On a positive note this may suggest that Peter recognised that in St. John he had a companion apostle with whom his future would be closely bound. Jesus does not reply but instead repeated His charge to Peter to, ‘Follow me’ (21:21). Jesus required that Peter emulate Him not only in his life but also in his manner of dying, so fulfilling Peter’s promise that he would lay down his life for Him (13:37). Resurrection and the hope that emanates from it, does not deny the reality and inevitability of death, or the state of helplessness that resides alongside it. Louw suggests that: “The empty grave is God’s final critique on the reality of death and every other form of death related to our being human, including the death of

relationships and the robbing of our human dignity” (Louw, 2014, p.341). Yet human anxiety about death should not necessarily be the *raison d’être* for believing in Jesus’ claim that: “I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die (11:25-26). However, there is still the need to make sense of the fact that our time on this earth is limited. Our perception of time changes, as we grow older. As a child a lifetime appears as an eternity stretching before us but in old age we realise how short a lifetime is. We will all leave this earthly existence with some unfinished business, even if we are fortunate to live to a ripe old age. Louw puts forward a hermeneutic of resurrection revealing its purposefulness to hope:

- In Christ, God’s promises are fulfilled and creation is brought back to its purpose: communion with God through *doxa* [common belief], praise and worship.
- The accomplishment ‘He has truly risen’ has become a new promise and places the creation within the framework of a new reality: the eschatological salvation. It means life has been transformed radically: From anxiety to hope; from nothingness to eschatology; from death to everlasting life; from futility to the vista of future as *adventus* [arrival].
- In terms of the resurrection of Christ, history becomes more than an evolutionary development, a human achievement or technological management. History becomes a teleological accomplishment: the healing of the whole creation by the peace (*shalom*) of the coming kingdom of God (Louw, 2014, p.343).

Occurring immediately after Jesus’ questioning of Peter, the passage seems to indicate that Peter was slow to learn that he must pay attention to his own life of discipleship and remain faithful to it. Peter and the other disciples needed faith to fulfil Jesus command to follow Him, for this call was to be a

costly one. Yet they were also not without hope, for they were not required to obey Jesus' call in their own strength. The difference the resurrection made to their lives can be summed up thus:

The existential consequences of the resurrection are incomparable. It is the concrete, factual, empirical proof that: life has hope and meaning; 'love is stronger than death'; goodness and power are ultimately allies, not enemies; life wins in the end; God has touched us right here where we are and has defeated our last enemy; we are not cosmic orphans, as our modern secular worldview would make us. And the existential consequences of the resurrection can be seen in comparing the disciples before and after. Before, they ran away, denied their Master and huddled behind locked doors in fear and confusion. After, they were transformed from scared rabbits into confident saints, world-changing missionaries, courageous martyrs and joy-filled touring ambassadors for Christ (Ray, 2002, p.373).

This thesis argues that the motif of hope, emerging from the analysis of the two resurrection Chapters in the Gospel of St. John, can provide a theological vision for Christian education. In concluding his Gospel, St. John expressed his desire that readers should "know that his testimony is true" (21:24). Whether these are St. John's words, or the words of a group of his disciples written at the time of St. John's immanent or actual death, is not the concern of this research. King (2004, p.249) describes this ending as a disclaimer that the Gospel does not contain everything that Jesus did: "and so this astonishing composition tails away into silence. Only it doesn't, because in the silence there lies hidden an invitation to you, the reader."

4.4 Phase 4: A re-reading of the Bible and Christian tradition (Interpretation level 3/ contextual critical realism/ Biblical hermeneutics)

In the fourth stage of the approach I will seek to remain within the

critical reflection phase of the praxis model and move into the third element of Kennard's Thiselton-Ricoeur hermeneutic that involves moving from the horizon of the text back to my horizon as the interpreter. In this phase I will be seeking to apply my informed interpretation to the chosen context: that of finding a theological vision for Christian education that has the potential to be translated into Christian practice within a Church of England primary school. Once again comparisons of similarities with the original context are a prime concern. Wright's 'fifth act' metaphor offers key guidance at this stage in the approach in identifying my responsibility in the role of interpreter of the text to maintain the continuity of the story, whilst also exploring the potential for new expressions (see p.93). Applying this in my context will therefore involve me in reaching a point of finding the authoritative textual meaning for me.

As a result of the Biblical analysis above it is clear that the resurrection changed the lives of individual disciples like Mary Magdalene, Thomas and Peter forever. However, in thinking about a possible theological vision for Christian education, it would seem appropriate for me to focus on the impact of the resurrection on the disciples as a communal group, for that is what they were. Whilst the community of a Church of England school is different from a community of Christian believers both today and in the early Christian Church, there are nonetheless useful parallels to be explored and applied within this context in putting forward a theological vision and it is to this that I now turn.

Groome defines vision as a "metaphor for a comprehensive representation of the lived response which the Christian Story invites and of the promise that God makes in that story" (Groome, 1980, p.193). The document analysis in Chapter four has focused on one aspect of the Christian Story, namely that of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as revealed in St. John's Gospel. From a theological perspective the textual analysis has revealed that it is appropriate to focus on the virtue of hope as an outcome of resurrection. However, for the Christian believer, the Christian Story when considered as a whole is about establishing the Kingdom of God "on earth as it is in heaven" (Lord's Prayer). Therefore a theological vision for education is ultimately part of a wider vision of the Kingdom of God.

Similarly, a feature of Christian education within the context of a Church of England primary school will involve introducing pupils to the experience of living in a community that is part of God's Kingdom on earth. In critically applying the knowledge and understanding I have acquired through the Biblical analysis of the resurrection to the present context of Christian education, I have identified the following expressions of theological hope within community that could inform a theological vision.

4.4.1 A Community of Hope as a Collective Existence

In the introduction to this research I focused on the potential of the resurrection to set people free from a linear path through life, to a place of hope with a future full of limitless opportunities. I also stated that this is true of education with its capacity to develop the potential of every human being and to transform children's life chances (see p.11). In order to remain faithful to the findings of the textual analysis I chose the key overarching theological virtue of hope as an outcome of resurrection which I applied to the context of Christian education. I have used hope as a metaphor to describe the potential for a Church of England School to live as a "Community of Hope." I have previously explored the concept of the Church school using the metaphor of a "pilgrim community" (Northing, 2015) and this research has enabled me to view the Church school in a new way. Other writers have described the Church school using metaphors such as a "threshold community" (Astley, 2002); a "signpost community" (Cooling & Cooling, 2013); a "covenant community" and as a "meeting place" (Worsley, 2013). In the wider field of Christian education this is perhaps a new way of expressing the inherent character of a Church of England primary school. It also informs the manner in which the school delivers education and what it understands as the purpose of education. In discussing the application of Biblical metaphors to an educational context Smith and Shortt suggest that:

Metaphors encode the expectations we have of the educational process. They play an important role in shaping and expressing our basic vision. If metaphors are not water lilies on a pond, decorative

and opaque, but can instead be windows through which the light of a particular vision of reality is refracted, then an exploration of how metaphors can refract a Bible vision is of considerable significance to Christian educators (Smith & Shortt, 2002, p.120).

It is evident that a theological understanding of hope is more than a purely subjective longing for everlasting life. Louw expresses this as “resurrection hope becoming hope for a collective existence” (Louw, 2014, p.341). Whilst this quite naturally encompasses the eschatological dimension of hope, it is also an expression of its potential to impact positively on the quality of corporate life experienced in the present age. One outcome of the resurrection appearances was that Jesus was able to restore the disciples’ fellowship both with Him and with each other (see p.111). However, the expectations of this new communal existence were not the same as they were before the events of the Passion and resurrection, for the praxis of the vision had changed and moved on. Groome (1980, p.194) describes this transition as an unfolding of the vision rather than a mere repetition of the past. This prevents the present from passively inheriting the past and thereby simply becoming a repetition of the Christian Story. It subsequently paves the way for the important aspect of the continuity in the Story but also opens up the potential for a fresh expression of the vision, which involves bringing elements of the future into the present moment. Moltmann (2002, p.310) argues for a different interpretation of Christian tradition, which many view as a backward looking exercise. Although it is rooted in the past, according to Moltmann it is inherently forward looking.

Meaningful action is always possible only within a horizon of expectation, otherwise all decisions and actions would be desperate thrusts into a void and would hang unintelligibly and meaninglessly in the air. Only when a meaningful horizon of expectation can be given articulate expression does man acquire the possibility and the freedom to expend himself, to

objectify himself and to expose himself to the pain of the negative, without bewailing the accompanying risk and surrender of his free subjectivity. Only when the realization of life is, so to speak, caught up and held by a horizon of expectation, is realization no longer... the forfeiting of possibilities and surrender of freedom, but the gaining of life.

This suggests that social change, of which education plays its part, is the product of a collective effort. Moltmann expresses this as: “Hope’s statements of promise anticipate the future. In the promises, the hidden future already announces itself and exerts its influence on the present through the hope it awakens” (Moltmann, 2002, p.3). Here is also expressed an interweaving of past, present and future which theological hope encapsulates. In liturgical terms this is most evident in the celebration of the sacrament of Holy Communion. From an Anglo-Catholic perspective Christians believe that, through participating in the liturgy and in receiving the elements of bread and wine, which some believe become the “real presence” of Jesus, they are united with God in Christ. As well as being united with members of the Church, some Christians believe that they join with believers of all times and places who have celebrated this sacrament in the past, so bringing the past into the present. Hume explains that “in each Mass is made present the mystery of Christ’s passion, death and Resurrection, and that Christ remains really and truly present for us in the Blessed Sacrament” (Hume, 1984, p.141). In addition, by sharing in this sacramental meal in the present, Christian believers anticipate the eternal banquet of God’s eternal and heavenly kingdom that is to come. In the Holy Communion past, present, and future interact. N.T. Wright expresses it this way:

We must see the Eucharist as the arrival of God’s future in the present, not just the extension of God’s past (or of Jesus’ past) into our present. We do not simply remember a long-since-dead Jesus; we celebrate the presence of the living Lord. And he

lives, through the resurrection, precisely as the one who has gone on ahead *into the new creation*, the transformed new world, as the one who is himself the prototype (N.T.Wright, 2007, p.287).

As mentioned in the literature review, one of the key conclusions identified in the *Rooted in the Church Report* (2016) states that: “Churches should be encouraged to explore the possibility of admitting baptised children to Communion before Confirmation” (Church of England Education Office, 2016, p.3). Whilst this may well be aimed at Sunday worship, it does also open up the potential for the Church to further promote the theological virtue of hope through a regular school Eucharist. In doing so the opportunity is created to explore more deeply, in a theological and spiritual sense, the whole concept of being in communion with each other and God in a shared existence. Contextually, such a focus theologically reveals God’s presence in the world as a whole and specifically within the context of the Church school.

If hope is to be understood as being inherently social in nature then it also follows that hope cannot entertain any notion of individual self-promotion or superiority over others. In terms of pedagogy, the notion of being in communion in an educational context will therefore involve “working together toward the future in a relationship of praxis involving hope-in each other rather than hope-for an individual desire” (Jacobs, 2005, p.786). However, the on-going foreseeable landscape of education appears to make this an ambitious view rather than one that is wholly realised. Although intending to be aspirational a White Paper, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* (2005) demonstrated a deterministic outlook on pupil achievement.

Breaking cycles of underachievement, low aspiration and educational underperformance is vital for our economic future. We must ensure that all children have the same chance in life – with success based on hard work and merit, not wealth or family background. *And we must make sure that every pupil – gifted and talented, struggling or just average –*

reaches the limits of their capability (DfES, 2005, p.20). (Italics mine)

Commenting on the prevailing culture of education Swann *et al.* state that: “Targets, levels, objectives, outcomes – all these ways of conceptualising learning require teachers to behave as if children’s potential is predictable and their future knowable in advance” (Swann *et al.*, 2012, p.1). Ability labelling can lead to pedagogical practice that is linear and undermining of each person’s sense of individual uniqueness and worth. This is in contrast to the concept of resurrection as liberating people from a predetermined path through life, to a place of hope and a future full of limitless opportunities.

These dehumanising ways of conceptualising learners, learning, progress and achievements invite children and young people constantly to compare themselves with others, rather than fostering a strong positive sense of themselves as competent, complex, creative people each capable of playing a full part within a *collaborative learning community*. They prevent young people, and their teachers, from experiencing and savouring the joys and endless possibilities of learning (Swann *et al.*, 2012, p.3). (Italics mine)

Following their research, Hart *et al.* (2004) proposed a transformational pedagogical model for classroom practitioners which recognised that the capacity to learn was not predetermined or fixed and could be found both in the individual learner and importantly for my research within the social collective of the classroom. Interestingly, their *Learning without Limits* approach identified the ‘power of collective action’. Their research showed that in the same way as children’s learning capacity was affected by the way the class interacted as a group, so each teacher’s performance was similarly influenced by the overall ethos of the staff team (Hart *et al.*, 2004, p.101). Furthermore, an additional link with my study can be found in one of the suggested monitoring and evaluation foci of the *Learning without Limits* approach: ‘Increasing hope and confidence in the future.’ While my study is

directed towards a Christian interpretation of hope, it would seem entirely appropriate for a Church school whose *raison d'être* was theologically underpinned by resurrection hope to similarly evaluate pupil perceptions about the future. Akin to the *Learning without Limits* approach (Hart *et al.*, 2004, p.111) questions asked of pupils could be a starting point to evaluate the impact of the school's Christian character and learning culture. These could include: Do pupils recognise their own potential to make a positive difference to their own lives and the lives of others? Do pupils view the future as predetermined or do they have an expanding vision of what they could achieve? Are pupils hopeful and confident about what the future might hold for them?

A "collective existence" opens up the possibility for a Church school to recognise that its members share a common life together and have a shared responsibility towards one another. This has been described as "building a narrative identity for the community" so creating a "collective memory" through the sense of being on a shared and collaborative journey (Call, 2011, p.68). This also involves the recognition of the importance of the community's relationship with God who is the foundation of its life and hope. *The Church of England's Vision for Education* describes this communal aspect of hope and aspiration as involving:

Grasping how one's own fulfilment cannot be separated from that of other people or from the flourishing of families, groups, communities, institutions, nations and the whole of creation, so that hope and aspiration are social as well as individual (Church of England Education Office, 2016b, p.15).

Similarly, Andrew Wright argues that a critical realist approach to the nature of personal and social development is grounded in relational identity in assuming that our developing identities are not primarily dependent on an introspective self-awareness. "We cannot develop as individuals without simultaneously contributing to the development of society; neither can we contribute to the development of society without also developing as

individuals” (A. Wright, 2004, p.173). He goes on to say that whatever the setting of the school there is a need for on-going relationships with others in community whether the presence of God is recognised or not. In the context of a Church of England school it is assumed that God occupies a central place in the life of the school community, informing the manner in which the school conducts the business of education. There is also an assumption that it is a place where the school community are aware that life is a spiritual as well as a physical journey through this world. As a consequence, spiritual formation will be an important element within the curriculum as a whole, as well as during times of collective worship.

In summary the features of a *Community of Hope as a Collective Existence* would ensure:

- A school Eucharist is regularly celebrated to support the community in reflecting on what it means to be in communion with God and each other.
- The collective nature of the community is evident in the pedagogy of the classroom where learning is open-ended and is always a hopeful exercise of mind, body and soul for pupils and staff.
- The formation of a “collective memory” which views the school’s corporate life as a spiritual as well as a physical journey.

4.4.2 A Community of Hope as Love in Action

The Biblical analysis shows that love should be a key characteristic of a Church of England school community whose *raison d’être* is Christian hope. The focus in the Biblical narrative is on God’s love for the world as the motivation for His reconciling gift of Jesus. In the resurrection accounts much of the theological emphasis on love is expressed through Jesus’ human love for His followers and friends so exemplifying God’s divine love for the world (13:1). “In Jesus’ love for his friends God’s love took human historical form in order to embrace the world” (Bauckham, 2015, loc.1525). Jesus Christ, as suffering servant, exemplifies the selflessness of love in His relationships with others, His obedience to His Father’s will and supremely in His death and resurrection. Through his narrative St. John also records how the love of God towards His Son, supports Jesus throughout His

ministry, death and resurrection (3:35). It appears that Jesus is aware of the Father's love: "The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again" (10:17). Most importantly the research illustrates the importance of love in the events of the resurrection. The meeting with Mary Magdalene in the garden (20:11-18) depicts Jesus' reunion with one of the people who had stood by Him in the worst moments of the crucifixion (19:25-26). His words to Mary are a reflection of those Jesus uses in the parable of good shepherd: "the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out" (10:1-6). Mary recognises Jesus' voice when He says her name. She knows Him as He knows her.

The love encapsulated in "hope" is not sentimental or emotional but it involves *agapé*, which reflects the self-sacrificing love of God for His creation. "Christ as suffering-servant exemplifies the selfless love that should be at the heart of all human relationships" (National Society, 1984, p.68). Similarly, Moltmann describes the need for love to be more than *philia* which is brotherly love or affection. *Agapé*, he explains is:

Love to the non-existent, love to the unlike, the unworthy, the worthless, to the lost, the transient and the dead; a love that can take upon it the annihilating effects of pain and renunciation because it receives its power from hope of *creatio ex nihilo*. Love does not shut its eyes to the non-existent and say it is nothing, but becomes itself the magic power that brings it into being. In its hope, love surveys the open possibilities of history. In love, hope brings all things into the light of the promises of God (Moltman, 2002, p.17).

Whilst on the cross Jesus Christ encapsulates *agapé* as he dies for others, identifying closely with those who are marginalised by others, the poor, the suffering and those who have no hope. However, through His resurrection there is the promise of a new beginning which for Moltmann is the bedrock of hope. In an historical sense Jesus links both universal expectations and individual hope.

In human terms *agapé* is often expressed as a promoting the good of others over individual desires. This is important for building a hopeful community in the context of a Church of England Primary School. Jacobs describes this communion as forming “the basis for hope and each is imbricated in the act of communion and the process of hope; without love, there can exist no ‘level of the us,’ no relationship of communion, and, consequently, no real hope” (Jacobs, 2005, pp.798-9).

The motifs of love and life in relation to death and resurrection are closely linked, because life in St. John’s Gospel is understood relationally (17:3). Love is seen in the renewal of relationships that occur post resurrection between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, Jesus and the disciples, Jesus and Thomas, and finally Jesus and Peter. “The love which has given itself in death is now renewed with the new life of resurrection” (N.T. Wright, 2003, p.674). However, this love is not limited to this small group of friends but rather it is exemplified in these relationships as a model for everyone, and reaches to everyone who did not know Jesus in the flesh (17:20; 20:29). Bauckham describes how Jesus loves to the end and consequently “He is able to go on loving his friends beyond the end. The end becomes a new beginning” (Bauckham, 2015, loc.1518).

I earlier discussed the landscape of education as appearing to promote aims that are currently driven by competitive and individual success (see p.131). The outworking of this leans towards achieving some form of economic or material gain rather than a commitment to contributing to a more hopeful society for all. Insightfully, Westheimer suggests that, “since we can’t measure what we care about, we start to care about what we can measure” (Westheimer, 2015, loc.591). By this he is referring to education’s obsession with the standardisation of attainment and progress, a preoccupation with test preparation and a prescribed, narrow curriculum with the emphasis on delivering facts and information (see p.132). Clearly, it is healthy for education to have clear standards and expectations, and for pupils to learn to read, write and be numerically able and to make choices about career paths, so that they are able to live fulfilled lives. However, it is the competitive promotion of self, rather than a commitment to the service and flourishing of others that appears as the dominant motivator. In contrast,

Westheimer puts forward his belief that, “education is first and foremost about human relationships and interaction” (Westheimer, 2015, loc.1651). He writes passionately about the need to reclaim education in the service of democratic values and the common good. For Westheimer (2015), education involves preparing pupils to recognise that they have an important role to play in their community through their engagement in creating a present and a future filled with justice and hope. Although not writing from a Christian perspective, this resonates with the demonstration of God’s love in action within the context of a Church of England primary school whose pupils come from within the local community. Within the context of a Church school community, this would be expressed in the quality of the relationships throughout the school. It would be seen in its engagement with and work for the Church and local community. In addition, it would practically demonstrate Christ’s attitude to those on the margins of society, the physically and spiritually impoverished and the disadvantaged through ensuring that all pupils received the pastoral support they needed in order to flourish. At this point I would like to give an example drawn from my role of SIAMS inspector. In this capacity I have the privilege of visiting many Church of England primary schools. Amongst them, one stands out for its provision both for spiritual development and pastoral care. A chaplaincy team involving a spiritual development co-ordinator, clergy, learning mentor and other members of staff took responsibility for working with pupils and their families on a needs basis. The impact of this work was evident in the lives of the learners and the spiritual life of the school. There was a recognition amongst governors and senior leaders that academic achievement was only one aspect of the curriculum and there was a real sense that the school was preparing pupils to make a valuable contribution to society because it was being attentive to their needs in a way that expressed love in action.

Although the focus of this theological vision is expressed primarily through understanding the school community as a *Community of Hope*, it is also important that each individual within the community knows that God loves them. “Christian education should offer a distinctive vision of what it means to be a person made in God’s image” (What If Learning, 2017). I

would now like to draw on my experience of being a diocesan adviser on the *Church of England's What If Learning Character Development Project* (Church of England Education Office, 2015a) funded by the Department of Education. I have also run a number of *What If Learning* projects for Church of England schools in Peterborough diocese. *What If Learning* is a pedagogical approach that endeavours to place the school's Christian vision at the heart of the curriculum whilst at the same time recognising the importance of the academic focus on progress and achievement in learning. It is designed to "enable teachers to reframe the content so that pupils experience learning through the lens of Christian character development" (Church of England Education Office, 2015a, p.8). This pedagogical approach shifts the emphasis from a Christian value as an idea, to a virtue or character trait so leading schools to become more intentional about the long-term development of pupils as people.

The *What If Learning* pedagogical approach involves three stages to support teachers in the planning process. For the purpose of this thesis I have linked these stages to *love in action* to exemplify how this pedagogical approach could support the vision of a church school as a *Community of Hope* as follows:

- Stage 1: *Seeing Anew* involves the teacher in considering how they could shape their pedagogy towards a more explicit articulation of the school's Christian vision, in this case *love in action*. This could involve the teacher in posing the question 'What if history could inspire pupils to love their community?' The example that follows is drawn from work undertaken by teachers at Braunston Church of England Primary School, Northampton as part of the *What If Learning Character Development Project Case Studies* (Church of England Education Office, 2016a). As part of their coverage of the WW1 history curriculum pupils in Years 5 and 6 visited the local war memorial. They looked at the names and identified those who had fought in the Battle of the Somme. With support from the local historical society the pupils found out more about the characters behind the names. People from within their local community who had given their lives as an expression of "love in action." In response they replicated the ceramic poppies at the Tower of

London and displayed them on a grass bank outside the school to mark Remembrance Day. Instead of performing the 'Nativity of Jesus' at Christmas, staff and pupils produced a play based on the Christmas truce of 1914 dedicated to the local people who had given their lives in WW1.

- Stage 2: *Choosing Engagement* involves the teacher in considering the best way for the pupils to experience the learning so that their engagement with it is optimised. For this particular focus aimed at inspiring pupils to show *love in action*, teachers increased pupils' engagement by focusing on particular people within the local community so that pupils were able to connect with them on a more personal level.
- Stage 3: *Reshaping Practice* involves the teacher in deciding on changes they need to make to their classroom practice in order to maximise the learning potential within the lesson. In this particular example teachers used discussion as a strategy to support pupils as they explored the narrative of particular people's lives. Time for reflection was also important to enable pupils to consider the impact of war to maximise the learning potential within each lesson. The following theological underpinning is also useful for teachers in planning for the *What If Learning* approach. This example links with a history focus, the Christian virtue of *hope* and *love in action*.

The Bible encourages people to love their city, to pray for it and to work for its wellbeing. The New Testament encourages Christians to be good citizens, ready and willing to do good to others. It also encourages believers to remember what God's love looked like through past generations, celebrate it and build on it in their own times. This is a new way of perceiving the past, framed by what God's vision is for the good of the city. It says that we can all play a part in bringing hope by loving our city (What If Learning, 2017).

In summary the features of a *Community of Hope as Love in Action* would ensure:

- A commitment to the service and flourishing of others within the school community and to those who are disadvantaged or on the margins of society. This is expressed through the school's practical involvement in the life of the local community and beyond, including the Church, and vice versa.
- Meaningful relationships and human interactions within the school community including the provision of practical and pastoral support for those in need.
- The articulation and practical expression of each individual being made in God's image alongside character development with a particular focus on the Christian theological virtues of hope and love.

4.4.3 A Community of Hope as the Peace of Christ

Before referring to the resurrection appearances it is important to note that this explicit articulation of the presence of Christ in the educational context of a Church of England Primary School is very important for it identifies hope with Christ. Moltmann, similarly makes this point when he states that:

Without faith's knowledge of Christ, hope becomes a utopia and remains hanging in the air. But without hope, faith falls to pieces, becomes a fainthearted and ultimately a dead faith. It is through faith that man finds the path of true life, but it is only hope that keeps him on that path. Thus it is that faith in Christ gives hope its assurance. Thus it is that hope gives faith in Christ its breadth and leads into life (Moltmann, 2002, p.6).

While the purpose of a Christian education with the context of a church school is not to convert pupils and their families to the Christian faith, it is important that any articulation of a theological vision involving hope is clearly expressed within the context of Christianity and with reference to Jesus Christ.

St. John recalls Jesus' appearances to His disciples in Jerusalem. It seems evident that Jesus' presence involves them in experiencing His peace once again. The apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 2:14-17: "For He is our peace...He reconciled us to God in one body through the cross." To be reconciled to God is to be reconciled to all who are reconciled to God. This is an important facet for a Christian community of hope, particularly a school community, where there is a valuing of difference and diversity, and an acceptance of others.

The peace and presence of Christ involves experiencing God's forgiveness. Torrance describes the impact of resurrection thus:

The resurrection reveals that God himself was at work directly in Jesus Christ making himself responsible for our condition, and fulfilling it by bearing the cost of forgiveness in himself. Forgiveness is not just a word of pardon but a word translated into our existence by crucifixion and resurrection, by judgement and recreation (Torrance, 1998, p.61).

In addition, St. John recalls the event of Jesus' meeting with Peter in Galilee. There is a sense in which this meeting is a practical expression of the impact of the resurrection to change all lives for the better. Williams commenting on this meeting between Jesus and Peter writes that:

Our pasts make us who we are – Peter needs to recognise himself as the betrayer. Memory is never the recovery of lost innocence. For St. John Galilee is a place where the past is recovered in such a way as to make it the foundation for a new and extended identity. He comes now to men whose history is one of initial hope and promise followed by betrayal and emptiness. They are called now and sent out as forgiven men (Williams, 2014, p.29).

Although the narrative involves a dialogue between Jesus and Peter, it is nonetheless a depiction of the hope that Jesus freely offers to every individual who has made the wrong choice or choices in their life. This hope becomes possible through God's mercy and forgiveness made visible in Jesus' resurrection. Through the events of the resurrection "all that God had to say about our forgiveness, and all that Jesus had said about forgiveness became actualised in the same sphere of reality as that to which we belong" (Torrance, 1976, p.62).

It is clear that the presence of Jesus with His disciples post-resurrection had a transformative and powerful influence on their lives both in the present moment and for their future as disciples. The risen Jesus appears amongst them unannounced and displayed no signs of anger, resentment, revenge or bitterness towards them. Instead, he came offering His gift of resurrection peace. Commenting on Jesus' appearance to the disciples in Galilee, Williams also notes how:

The stranger on the shore points to where they may find abundance and sustenance: and in that moment the connection is made. "It is the Lord". What he once gave he still gives – abundance. As he once broke bread with them he does again. He has food already – he does not need their fish and yet he invites them to share it with him and he in turn shares what he has with them. It is in this sharing that they recognise who the stranger is (Williams, 2014, p.28).

In the context of Christian education the resurrection appears to offer a way for educators to work towards peace and transformational change. Jacobs suggests that Marcel's definition of *availability* that concerns being open to others in the world around you, is a "means to transform circumstances into opportunities through communion with others." He goes on to link this to education and writes that:

As teachers we are not always prone to see our circumstances or limited situations as problems that can be solved through creative thinking and collective action. Too often, we *do* see those circumstances as givens – a curriculum we are told to teach that is not of our design, an ever-increasing number of students in our classes, the implementation of high-stakes testing for our students - and are paralysed by them (Jacobs, 2005, p.790).

A similar point is also made by Westheimer when he writes that it seems that those in authority seem to “trust teachers less and standardised scores more to the exclusion of other perspectives or interpretations” (Westheimer, 2015, loc.1945). These examples suggest that it is the opposite of hope, namely the temptation to despair that is prevalent in the current context of education. However, this temptation to despair does not necessarily have to have the last word. Jacobs (2005, p.792) links the temptation to despair to a view of the future that sees it as inevitable, passive, resulting in inaction. Hope on the other hand sees the future as full of creative possibility and as a consequence actively seeks to bring the potential vision into being. At the same time, hope recognises that there is no certainty that this future vision will be realised, but it remains undeterred. Hope remains as something to be both individually and communally articulated, and reflected in practice Jacobs (2005, p.793). This encouraging and hopeful vision for school flourishing anticipates and supports greater involvement for teachers within policy-making and subsequent implementation. Brain *et al.* (2006, p.412) suggest that government initiatives in the 1980’s and 1990’s changed the role of the teacher, taking away much of their professional freedom and reducing their role to that of a “technical deliverer of pre-set pedagogies.” They argue for an appropriate strategy or model of policymaking that moves away from a prescriptive approach towards consultation with teachers as a way of valuing their professional knowledge and skills (Brain *et al.*, 2006, p.421). Perhaps this is where imagination can once more come to the fore allowing educationalists and practitioners to claim the freedom to put into

practice a vision that might seem impossible to realise. Although not linking his thoughts specifically to education, Macquarrie puts it like this:

Hope implies that there is, so to speak, an empty space before us that affords us room for action; or, to put it in a slightly different way, an open road along which we can choose to move. Where everything is foreclosed, there is no hope (Macquarrie, 1978, p.8).

It is important that those involved in Christian education seek to view the future as being full of opportunity because of the presence and peace of Christ in the midst of their Church school community.

In summary the features of a *Community of Hope as the Peace of Christ* would ensure:

- A genuine valuing of diversity, an appreciation of difference and an acceptance of others.
- An explicit recognition of Christ's presence and peace within collective worship and the daily corporate life of the school community resulting in forgiveness and reconciliation with God and each other.
- An awareness of the responsibility that comes with the freedom to make decisions about the implementation of policy and practice resulting in transformational learning and achievement for all.

4.4.4 Community of Hope as a Vision of Resurrection

It is evident from the Biblical analysis that the resurrection event required those who witnessed to reflect on what it all meant for them both individually and as a group of disciples. Critical reflection is also a key feature of my chosen methodology. The practical implications of the resurrection brought raised expectations about how they would live their lives both in the present and future in their service of Christ. This is an important consideration for a school community whose praxis is an expression of resurrection hope.

Before hope rooted in the resurrection of Jesus Christ can impact on praxis, the school community has to come to the conscious decision that this

is to be its inherent characteristic or trait. Macquarrie suggests that: “hope can only begin to have its definite influence on action and to produce policies of action when it has been made specific and raised to the level of a settled disposition” (Macquarrie, 1978, p.8). It would seem appropriate that this could be achieved through a consultation process with all stakeholders involving school leaders, pupils, staff, governors, parents, the Church and local community. Once established, the overarching Christian vision of the school can then be articulated, understood and experienced as one of a hopeful community.

In proposing a vision for a Church school community, it is anticipated that all stakeholders will support it even though they will come from a diversity of cultural and faith backgrounds. *The Church of England Vision for Education* (Church of England Education Office, 2016b, p.11) offers a useful understanding of Jesus’ first miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana (2:1-11) that can be applied to the context of any Church of England school. The miracle that Jesus performed did far more than meet a need or solve a problem to spare the family’s humiliation at running out of wine. Both the sheer quantity and the quality of the wine Jesus provides is far in excess of what they need. Despite this, the point is made that the majority of the wedding guests would not have been aware who was behind the generous provision of wine but some, His mother and disciples, did know and consequently they believed in the one who came to bring life in all its fullness. Similarly, in the setting of a Church school, even one whose vision is explicit about the Christian Gospel for which it stands, will have many members who do not recognise the divine inspiration behind the hope that they experience but some will. However, they will all benefit in one way or another from being members of a community inspired by a vision of resurrection hope.

It is the role of Christian education to ensure that its praxis is not simply a ‘from theory to practice’ epistemology but that the Christian Story is critically applied within the present context (Groome, 1980, p.194). Groome describes vision as: “a comprehensive representation of the lived response which the Christian Story invites and of the promise God makes in that Story” (Groome, 1980, p.193). He suggests that Christian Story and

Christian vision are two aspects of the same reality that are experienced in and through the life of the community. Elbourne (2013, pp.251-2) similarly describes the life of a Church school as a 'Narrative', which encompasses the manner in which the community lives out and tells its story. This is clearly important in determining how a Church of England primary school might show in its praxis that its founding principle was that of a theological understanding of resurrection hope.

Once the overarching vision of the school as a community of hope rooted in the resurrection is established in praxis as a thread running through all aspects of the school's corporate life, then this can begin to inform the policy of the school. Whilst hope does have its emotional aspects, it also has its intellectual, critical and reflective elements that are expressed in and through praxis, and are important for educators. It is the intellectual side of hope that prevents it from lapsing into optimism, which has been described as the 'counterfeit' of hope. Macquarrie suggests that optimism masquerades as false hope because it fails to take evil seriously. In practice optimism frequently comes across as superior and self-satisfied, which is in stark contrast to the "humble, vulnerable, tentative, sensitive and compassionate" nature of hope (Macquarrie, 1978, p.13). A further characteristic of hope is seen in its subtlety as Macquarrie puts it:

We talk of change, possibility, transformation, the new, the better – even of salvation and revolution and utopia! The concept of change, as seen from the viewpoint of hope, is quite a subtle one. In the first place such change demands some continuity. In change, that which is at present the case is not merely replaced but is actually transformed, so that there is both identity and difference. Furthermore, the change which is of interest to hope is change that brings the new...Again, hope is not interested in change for change's sake, but in change for the better, where the better is understood in terms of the deepening and enhancing of personal and communal life (Macquarrie, 1978, pp.11-12).

These characteristics of hope are clearly evident in the resurrection where for example there is continuity in the quality of the relationship between Jesus and His disciples but they are also changed. The impact of this change is evident in the deepening of their spiritual perception and subsequent action both individually and corporately in the service of Christ. Moltmann describes this as:

The appearances of the risen Lord were recognised as the promise and anticipation of a really outstanding future. Because in these appearances a process was manifestly perceptible, they provoked testimony and mission. The future of the risen Lord is accordingly here present in promise; it is accepted in a hope that is prepared to suffer, and it is grasped by the critical mind that reflects on men and things in hope (Moltmann, 2002, p.74).

In the light of this any vision for a school community that places resurrection praxis at the heart of its corporate life must reflect the possibilities of a future that is full of limitless potential. Yet at the same time the school community must be realistic about the present. Living as a community of hope does not mean that life becomes a utopia. Hope takes the reality of a broken world seriously and does not merely superimpose itself like a transfiguring glow on darkened existence. In order that this can be realised the leadership of the school need to be theologically literate so that they can articulate what resurrection means. Without this it is difficult to see how the implications of resurrection hope can be fully realised in the life of the school and community. This might be one way in which the local clergy could support school leaders.

The work of Smith (2009, loc.236) is supportive of an articulation of Christian education as a ‘formative rather than just an informative’ exercise. Perhaps Dewey was ahead of his time in capturing something of this vision over fifty years ago when he wrote:

The school is an institution in which the child is, for a time, to live - to be a member of a community life in which he feels that he participates, and to which he contributes. This fact requires such modification of existing methods as will insure that the school hours are regarded as much a part of the day's life as anything else, not something set apart; and the school house, as for the time being, a home, not simply a place to go in order to learn certain things (Dewey, 1966, p.297).

Smith suggests that education has not moved forward since the time that Dewey was writing and describes education as being:

A constellation of practices, rituals and routines that inculcates a particular vision of the good life by inscribing or infusing that vision into the heart (the gut) by means of material, embodied practices. And this will be true even of the most instrumentalist, pragmatic programs of education that see their task primarily as providing information because behind this is a vision of the good life that understands human flourishing primarily in terms of production and consumption. Behind the veneer of a 'value-free' education concerned with providing skills, knowledge and information is an educational vision that remains formative. There is no neutral, non-formative education; in short there is no such thing as a 'secular' education (Smith, 2009, loc.400).

For Smith (2009, loc.555) the practice of Christian education involves much more than providing a 'safe' place to acquire information that is in effect no different from a non-Church school. Nor should it simply be a place that provides a 'Christian perspective' on what the world thinks is essential knowledge in order to become successful members of society. He suggests that a Christian perspective does little to re-orientate our educational

practice but simply affirms the configurations of the prevailing culture – in other words the Church school does just what every other school does ‘plus Jesus’ (Smith, 2009, loc.3792). This poses a difficulty, for Church of England schools are part of the state education system and therefore required to teach the national curriculum as prescribed by the Department for Education (2014). However, Christian education when it is inspired by resurrection hope has the potential to expand horizons and create new opportunities for fullness of life. In the same way that the resurrection transformed the lives of the first disciples, so Christian education has the capacity to achieve a similar outcome.

A Church school’s link with the Church is vital in ensuring that the Christianity of Christian education is not reduced to the intellectual elements of a Christian worldview or perspective. Smith emphasises the importance of this Church school/ Church relationship in ensuring that Christianity is not turned into a “belief system available to the individual without mediation through the Church” (Smith, 2009, loc.3784). In putting forward what he describes as a ‘theology of culture’, Smith (2009, loc.575) identifies two important aspects relevant for this study. Firstly, the understanding that human persons are *embodied actors* rather than thinking things and secondly, the priority of *practices* rather than ideas as the site of challenge and resistance. Here is recognition that education involves the whole person “in a process of formation that aims our desires, primes our imagination, and orientates us to the world – all before we ever start *thinking*” (Smith, 2009, loc.610).

Christian hope is not a purely spiritual exercise but being part of a Church school community whose rationale is underpinned by resurrection hope and praxis will prioritise spiritual formation and development both for pupils and staff. Educators themselves need to be inspired to think creatively about the ways that hope and education could together impact positively on their praxis. Jacobs suggests that teachers should:

Be rigorous in our reflective examination of our collective actions. We need to foster inter-subjectivity and communion through love. We

need to orientate ourselves toward the future, to imagine what is possible so that we can transcend the limited situation in which we find ourselves. We need to see hope as part of the process of an unfinished, rather than historically determined world. We need to exercise critical hope even as we collectively foster and educate hope in ourselves and in our students (Jacobs, 2005, p.799).

In summary the features of a *Community of Hope as a Vision of Resurrection* would ensure that:

- The school's over-arching vision is focused on resurrection hope that informs strategic decision-making, policy and practice.
- Critical reflection on pedagogical practice ensures that the school community have high expectations of achievement in its fullest sense.
- The school community is theologically literate seeing the present and future as full of limitless potential.

4.5 Phase 5: Refined Action (more rooted in Biblical tradition/ contextual reality)

The cycle is complete at this point and the outcome of the approach is realised. The praxis of the school can be refined and informed by the theological engagement with the Biblical account of the resurrection in St. John's Gospel. The knowledge and understanding gained through the Biblical exegesis of the resurrection event can be applied to the present day context of a Church of England primary school. As a consequence, key indicators of theological hope can underpin and inform a theological vision that impacts on the daily life and practice of the Church school community. These have been outlined in Chapter 4 above and will be summarised in the conclusion that follows.

In addition to underpinning a Christian vision for the school the metaphor of hope can also, as part of intentional refined action, result in further transformation through greater engagement with the curriculum and

its delivery. *The Church School of the Future Review* (Archbishops' Council, 2012, p.17) noted that many respondents were passionately committed to a bold and broad view of education in the face of what they saw as a utilitarian, economically driven, narrow test-orientated system. In contrast to the metaphor of hope are the constant reforms that sap the enthusiasm of teachers. In opposition to the concept of community experienced as a collective existence, the world promotes and celebrates individualism, choice and diversity.

At this point, I would like to draw on two examples of Church of England primary schools that I support in my role as a diocesan support consultant. Both offer in different ways a broad view of the curriculum that is informed by a clearly articulated theological interpretation of the purpose of Christian education. This in turn impacts explicitly on the way the curriculum is delivered and experienced. The first is St Loys Primary Academy who develop reading and writing through Religious Education. This is the main focus of their creative curriculum for one term each academic year. With upper Key Stage 2 pupils, careful choice of Christian texts including *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis and *The Diary of a Disciple* by Gemma Willis enable literacy objectives to be met but also facilitate comparisons of Biblical prophetic writing in Isaiah with the prophecies in the story by C.S. Lewis for example. Grendon Church of England Primary School clearly identifies how the *Church of England's Vision for Education* (Church of England Education Office, 2016b) underpins the non-negotiable principles of its unique global curriculum. When the elements of educating for wisdom, hope, community and dignity are embedded in the whole curriculum, then the school considers that world-class learning is taking place.

Though the above schools do not directly link their vision, pedagogy and curriculum to resurrection hope, they do demonstrate in their practice a desire for a theological vision to inform the manner in which education is delivered and experienced. Therefore, my four-fold vision of transformation outlined in phase 4 of my approach could influence the following areas of school life in the context of a Church of England Primary School.

- 1) The school's overarching vision is made explicit and informs strategic decision-making, policy and practice. Decisions made by the governing body are explicitly informed by the vision. Some time could be spent at the beginning of each meeting in theological reflection around resurrection, community and hope as a Biblical concept. In addition, some time could be spent at the end of each meeting reflecting how decisions have supported pupils in particular, and the school community as a whole, to become a community of hope so that governors and trustees become theologically literate. Decisions involving money can be indicators of the manner in which the school's vision is informing its strategic decisions.
- 2) The school's overarching vision informs curriculum delivery and pedagogy. Whilst much of the curriculum content is prescriptive, imaginative and creative ways of delivering it to pupils can be found so that the process of education becomes a hopeful activity. Teachers are empowered to take responsibility for the curriculum that they deliver and the manner in which they deliver it, underpinned by the theological understanding of resurrection hope. The school community have high expectations of achievement in its fullest sense and learning is an open rather than a closed exercise involving mind, body and soul. The emphasis is on the realisation that education can expand horizons and create the possibility to experience life in all its fullness.
- 3) The school community is characterised by relationships that seek the good of others rather than promotion of self over others. Pastoral and practical support is available for those who are vulnerable and there is recognition that each person experiences vulnerability at some point in their lives, in one form or another. Pupils who are identified as being

particularly vulnerable within the school community receive unconditional support as a practical expression of the community's recognition that each individual is made in God's image. Diversity and difference is similarly valued and celebrated on a daily basis.

- 4) The worshipping life of the community is given a high priority. Daily acts of collective worship focus on the impact of resurrection in individual lives, the presence of Christ in the midst of the school community is acknowledged, and a regular school Eucharist is celebrated as a sacramental sign of Christ's presence. All stakeholders have the opportunity to reflect on the common life that they share with each other and with God. Members of the school community recognise that life is a spiritual as well as a physical journey through this world.

These suggestions for refined action at the end of the cycle indicate the ways in which the vision once established, and theologically underpinned, could be applied in an educational context. Although aspirational, they align closely with the resurrection with its hope of transformation, which also lies at the heart of education's purpose.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This research has reflected on the link between theology and education, with particular reference to how the resurrection account in St John's Gospel might inspire and theologically underpin an educational vision based on the virtue of hope in Church of England primary schools.

In Chapter 1, I outlined the rationale behind the focus for this research and the narrative sequence that was involved. In addition, I reflected on my career in education as a learner, student, teacher, headteacher and other roles that I still hold. I also provided some background to illustrate what has influenced me and brought me to this present moment in time. In the light of this, Chapter 2 focused on a review of literature with particular reference to Church of England education policy and practice since the start of the new millennium to identify gaps in theological reference within the policy and subsequent practice. This showed that the Church of England's *Vision for Education* (Church of England Education Office, 2016b) had been the first articulation of a Christian vision, underpinned by both theological and educational thinking since the Green Paper *A Future in Partnership* published by the National Society in 1984. This highlighted the value of this research in seeking to contribute a fresh perspective on the purpose and practice of Christian education. Findings indicate that the vision and values underpinning the educational experience in a Church school should be as transparent as possible. In Chapter 2, I also reviewed a range of literature to explore the link between theology and education. This highlighted the need to forge a mutually beneficial partnership between the two and for Christian educators to see themselves as 'theologians of education', to use Moore's description (Moore, 1984, p.28). In the literature review some consideration was given as to whether education was a sociologically or theologically informed activity. Findings indicated that it was important to establish a clearly defined and mutually beneficial relationship between the two in order to provide a theologically informed educational rationale within a particular sociological context.

In Chapter 3, I set out the research design, which sought to reflect the findings of the literature review. The premise within the research was that in order for education to be Christian it must be an integrated field of theology and the social sciences, thereby becoming a theologically shaped sociological discipline. As a Christian educator in the field of Church school education I adopted the role of a *theologian of education*. In seeking to promote a mutually beneficial relationship between sociology and theology it was important to recognise the importance of the school context in formulating a theologically informed vision. Therefore the methodology was based on an approach that used an epistemology informed by critical realism embedded with contextual Biblical hermeneutics. This involved analysis of the resurrection appearances as recorded in the Gospel of St. John, Bevans' (2012) praxis model of contextual theology combined with Kennard's Thiselton-Ricouer hermeneutic (2013). The theoretical perspective was informed by Thiselton's 'two horizons' (1980; 1992) and N.T. Wright's 'five act' hermeneutic (1992; 2013).

In Chapter 4, the different phases of the research design were applied to the selected Biblical text and the context of a Church of England primary school. Phase 1 of my approach began with a reflection on educational praxis and the part that theological reflection plays within it. In this phase the essence of pedagogy as a hopeful activity was explored. It was apparent that a Christian understanding of hope, linked to the resurrection accounts, was a difficult concept for educators to experience and use in their educational practice as it had not been clearly defined. The purpose of Phase 2 was to engage existentially with the Biblical text to begin to contemplate its relevance to my research question: *How might the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ in St. John's Gospel inspire a theological vision for Christian education?* Hermeneutically this phase began connecting the two horizons of the text and the researcher. This highlighted the fragility and vulnerability of the way hope was experienced in the lives of the first disciples, and for educationalists working within the context of a Church school today. Other concepts evidenced in both horizons included the empowering and transformational nature of hope and the importance of its communal and social aspects. Phase 3 of the approach

explores the motif of hope in the two resurrection Chapters in the Gospel of St John. In this phase it was the Biblical text that had the authority, and this informed the next contextualisation phase involving the application of the interpretation to the educational context. The requirement to maintain the continuity of the story was balanced with the need for a fresh expression of hope in the formulation of a vision for Christian education in the context of a Church of England Primary School. This fourth phase informed the following elements of the vision.

Applying hope to the context of a Church school community was a recognition that the resurrection of Jesus Christ offers humanity more than a future eschatological hope, for it also has the potential to inspire life in the here and now. The resurrection of Jesus Christ offered the disciples a new beginning. It was much more than a positive conclusion to the crucifixion. In the same way the resurrection offers hope of transformation today, tomorrow and on into the future. The very task of education can be seen as an act of hope, transforming lives and opening up new horizons. A theology of education inspired by hope recognises the complexity of the human condition. It looks to the future in a way that encompasses the present and past, with God as companion offering purpose and expectancy. Having based this theological vision of education on the Church school as a community of hope I have then identified four key characteristics emerging directly from the resurrection accounts.

Firstly this community of hope involves living *a collective existence* resulting in both the eschatological dimension of hope and the quality of a communal life being experienced in the present age. One outcome of the resurrection appearances was that Jesus restored the disciples' fellowship both with Him and with each other. In an educational context the school community shares its success, disappointment, hope, sadness, joy and despair as a corporate body. Individual achievements are celebrated in a way that builds up the common good and each pupil is valued as a unique individual loved by God. This collective existence also involves the community in collective acts of worshipping involving the invitation to pray and reflect, to praise and to learn more about God who is at the foundation of this community of hope.

A second characteristic of this community of hope demonstrates *love in action* involving agapé, so reflecting the self-sacrificing love of God for His creation. Love is the motivation for God's gift of Jesus to the world and this is also evident in the restoration of human relationships as Jesus is reunited with His disciples post-resurrection. Similarly, this love is evident in the life of a Church school, in the quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and in the school's involvement with the Church, local and wider community.

A third feature of the resurrection appearances involves Jesus' greeting to the disciples of "Peace be with you" (20:21; 20:26). Jesus' presence in the life of the school community is explicitly recognised and as a consequence its members experience the *Peace of Christ*. As is evident in the resurrection this peace involves forgiveness and reconciliation with God and others. This enables the future to be seen as transformational and full of limitless opportunities. The same is true of the potential for education to transform lives through the understanding and skills that learners acquire.

The final characteristic evident in life of a community of hope is that of a *vision of resurrection hope* that informs the strategic development and praxis of the school. This requires that the leadership of the school is courageous and steadfast in its commitment to resurrection hope as its founding principle. Macquarrie writes of the events of Easter and the hope that is born as a consequence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Easter is the extension and deepening of the hope already encountered in the self-giving death of Christ – the hope that love is stronger than death and will eventually triumph. Easter is the day of the Son not in the sense that through an almighty intervention of the Father the darkness of Good Friday has been scattered and its agony abolished, but that through that agony the Son has emerged as the living centre of a new life and new hope for all mankind (Macquarrie, 1978, p.68-9).

Findings show that when the resurrection of Jesus Christ is viewed as a new beginning rather than a positive conclusion for Jesus and his followers then resurrection offers ‘hope’ of transformation. The very task of education can be seen similarly, as an act of ‘hope’, transforming lives and opening up new horizons. A vision of education inspired by ‘hope’ recognises the complexity of the human condition. It looks to the future in a way that encompasses the present and past, with God as companion offering purpose and expectancy.

5.1 Limitations

This study of the resurrection appearances in the Gospel of St. John is limited by the fact that only these Biblical accounts were used due to the nature of the research. However, I do make appropriate reference to other passages in St. John’s Gospel and other Biblical texts to support the points I make. Little reference is made to the other Gospel accounts of the resurrection or to the wealth of St. Paul’s writing in the New Testament. Therefore in considering how resurrection might inform a theological vision for education a number of key Biblical passages do not feature in the analysis. In particular, the resurrection appearance recorded by St. Luke (24:13-35) of Jesus’ appearance to two of the disciples as they walked to Emmaus is not included. I feel that this passage in particular would add further depth and scope to the study. For example, St. Luke recounts how the two disciples recognised Jesus ‘in the breaking of the bread’ (Luke 24:35). This would likely add further insight into the mental and emotional state of the disciples post-resurrection and the relevance of the meal that Jesus shared with his disciples on the shore in Galilee. This would also add further depth to the important involvement of the Church in a regular celebration of a school Eucharist to support the school community in experiencing God’s sacramental presence in the world and developing their understanding what it means to be in communion with each other and God.

As this is a theoretical study, examples of educational practice underpinned by a theological understanding of the school as community of hope are limited by the researcher’s own knowledge and experience. As far as I am aware there are no schools currently applying this particular

methodology in seeking to identify a vision for their particular context. Nor, to the best of my knowledge, are schools directly applying the metaphor of a ‘community of hope’ as an inspiration for their vision and subsequent strategic direction. In the future I would like to use this methodology in working with a range of schools to formulate their vision. Whilst some may choose to focus on resurrection, this methodology can be applied to any Biblical passage and school setting. So whilst my research is limited to the resurrection as recorded in St John’s Gospel, the methodology does have the potential for a wider application.

5.2 Originality

The originality of the study is apparent in two aspects of the research design. Firstly, I am not aware that there has been any previous work done by theologians or educationalists to explore the notion of the resurrection informing educational practice in a Church of England primary school. The theological virtue of hope has been explored in relation to education by a number of writers including: Halpin, (2001); Jacobs (2005); Birmingham (2009). However, their exploration of hope is not explicitly linked to the resurrection accounts. Secondly, my methodology uses Bevans (2012) praxis model of contextual theology combined with Kennard’s Thiselton-Ricouer hermeneutic (2013). In addition, the theoretical perspective is informed by Thiselton’s ‘two horizons’ (1980; 1992) and Wright’s ‘five act’ hermeneutic (1992; 2013). The combination of these elements in my methodological approach is, as far as I am aware, unique and provides a secure contextual framework for exploring the horizon of the text and the researcher whilst maintaining the continuity and integrity of the story between the two.

In carrying out this research I have applied my chosen methodology to the resurrection appearances in the Gospel of St. John and identified a potential theological vision for Christian education. This arises from my existential reader engagement and critical reflection on the Biblical text. I envisage the next steps in my research journey as involving aspects of the following. Firstly, I believe the outcome of the research to be a worthwhile

contribution to the on-going discussions concerning the role of the Church of England in education in the twenty first century. Secondly, the research design provides a clear framework that other educationalists wishing to use Christian theology to inform their educational praxis could use and apply in their own contexts, and I would be keen to support this. Thirdly, I will continue to focus on resurrection and develop this research further by applying the methodology to the other Gospel accounts and the writings of the New Testament, in particular St. Paul, to seek fresh expressions of the ways in which a theological understanding of the resurrection can provide a vision for Christian education. As Torrance states:

Since the resurrection is the redemption of the old order of things, and is already the irruption of the new creation into the midst of the old, it brings with it the capacity to create in us new conception and new categories of thought with which to apprehend and speak appropriately and therefore objectively about it (Torrance, 1998, p.177).

The methodology within this thesis therefore focused on providing an exemplar study to formulate a unifying theological vision for Christian education that could be translated into educational practice. Using the resurrection appearances from St. John's Gospel it has been possible to put forward a vision that proposes the theological virtue of hope as a metaphor informing Christian education in the setting of a Church school. Louw expresses the impact of resurrection for a praxis of hope:

Resurrection provides the spiritual framework and theological theory for a praxis of hope. The cross and the resurrection, in their reciprocal interconnectedness, unveil the basic spiritual reason and driving force of a Christian hope: God's faithfulness to his promises; his salvific acts within the spiritual realm of both the cross and resurrection (Louw, 2014, p.343).

5.3 Future Development

Moving forward there are several ways in which this research can be developed further and inform Christian education in the context of a Church of England Primary School.

Firstly, I will send a copy of this research to the Church of England Education Office as a response to the invitation in the *Vision for Education* (Church of England Education Office, 2016b, p.4) for others to contribute their own reflections to the on-going discussions.

Secondly, as mentioned earlier (p.155), future work could extend the use of Biblical material to include the accounts of the resurrection found in the Synoptic gospels and the New Testament writings of St. Paul. This will further develop my skills in Biblical analysis and enable me to apply the research design to other Biblical passages.

Thirdly, I would like to work with individual Church of England Primary Schools to support them in developing a theological vision for their particular school context, involving all stakeholders in this process. This will not necessarily be underpinned by resurrection but could focus on a particular Christian virtue or theme from Scripture such as one of the 'I am' sayings or a parable for example. The methodology can be applied to any passage of Scripture and in this way its usefulness will be fully exploited.

Lastly, in the light of the new SIAMS inspection framework, which comes into effect in September 2018, many schools across the country will be working on developing an inclusive Christian vision grounded in a clear theology and rooted in a Christian narrative. I have already addressed a meeting of Diocesan Support Consultants in Peterborough Diocese about my research and the diocese has plans for me to deliver training for school leaders on how to put in place a theologically informed school vision that enables its community to flourish.

Bibliography

Ameen, R. & Hassan, H. (2013) 'Are faith schools educationally defensible?' *Research in Teacher Education*, 3(1), pp.11-17.

Archbishop of Canterbury (2016) *Archbishop: Church of England schools can help shape 'hopeful' society*. Available at: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5772/archbishop-Church-of-england-schools-can-help-hopeful-society> (Accessed: 27 April 2017).

Archbishops' Council (2001) *The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the New Millennium*. London: Church House Publishing.

Archbishops' Council (2003) *Sharing the Good News with Children: The Church of England Children's Strategy*. London: Church House Publishing.

Archbishops' Council (2008) *Guidance on Distinctive Christian Character: New Head's Induction*. London: Church House Publishing.

Archbishops' Council (2009) *Strong Schools for Strong Communities: Reviewing the Impact of C of E Schools in Promoting Community Cohesion*. London: Church House Publishing.

Archbishops' Council (2010) *Going for Growth*. London: Church House Publishing.

Archbishops' Council Education Division (2012) *The Church School of the Future Review*. London: Church House Publishing.

Archbishops' Council Education Division (2013) *The Church School of the Future Review – Implementation Report*. London: Church House Publishing.

Archer *et al.* (2004) *Transcendence: Critical Realism and God*. London: Routledge.

Ashton, J. (1991) *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Astley, J. (2002) 'Church Schools and the Theology of Christian Education', *Journal of the Association of Anglican Secondary School Heads*, 10.

Astley, J. & Day, D. (1992) (eds.) *The Contours of Christian Education*. Essex: McCrimmon Publishing Company Ltd.

Astley, J. & Francis, L. (1994) (eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education*. Leominster: Gracewing.

Bauckham, R. (2007) *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*. Michigan: Baker Academic.

- Bauckham, R. (2015) *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology*. Available at: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/kindle-ebooks> (Downloaded: 7 March 2017).
- Barrett, C.K. (1978) *The Gospel according to St. John*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.
- Bevans, S. (2012) *Models of Contextual Theology*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Bhaskar, R. (1996) *The Pulse of Freedom*. London: Verso.
- Bhaskar, R. (2008) *A Realist Theory of Science*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Birmingham, C. (2009) 'The Disposition of Hope in Teaching', *Teacher Education Quarterly*, (Fall), pp.27-39.
- Bishop of Oxford (2012) *The Church School of the Future* [Presentation], General Synod of the Church of England, 9 July.
- Brain, K. *et al.* (2006) 'Teachers as mediators between educational policy and practice', *Educational Studies*, 32(4), pp.411-423.
- British Humanist Association (2017) *BHA Education Policy: A Summary*. Available at: <http://humanism.org.uk/education/education-policy/> (Accessed: 11 April 2017).
- Brown, R. (1970) *The Gospel According to St. John XIII-XXI*. New York: Doubleday.
- Brown, A. (2015) 'The Church School as 'Safe' School', in Worsley, H. (ed.) *Anglican Church School Education*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp.151-166.
- Byrne, B. (2014) *Life Abounding*. Minnesota: Liturgical Press.
- Call, C. (2011) 'The Rough Trail to Authentic Pedagogy: Incorporating Hospitality, Fellowship, and Testimony into the Classroom', in Smith, D. & Smith, J. (eds.) *Teaching and Christian Practices*. Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, pp.61-80.
- Callan, E. (1997) 'Discrimination and Religious Schooling', in Ameen, R. & Hassan, N. (2013) *Are faith schools educationally defensible? Research in Teacher Education*, 3(1), pp.11-17.
- Church of England, Archbishops' Council Education Office (2014) *Making a Difference? A Review of Religious Education in Church of England Schools*. London: Church of England Education Office.
- Church of England Education Office (2015a) *What If Learning Character Development Project Intervention Document*. London: Church of England Education Office.

- Church of England Education Office (2015b) *The Fruits of the Spirit: A Church of England Discussion Paper on Character Education*. London: Church of England Education Office.
- Church of England Education Office (2016a) *What If Learning Character Development Project Case Studies 2015-16*. London: Church of England Education Office.
- Church of England Education Office (2016b) *Church of England Vision for Education*. London: Church of England Education Office.
- Church of England Education Office (2016c) *Rooted in the Church Summary Report*. London: Church of England Education Office.
- Church of England Education Office (2016d) *Understanding Christianity*. London: Church of England Education Office. Available at: www.understandingchristianity.org.uk (Accessed: 10 July 2017).
- Cooling, T. (1994) *A Christian Vision for State Education*. London: SPCK.
- Cooling, T. (2010) *Doing God in Education*. London: Theos.
- Cooling, T. & Cooling M. (2013) *Distinctively Christian Learning*. Cambridge: Grove Books Ltd.
- Cooling, T. (2013) 'The Distinctiveness of Christian Learning in Church of England Schools', in Worsley, H. (ed.) *Anglican Church School Education*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp.167-186.
- Copley, T. (2005) *Indoctrination, Education and God*. London: SPCK.
- Crossan, J. (1975) 'The Dark Interior: Towards a Theology of Story', quoted by Thiselton, A. (1980) *Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics & Philosophical Description*. Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Crotty, M. (2013) *The Foundations of Social Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Day, D. (1992) 'Apples of Gold: The Role of Proverbial Wisdom in Christian Education', in: Astley, J. & Day, D. (Eds.) *The Contours of Christian Education*. Essex: McCrimmons, pp.162-176.
- Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*. London: HMSO.
- Department for Education (2014) *National Curriculum Key Stages 1 - 4*. London: HMSO.
- Department for Education (2014) *Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in Schools*. London: HMSO.

- Dewey, J. (1966) 'Plan of Organisation of the University Primary School', in Wirth, A. *John Dewey as Educator: His design for work in Education*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Dunn, J. (2003) *Christianity in the Making: Vol. 1 Jesus Remembered*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Dyson, S. & Brown, B. (2005) *Social Theory and Applied Health Research*. Buckingham: OUP.
- Elbourne, T. (2013) 'Church School Identity beyond the Dearing Era', in Worsley, H. (ed.) *Anglican Church School Education*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp.239-255.
- Elizondo, V. & Boff, L. (1988) 'Theologies of the Third World: Convergences and Differences', *International Journal of Theology*, 5(199).
- Elowsky, J. (2007) (ed.) *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture St. John 11-21*. Illinois: Inter Varsity Press.
- Estep, J., Anthony, M. & Allison, G. (2008) *A Theology for Christian Education*. Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group.
- Evans, C. (1970) *Resurrection and the New Testament*. London: SCM Press.
- Francis, L. (1983) 'The Logic of Education, Theology, and the Church School', *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 9, pp.147-162.
- Francis, L. (1990) 'Theology of Education', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 38, (4), pp.349-364.
- Freire, P. (2004) *Pedagogy of Indignation*. Colorado: Paradigm.
- Ghasemi, A. *et al.* (2011) 'Ricoeur's Theory of Interpretation: A Method for Understanding Text', *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 15(11), pp.1623-29.
- Gooder, P. (2009) *This Risen Existence: The Spirit of Easter*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.
- Groome, T. (1980) *Christian Religious Education*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- Gutierrez, G. (1987) *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Halpin, D. (2001) 'The Nature of Hope and Its Significance for Education', *British Journal of Education Studies*, Vol. 94(4), pp.392-410.
- Hart, S. *et al.* (2004) *Learning Without Limits*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Hengel, M. (1989) *The Johannine Question*. London: SCM.

- Hesselgrave, D. & Rommen, E. (1989) *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods and Models*. Leicester: Apollos.
- Heywood, D. (1992) 'Theology or Social Science? The Theoretical Basis for Christian Education', in Astley, J. & Day, D. (1992) *The Contours of Christian Education*. Essex: McCrimmons, pp.99-116.
- Hirst, P. (1972) 'Christian education: a contradiction in terms?' *Learning for Living*, 11, 4, pp.6-11.
- Hirst, P. (1981) 'Education catechesis and the Church school', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 3, pp.85-93.
- Holy Bible (2006) Revised Standard Version: Second Catholic Edition. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.
- Hooke, S. (1967) *The Resurrection of Christ as History and Experience*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
- Hull, J. (1984) *Studies in Religion and Education*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Hull, J. (1992) 'The Bible in the Secular Classroom: An Approach through the Experience of Loss', in Astley, J. and Day, D. (eds.) *The Contours of Christian Education*. Essex: McCrimmon Publishing Company Ltd, pp.197-215.
- Hull, J. (1994) 'Christian Theology and Educational Theory: Can there be Connections?', in Astley, J. and Francis, L. (eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education*. Herefordshire: Gracewing, pp.314-330.
- Hull, J. (1994) 'The Holy Trinity and Christian Education in a Plural World', [National Society Annual Lecture]. London: National Society.
- Hume, B. (1984) *To Be a Pilgrim*. London: SPCK.
- Huskey, R. (2007) *Paul Ricoeur on Hope: Expecting the Good*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Jacobs, D. (2005) 'What's Hope Got To Do With It? Toward a Theory of Hope and Pedagogy.' Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/journal/jac> 25,4. (Downloaded 10 April 2017).
- Johnson, E. (1990) *Expository Hermeneutics an Introduction*. Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Jones, S. (2009) *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World*. Kentucky: Westminster: St. John Knox Press.
- Keane, P. & May, M. (1994) 'What is the Character of Teaching, Learning and the Scholarly Task in the Good Theological School?', *Theological Education XXX*, 2, Spring, p.40.

Kennard, D. (2013) *A Critical Realist's Theological Method: Returning the Bible and Biblical Theology to be the Framer for Theology and Science*. Oregon: WIPF & STOCK Publishers.

King, N. (2004) *The New Testament*. Suffolk: Kevin Mayhew Ltd.

Lee, J. (1973) *The Flow of Religious Instruction*. Alabama: Religious Education Press.

Lee, D. (2002) *Flesh and Glory: Symbol, Gender and Theology in the Gospel of St. John*. New York: Crossroads Publications.

Liston, D. (2000) 'Love and Despair in Teaching', *Educational Theory*, 50, 1, pp.81-102.

Lonergan, B. (1972) *Method in Theology*. New York: Seabury Press.

Louw, D.J. (2014) *Wholeness and Hope Care*. Berlin: LIT.

Macquarrie, J. (1978) *Christian Hope*. Oxford: Mowbray & Co. Ltd.

Marcel, G. (2010) *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope*. Indiana: St. Augustine's Press

Martin, D. (1994) 'Learning to become a Christian', in Astley, J. & Francis, L. (eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education*. Leominster: Gracewing, pp.184-201.

McCulloch, G. (2004) *Documentary Research: In Education, History and the Social Sciences*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

McGrath, A. (1999) *Science and Religion: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

McGrath, A. (2011) *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Meyer, B. (1989) *Critical Realism and the New Testament*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series, 17. Pennsylvania: Pickwick Publications.

Miller, R. (1950) 'The Clue to Christian Education', in Heywood, D. (1992) *Theology or Social Science? The Theoretical Basis for Christian Education* in Astley, J. & Day, D. (1992) *The Contours of Christian Education*. Essex: McCrimmons, pp.99-116.

Moltmann, J. (2002) *Theology of Hope*. Canterbury: SCM Press.

Moore, A. (1984) 'A Recovery of Theological Nerve', in Seymour, J. (2010) *The Clue to Christian Religious Education: Uniting Theology and Education, 1950 to the Present. The Official Journal of the Religious Education Association*, 99, 3, pp.272-286.

National Society for Promoting Religious Education (1984) *A Future in Partnership*. London: Church House Publishing.

National Society (2013) *Statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Evaluation Schedule*. London: Church House Publishing.

Norman, D. (2008) 'Doubt and the Resurrection of Jesus', *Theological Studies*, Volume 69, Issue 4, pp. 786-811.

Northing, J. (2015) 'The Church School as a Pilgrim Community', in Bryan, H. & Worsley, H. (eds.) *Being Christian in Education*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, pp.174-188.

Ofsted (2013) *Religious Education: Realising the Potential*. London: HMSO.

Osiek, C. (1997) 'The Women at the tomb: What are they doing there?' *HTS Theological Studies*, Vol. 53, no.1 & 2, pp.103-118.

Peters, R.S. (1965) 'Education as initiation', in Ameen, R. & Hassan, H. (2013) *Are faith schools educationally defensible? Research in Teacher Education*, 3(1), pp.11-17.

Phillips, D. (1994) 'Philosophy and Religious Education', in Astley, J. & Francis, L. *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education*. Herefordshire: Gracewing, pp.439-452.

Piaget, J. & Inhelder, B. (1996) 'The Psychology of the Child', in Estep, J., Anthony, M. & Allison, G. *A Theology for Christian Education*. Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group.

Polkinghorne, J. (1988) *Narrative Knowing in the Human Sciences*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Polkinghorne, J. (2002) *The God of Hope and the End of the World*. London: SPCK.

Ray, S. (2002) *St. John's Gospel*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Reynolds, S. 2016, 'From the Site of the Empty Tomb: Approaching the Hidden Grief of Prenatal Loss', *New Theology Review*, 28 (2), pp.47-59.

Schneiders, S. (2013) *Jesus Risen in Our Midst: Essays on the Resurrection of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*. Available at: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/kindle-ebooks> (downloaded 29 December 2016).

Schüssler Fiorenza, E. (2015) *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*. London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark.

Segundo, J. (2002) *Liberation of Theology*. Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

- Selby, P. (1976) *Look for the Living: The Corporate Nature of Resurrection Faith*. London: SCM Press.
- Seymour, J. (2010) 'The Clue to Religious Education: Uniting Theology and Education, 1950 to the Present', *The Official Journal of the Religious Education Association*, 99, 3, pp.272-286.
- Shipway, B. (2011) *A Critical Realist Perspective of Education*. London: Routledge.
- Short, G. (2002) 'Faith-based schools: a threat to social cohesion?' *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 36(4), pp.559-72.
- Simon, U. (1967) *A Theology of Auschwitz*. London: Gollancz.
- Smith, D. & Shortt, J. (2002) *The Bible and the Task of Teaching*. Nottingham: The Stapleford Centre.
- Smith, J. (2009) *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation*. Available at: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/kindle-ebooks> (Downloaded 2 July 2017).
- Smith, D. & Smith, J. (2011) *Teaching and Christian Practices: Reshaping Faith & Learning*. Michigan: Eerdmans.
- Smith, J. (2011) 'Keeping Time in the Social Sciences: An Experiment with Fixed-Hour Prayer and the Liturgical Calendar', in Smith, D. & Smith, J. (eds.) *Teaching and Christian Practices*. Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Sobrino, J. (1975) 'El Conocimiento', in Hennelly, A. (1977) *Theological Method: The Southern Exposure. Theological Studies* 38, 4, pp.718-725.
- Swann, M. et al. (2012) *Creating Learning Without Limits*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- The Mission and Public Affairs Council (2005) *Children Included*. London: Church House Publishing.
- The Second Vatican Council (2011) *An Explanation*. Available at: <http://www.vatican2voice.org/> (Downloaded 22 April 2017).
- Thiselton, A. (1973) 'The Use of Philosophical Categories in New Testament Hermeneutics', *The Churchman*, 87, pp.87-100.
- Thiselton, A.C. (1980) *The Two Horizons*. Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Thiselton, A.C (1992) *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading*. London: HarperCollins.
- Torrance, T. (1998) *Space, Time and Resurrection*. Edinburgh: Handsel Press.

- Van Huyssteen, J. (1997) *Essays in Post-foundationalism Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Vanhoozer, K. (1998) *Is there meaning in this text?* Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Volf, M. (2000) 'The end of the world and the ends of God', in Polkinghorne, J. (2002) *The God of Hope and the End of the World*. London: SPCK.
- Walford, G. (2003) 'Separate schools for religious minorities in England and the Netherlands: using a framework for the comparison and evaluation of policy', *Research Papers in Education*, 18(3), pp.281-99.
- Westerhoff, J. (ed.) (1978a) *Who Are We? The Quest for Religious Education*. Alabama: RE Education Press.
- Westerhoff, J. (1978b) 'Christian Education as a Theological Discipline', *SLJT*, 21, p.285.
- Westheimer, J. (2015) *What Kind of Citizen? Educating Our Children for the Common Good*. Available at: <http://amazon.co.uk/kindle-ebooks> (Downloaded 1 July 2017).
- What if Learning (2017) *What If Learning*. Available at <http://www.whatiflearning.co.uk> (Accessed: 29 July 2017).
- White, J. (1990) *Education and the Good Life*. London: Kogan Page.
- Williams, R. (2009) *Church of England Values for Schools Introduction*. Available at www.christianvalues4schools.co.uk (Accessed 4 August 2017).
- Williams, R. (2014) *Resurrection: Interpreting the Easter Gospel*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd.
- Wilson, J. (2016) *A Physicist Examines Hope in the Resurrection*. Available at: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/kindle-ebooks> (Downloaded 25 March 2017).
- Wittig, S. (1977) 'A Theory of Multiple Meanings', *Semeia*, 9, pp.84-85.
- Worsley, H. (Ed.) (2013) *Anglican Church School Education: Moving Beyond the First Two Hundred Years*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Wright, A. (2004) *Religion, Education and Post-Modernity*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Wright, A. (2013a) *Christianity and Critical Realism*. Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Wright, A. (2013b) 'Church School Ministry as Contextual Theology', in Worsley, H. (ed.) *Anglican Church School Education*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp.186-205.

Wright, N.T. (1992) *The New Testament and the People of God*. London: SPCK.

Wright, N.T. (2003) *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. London: SPCK.

Wright, N.T. (2007) *Surprised by Hope*. London: SPCK.

Wright, N.T. (2013) *Scripture and the Authority of God*. London: HarperCollins.