TESTING THE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN NICARAGUA

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Abstract

Nicaraguan history is fraught with conflict, disasters and economic hardships. Among these challenges the religious nature of the population has remained. But, these faith perspectives have shifted and often have become politicized. Caught in the middle of these shifts is the education system and the politicized nature of education amidst these conflicts has had a negative effect. The growth of Protestant Churches has coincided with a growth of Christian schools and these operate with the support of Christian Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs). Many of these FBOs operate from a theoretical perspective called Transformational Development (Myers 1999, 2011). The shift in religion – a growth of Protestantism – and the lack of quality education have brought the importance of this theoretical perspective and development approach to the foreground. This thesis examines the role of three FBOs, the Nehemiah Center, ACECEN and Edudeo Ministries, and how their theological underpinnings provide meaning into their work.

List of Abbreviations Used

ABCD – Asset Based Community Development
ACECEN – *Asociación de Centros Educativos Evangélicos de Nicaragua* (Association of Evangelical Christian Schools of Nicaragua)
AI – Appreciative Inquiry
CEB – Christian Base Community
CEPAD - *Comité Evangélico Pro-Ayuda al Desarrollo* [Protestant Committee for Development and Aid]
CNPEN – Consejo Evangelicos de Nicaragua [Council of Nicaraguan Evangelicals]
CW – Christian Witness
EFA – Education for All
EM – Edudeo Ministries
FBO – Faith-based organization
FSLN - *Frente Sandinista Liberacion Nacional*
MDG – Millennium Development Goal
MINED – Ministerio de Educación (Ministry of Education)
TD – Transformational Development
WR – World Relief
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID – United States Agency for International Development

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Recognizing the importance of Religion *in* Development

      Faith-based organizations (FBOs) remain significant actors in development and

their role may well become increasingly important (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011: 47). An

FBO is typically defined as "any organization that derives inspiration and guidance for its

activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation

or school of thought within the faith" (Clarke & Jennings, 2008: 6). Christian FBOs

dominate the development landscape in Nicaragua and their role as social service

providers continues to be immense (Phillips, 2010). These organizations also have been

found to have connections with communities in ways that secular organizations do not.

According to Wendy Tyndale, in her analysis of World Bank surveys, "no other

organizations are more firmly rooted or have better networks in poor communities than

the religious ones and that religious leaders are trusted more than any others" (2003: 26).

The importance of faith within these organizations has often been overlooked, and little

effort has been made to promote a research agenda that is focused on the issues

surrounding faith in development (Tomalin, 2006; Tyndale, 2003). However, this should

not be the case. Faith and religion have been shown to play a meaningful role in shaping

the lives and perspectives of both those providing development assistance and those

receiving it (Bornstein, 2002). Also religious organizations are developing their own

frameworks for development and, "Religion, rather than disappearing as may have been

expected, is working alongside development, taking its ideas, structures and concepts and

thriving in this new world" (Selinger, 2004: 532). This research will focus on one such

Christian framework, Transformational Development (TD) (Myers, 2011), and its interaction with education in Nicaragua.

TD is important to examine because it is the framework for many Christian organizations and it has not undergone rigorous theoretical examination. This Christian framework is associated with Protestant Christianity, as are the Christian schools that are examined in this thesis. TD is a relatively new example of an approach to religion and development that takes the "ideas, structures and concepts" (Selinger, 2004: 532) of the social sciences and combines them with a biblical worldview. This theoretical approach is not well known in academic circles even though it is being used by prominent Christian FBOs, such as, World Vision and Food for the Hungry (Myers, 2011). This lack of knowledge and study on TD and Christian development needs to be addressed, as this blind spot ignores the reality of life in the global South. Philip Jenkins writes,

> For the growing churches of the global South, the Bible speaks to everyday, real-world issues of poverty and debt, famine and urban crisis, racial and gender oppression, state brutality and oppression, and persecution. The omnipresence of poverty promotes awareness of the transience of life, the dependence of individuals and nations on God, and the distrust of the secular order. (Jenkins, 2006: 5)

This interaction with scripture that occurs within the global South strengthens the case for examining the ways that faith and religious texts influence the development of these regions.

A shift from religion *and* development to religion *in* development has begun to occur in recent literature on the subject. This means that the role of faith needs to be understood from an emic perspective when relating to development; it cannot be viewed as an addendum to development. Séverine Deneulin and Carole Rakodi (2010) were

instrumental in pointing out the need for the shift towards religion in development. They showed how much of development literature on religion has focused on the role of FBOs in humanitarian relief or long-term development work, but has ignored the ways that faith within development work influences worldviews. They write that religion's "role in shaping people's values and conception of development is rarely considered. Religion in developing countries is much more than welfare provision and charity. A transformation of development studies is required if it is to take the relationships between religion and development fully into account" (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2010: 49). This thesis approaches the role of faith from this transformed perspective and focuses on the way that theologies have changed within[1] Christianity and how the development landscape in Nicaragua has been altered because of Christianity.

The changing dynamics of development in which religion is being seen as a continually more important aspect to the field is evidenced by an increase in scholarship (Ver Beek, 2000; Clarke, 2006; Selinger, 2004; Tyndale, 2003; Deneulin & Bano, 2009). This increase has been experienced in the Canadian academic context as well. The Canadian Journal of Development Studies (Volume 34, Number 2, June 2013) was dedicated to exploring the roles and relationships of religion and international development (Levy, 2013). More recent research into religion and development recognizes the importance of incorporating religion into development theory. Leah Selinger writes, "Social capital, cultural relativism and social structures, which will govern the impact of economic policy, as we have seen above, are intrinsically related to

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[1] This shift has gone from one where the soul was regarded as the main object of salvation to one where the body and material are also in need of salvation (Phillips, 2010).

world views and thus religion is central to any progression in development theory" (2004: 536). Perhaps even more pertinent is the view that Scott Thomas holds concerning the function of faith-based communities. He states, "The social connections that faith communities provide are often of only secondary importance in understanding their importance as reservoirs of social capital. It is the kind of communities that they are, or are struggling to become, that are of primary importance in their ability to facilitate bonding and bridging social capital" (Thomas, 2004: 138). TD claims to make an impact on the whole community and a key part in this achievement is through enhancing social capital. Drawing upon John Friedmann's (1992) theory of poverty as a lack of social access to power, Myers argues that incorporating the spiritual aspects of life into building social capital is a necessary prerequisite for creating the kind of communities that enhance development (Myers, 2011).

Religion, and Christianity in particular, have been viewed with suspicion by academics within international development studies. This is, in large part, due to the colonial experiences of developing countries when, "[f]or the most part, Christians were collaborators with the European states in the conquering and suppression of many peoples throughout the world. Ideologically, they were driven by a desire to bring 'salvation' to 'uncivilised' people's" (Dalton, 2013: 164). However, Anne Marie Dalton (2013) of Saint Mary's University argues that, although the overall picture of Christianity and colonialism may seem accurate, the relationship between them are more complex and each context is unique. Also the way in which Christianity operates in the post-colonial era has markedly changed and an examination of the role that it plays in providing

meaning that "operate in processes of societal enhancement and change" (Dalton, 2013: 171) should not be ignored.

To examine the influence of religion in development three organizations in Nicaragua were chosen: the Nehemiah Center, the Asociación de Centros Educativos Evangélicos de Nicaragua (ACECEN) and Edudeo Ministries. These organizations were chosen because of their explicit references to TD on their websites, the large amount of schools that they support here and because of the relational manner in which they claimed to operate. My interest in researching these organizations was sparked because of volunteer work I had done for Worldwide Christian Schools in 2008. Worldwide Christian Schools underwent a dramatic change in Canada and became Edudeo Ministries so that it could be better aligned with its partner organizations in the countries, which it operates. The combination of these factors led me to use their operation in Nicaragua as the case study for this thesis.

The role of religion in providing educational services has been immense throughout history and its relevance continues today (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2010). Education cannot be separated from development, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) affirm this, specifically MDG-2, which aims to achieve universal primary education (UNICEF, 2009). However, the achievement of universal primary education is not enough and educational quality – trained teachers, low absenteeism, safe environments and strong curriculums (UNICEF, 2009) – needs to be considered as well. The Education for All (EFA) Global Report 2014 emphatically states, "There are no excuses for students not having the right conditions to learn: ultimately it is vital that all children, regardless of their background and the type of school they attend, have the best

teachers to offer them this opportunity" (EFA Global Report 2014: 33). The EFA Global

Report is published each year by UNESCO and monitors educational quality globally.

Currently in Nicaragua the educational quality is poor and about half of all students do

not finish primary school and a good portion of teachers are not adequately educated

(UNICEF, 2009). The Nehemiah Center, ACECEN and Edudeo Ministries (EM) are

aware of the shortcomings in the Nicaraguan education system (Van Klompenberg,

2011), especially of the challenges facing the poorest 20% of the population in obtaining

quality education (UNICEF, 2009). Their efforts to alleviate the problems facing the

education system through a faith-based Christian approach are claimed to align with the

principles and practices of TD (Van Klompenberg, 2011). What this means will be

examined in this thesis.

A large number of faith-based schools exist in Nicaragua, these faith-based

schools are predominantly Christian, either Roman Catholic or Protestant. Research has

shown that

> Power and influence reside in different places than before in educational
> systems. NGOs, subnational units, and private sector and international
> organizations matter more and more as compared to traditional national
> public executive and legislative organizations. International education
> research must consider this increasingly pluralistic context emerging in
> many countries. (Bresler & Ardichvili, 2002: xiv)

This pluralistic context has emerged in Nicaragua, and ACECEN is a good example of

this. Within ACECEN there are 85 schools that are directly affiliated with this

organization and about 20 more schools, which maintain a loose connection with them.

These Christian schools can be considered to be "low-fee private schools" as students are

required to pay a monthly fee in the range of 2-14 US dollars per month (Nehemiah

Center Representative). There are several reasons for the presence of "low-fee private schools" in a country such as Nicaragua. According to the EFA Global Report 2014, "low-fee private schools" are able to provide better learning outcomes for students who attend them due to smaller class sizes and more teacher-student interaction. The private sector is able to pay the teachers lower salaries and therefore hire more. However, this has problems associated with it as well. Often teachers in the private sector have less experience and may be under-qualified. Despite the benefits that "low-fee private schools" offer to children, they do not offer solutions to all and many of the poorest people cannot afford them (EFA Global Report 2014). These reasons for the growth of "low-fee private schools" explain in part the growth of faith-based schools in Nicaragua.

Another factor for the rise of Protestant Christian schools has been the contested terrain of politics in Nicaragua. Robert Arnove (1995) outlines the battle over education that occurred during the Sandinista revolution and their election defeat in 1990. While the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) promoted education and heavily subsidized it, the post-FSLN government wanted to privatize it and reduce funding. The following is a brief summary of how this materialized: "The logic of the majority was to be replaced by the logic of the market, and values with a socialist orientation by Christian-inspired principles. In these circumstances, schools inevitably became sites of contestation over educational governance, financing, curriculum, and pedagogical methods" (Arnove, 1995: 32). This meant that during the Sandinista government, their political ideology and propaganda was pervasive in the curriculum and texts of the students, but after their exit from power in 1990 the *Unión Nacional Opositora*, which, gained control of the government, spent a lot on the full-scale replacement of textbooks

without revising the curriculum. Arnove says, "This wholesale introduction of new texts has been compared to purchasing furniture and appliances for a house that has not been designed" (1995: 34). Within these texts there is also a lot of criticism about the messages being spread. These criticisms have come from both Protestants and secularists and mainly surround the paternalistic and Catholic messages of the texts and curriculum. One school director who was interviewed echoes these criticisms when reflecting on his own education as a child, "When I studied my last year of secondary school I was forced to pray to the Virgin Mary and this forced me to dream of a Christian [evangelical] school, where I could study without any problem and teach the truth" (School Director 2). This rise in Protestant schools reflects a wider societal dissatisfaction with Catholicism and growth in evangelical Protestantism since the 1980s (Gooren, 2010).

Those who are concerned with critical pedagogy and teaching methods have noted the importance of understanding how these both are being influenced by faith-based approaches to education. Shari Stenberg observed that, "For instance, those of us committed to critical education work to value students as complex subjects whose social locations are deserving of study and inquiry. For many of our students, spiritual identity is the most defining component of their social locations" (Stenberg 2006: 272). Writing from a Latin American perspective, Pedro Ortega Ruiz and Ramón Minguez (2001) call for a re-orientation of education that holds up the "intrinsic value of the being" (2001:155) and that "[i]n education Utopia cannot be renounced" (2001: 170). They draw upon the late Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset to substantiate this:

> … while we accumulate scientific knowledge, news, information of the world and we hone the techniques by which we manage this material, the development of other facets of human knowledge which are not intellect or brain are neglected; above all the heart is left adrift, floating without

guidance or concern on the surface of life. Thus intellectual progress has been accompanied by a reduction in feelings; the culture of the head by a lack of heartfelt culture; today, on the other hand, we begin to perceive that this is not true, that in a very specific and complete sense, the roots of the head lie in the heart. (Ortega y Gasset 1973: 149-50 as quoted in Ruiz and Minguez, 2001: 156-7)

The value of creating a "heartfelt culture" which goes beyond scientific knowledge and allows for material things to be managed is stressed in the holistic approach to education used in TD. This critical approach to education where values are based on the Bible and not merely on scientific and technological reasoning is growing within Nicaraguan schools through ACECEN, the Nehemiah Center and EM.

EM is a Canadian based Christian NGO that operates through partnerships with local NGOs in five countries from around the world: South Sudan, Zambia, Belize, Dominican Republic and Nicaragua (edudeo.com/get-inspired/countries). Within Nicaragua the partner organization that they are directly affiliated with is ACECEN. ACECEN is an Association of Christian Evangelical Schools, which contains both Pentecostal and Baptist schools. This network of schools receives assistance from EM financially and through teacher training and curriculum support. ACECEN operates within the Nehemiah Center, which is a community of Christian NGOs based out of the same headquarters in Managua. The Nehemiah Center has a goal of bringing TD to Nicaragua through the collaboration of both local and international Christian NGOs. These three organizations are independent but the relationships that they have created between them have made it difficult to distinguish between them in Nicaragua.

This thesis adds new insights to the sparse literature on TD and its impacts in practice, especially as to how Christian education fits into this perspective on

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development. It also adds to the growing body of literature that pertains to religion *in* development. Through the following research questions the connections between the theory and practice of TD can be better understood, which in turn highlights the ways in which religion in development operates.

Primary research question:

Do the efforts by Edudeo[2] Ministries and their partner organizations in Nicaragua, the Nehemiah Center and the Association of Evangelical Christian Education Centers of Nicaragua (ACECEN), follow the principles and practices of *transformational development* in their work with education?

Secondary research questions:

1. How does the partnership and relationship between Edudeo Ministries, the Nehemiah Center and ACECEN operate?
2. Does the curriculum in the Christian schools reflect the principles of transformational development?
3. Are the parents satisfied with the education that their children are receiving and do their responses reflect the goals of TD?

These research questions work together to first understand what TD resembles at the organizational level, second, to see how this influences schools and teachers and, third, to see how this approach to development provides for the parents of students who want their children to succeed in their lives. Finally, a culmination of the findings from these

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[2] "The name EduDeo [ed-joo-day-oh] is a combination of the words 'Education' and 'Deo' (Latin for God)." Retrieved from Edudeo.com/whats-in-a-name/

questions provides a clearer picture into the way that faith can influence education and development. The central finding within this thesis is that when TD is employed properly and a focus on relationships exists it can be a useful tool for Christian development organizations.

1.2 Methodology

Selection Method and Criteria

The research was conducted throughout Nicaragua, in cities and towns scattered throughout the most populated regions of the country. The research took place from September 17, 2013 to November 30, 2013. In total seven schools within ACECEN, the Association of Evangelical Christian Schools in Nicaragua, were visited. Within these schools the director, a sample of teachers and a sample of students' parents were interviewed (except no parents were interviewed at one school). Along with the interviews that took place at these seven schools, development workers with ACECEN, the Nehemiah Center and EM were interviewed in Managua. One interview with the Executive Director of EM took place in Hamilton, Ontario, at their Canadian office and headquarters. The interviews were conducted with the assistance of a translator who was proficient in both English and Spanish. Being Nicaraguan, she was also familiar with the education system and the different school locations. She was a valuable source of information and assistance. Prior to working she agreed to a confidentiality clause where the interviewees' identities were kept private and the information obtained could only be used for the purposes of this study.

The research conducted consisted of semi-structured interviews in which the participant was asked questions that related to either TD or Christian education. The questions were designed to allow for a variety of responses, as they were open-ended and allowed for conversation to occur. The participants came from a variety of backgrounds and were able to provide a comprehensive picture of the work of the FBOs, the Protestant Christian education system and how this faith-based approach, TD, impacts this.

Other methods were considered for this research but due to limitations and the limited knowledge of Spanish on the part of the principal investigator these other methods were not employed. There was a consideration to include children into the research process through using participatory methods. However, due to the vulnerability of this population and the language barriers this was decided against. The parents of students were then chosen to be included in the study.

Schools were selected based on their affiliation with ACECEN. The director of ACECEN sent out e-mails to each school within this association with the information sheet that explains the purpose and extent of the research attached (see Appendix 2). These information sheets were translated into Spanish so that they could be understood by anyone wanting to participate. The schools that responded positively and could arrange a convenient time for the research were selected. The sample was not random. But, to gain entry into a school it was necessary for trust to be created with the researcher and this was achieved with the assistance of the ACECEN director.

Once a school was selected the director or principal was contacted via e-mail or cell-phone and a time to conduct the interviews was arranged. This director would sometimes inform parents and teachers that research and interviews were being done on a

certain date and ask them if they would like to participate. If the director did not do this, the school would be visited and different teachers and parents were approached to see if they would like to participate in the interviews. All participants were given an information sheet in Spanish and the process of consent and confidentiality was thoroughly explained to them. They were ensured that their identity would remain confidential and consent was thoroughly explained to them. Through these methods we were able to conduct our interviews with the directors, parents and teachers at seven different schools in Nicaragua.

For the interviews conducted at the Nehemiah Center, which was located nearby in Managua, the participants were contacted directly by the research assistant and me. These participants were not randomly selected, but were chosen due to the participants' occupation. These participants either worked for the Nehemiah Center, EM or ACECEN. This group of participants was mostly made up of Nicaraguan nationals who served as regional directors or facilitators who would provide training sessions, resources and support for teachers and schools within their own region. The final interview was conducted back in Canada, with the Executive Director of EM in their head office located in Hamilton, Ontario. Every single interview underwent the same processes of consent.

A combined total of 51 interviews were transcribed and analyzed which was more than expected prior to undertaking the research. The interviews were well received and many parents, teachers and development workers were eager to participate. This sample of interviews included key figures within EM, the Nehemiah Center and ACECEN as well as a diverse group of parents, teachers and principals from different schools across the country.

Ensuring Confidentiality

Only the principal investigator (Adam Faber), the research assistant (Daniela Villacorta) and the thesis supervisor (Dr. Owen Willis) were allowed access to the primary data collected. The research assistant was found through her affiliation with Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) and her role with Comunidad de Estudiantes Cristianos de Nicaragua (CECNIC) which is a Protestant group on campus. After undergoing an interview, she was chosen due to her following qualifications: fluency in English and Spanish, experience with translation, transcribing and interviewing based on prior experience working for Tearfund (UK based Chrisitan FBO) and her availability to travel. No one else had access to the original audiotapes, interview transcripts, or notes that were taken during the research process. Participant names were removed from the transcripts and a unique identifier was assigned to each transcript (in addition to the pseudonym provided by the participant). Only the principal investigator, research assistant and the thesis supervisor had access to information linking the names of the participants with the text of their transcripts. The audiotapes, transcripts, and any other related documents will be retained for a period of five years following the completion of the project and then destroyed. Participant names and addresses, and any potentially identifying demographic data, were not included in any reporting of the research. After all data are collected and transcribed the research assistant will have no access to any of these materials. Also the research assistant was required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to assisting in any manner.

Many of the participants knew each other through their place of work, be it within the same organization or school. Therefore, in all cases it was made clear that no details or information from the interviews were released with other participants. This ensured that there were no instances of 'leaked' information.

In order to ensure that participants were aware of their right to confidentiality, the principal investigator divulged the *Information Sheet* (Appendix 2) and *Consent Form* (Appendix 3) with all participants in their preferred language (Spanish or English). Participants were required to fill out and sign the *Consent Form,* and all participants were content to provide written, rather than oral, consent. The participants involved were unable to participate in complete anonymity, as in-depth interviewing was conducted face-to-face with the interviewer, research assistant and the respondent.

According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999: 183) "all researchers are bound by codes of ethics *to protect the people whom they study* against treatment that would be harmful to them – physically, financially, emotionally, or in terms of their reputation" [emphasis added]. Given the nature of the interview guide and the research in general, it was unlikely that the interviewer was faced with information about serious prospective harm or harm that has already occurred to an individual or individuals. This turned out to be the case as no respondents requested for the interview to be terminated and no instance of emotional stress was observed. However, due to the possibility that this did occur without our knowledge we have pledged to provide unlimited confidentiality to those where this is possible. This was impossible for the Executive Director of EM in Canada and their representative in Nicaragua as their identities are openly available to the public. For the others involved this was possible and no information was divulged to the

authorities or any other parties. The reasoning behind this was twofold: first, by limiting

confidentiality at the outset, the principal investigator runs a high risk of limiting full and

honest participation in the research project. Second, divulging any type of information to

local authorities, for example, would pose an unintended threat of harm to the respondent

or the individual(s) in question, especially given that the principal investigator is not

familiar with the nature of local legal and law enforcement conditions. It was discovered

while in Nicaragua that there is distrust between the government and those involved in

the Christian schools, so this was a necessary precaution.

Analyzing Information

All data were analyzed after it had been successfully transcribed from the

audiotapes and translated from Spanish to English with the assistance of Daniela

Villacorta. Within this research study there were five different information sources:

1. Data collected from secondary sources

2. Data collected from interviews with development practitioners

3. Data collected from interviews with teachers

4. Data collected from interviews with students' parent(s) or guardian(s)

5. Data collected from observations and field notes

This data was sorted into different categories depending on the source from which it had

been obtained. These categories were: development workers, school directors/principals,

teachers and the parents of students. This enabled similarities and dissimilarities in

perspectives that arose within each different study population to be noticed. This also

allowed for the analysis of what Christian education means for each study population and

how TD has impacted this. There were also important themes that came to the foreground and these are highlighted within this thesis. This approach assisted in the composition and writing of the thesis by providing a more fluid narrative of the data that was obtained (Creswell, 2009).

The final step in the analysis process was the interpretation of data, which was done by carefully reading and examining the transcripts of the participants involved. A Constant Comparative Method for analyzing the transcripts was employed (Boeije, 2002). This method breaks down the transcripts and qualitative data into different groups that should be compared. These are:

1. Comparison within a single interview (this is useful in the sense that it can highlight inconsistencies or central themes that the participant is displaying, for example, if an interviewee would claim to know about TD but offer no such indication of it later in the interview might point to a lack of familiarity with this theoretical approach).

2. Comparison between interviews within the same group - that is persons who are involved with the same experience and role.

3. Comparison of interviews from groups with different perspectives but involved with the subject under study (for example comparing views between teachers and development workers on how they view TD).

4. Comparison of the compilation of notes from previous analyses to the views and ideas held within TD.

Through reading and comparing the transcripts and data in this manner, different themes and responses that are useful in answering the primary research question and secondary research questions were collected and incorporated into the thesis.

1.3 Chapter Outline

This thesis comprises five chapters: the Introduction, the Historical Background, the Theoretical Framework, the Findings and Results, and the Conclusion. Chapter Two, the "Historical Background of Christianity's Response to Social Needs in Nicaragua" examines the changing theologies within Roman Catholic and Protestant Christianity in regards to social development. Within this chapter Liberation Theology is discussed as well as the rise of Protestantism in Nicaragua. It also introduces the changes within Evangelical Protestantism that have influenced the creation of TD. The third chapter, "The Transformational Development Framework" outlines the key principles and practices of this development theory and lays the groundwork for its ability to be analyzed and tested in the following chapter. Chapter Four, "Is Christian Education in Nicaragua a Good Example of Transformational Development?" listens to the perspectives and stories of those who were interviewed to learn what is occurring in Nicaragua with TD and how this theological approach to development influences education. Finally in Chapter Five, the Conclusion, the future for TD in Nicaragua is discussed and the further role that theologies can influence development, especially as they relate to education, is presented.

Chapter 2: Historical Background of Christianity's Response to Social Need in

Nicaragua

The history of Christianity in Nicaragua and Latin America contains shortcomings, harmful policies and worldviews, but it is also one that has provided hope to the hopeless and power to the powerless (Lunn, 2009). The Kingdoms of Spain and Portugal evangelized the Americas with greedy motives to exploit them, and plunder their resources, but, "On the other hand, the Christian religion has paradoxically been a powerful force for defending human dignity. When the exploitation of indigenous people was widespread in Latin America during colonization, Bartolomé de las Casas, a Dominican friar, became the pioneer of human rights and defended freedom of conscience and of religion" (Deneulin, 2012: 1). Gerard Clarke (2006) writes, "Missionary organizations associated with the mainstream Christian churches are in many respects the forerunners of modern-day development NGOs in their commitment to the provision of social services and in their support of the poor" (Clarke, 2006: 843). This is true for Nicaragua. The complex interaction between faith, religion and development is prominent in the history and lived experiences of the Nicaraguan people. James Phillips writes that, "To understand the evolution and variety of faith-based initiatives, it is helpful to understand the remarkable transformation that has taken place over the past 50 years, and a shift in methodology of theological reflection, with less reliance on abstract universal principles and more on the lived experience of the community" (2010: 13). The

focus of this historical review will be on the remarkable transformations that have occurred within this 50-year period.

Nicaragua remains one of the poorest countries in Latin America with a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita that is approximately US$1600 as of 2012 (World Bank, 2014). This economic poverty has been fuelled through a series of political conflicts that have plagued this country. Nicaragua has experienced dictatorship under the Somoza family from 1939 to 1979, a bloody revolution led by the FSLN, and a subsequent US-backed insurrection known as the Contra War throughout the 1980s. Interspersed among these conflicts were natural disasters, such as the Managua earthquake of 1972 and Hurricane Mitch in 1998 (Philips, 2010; Dijkstra, 2014). These events have left scars on both the economy and the education system. Even though the political violence appears to be mostly behind them[3] the country is still attempting to move on from this.

Key events that cannot be overlooked in this 50-year period are the Sandinista Revolution and the Contra War. The Sandinista Revolution had roots in the 1920s and 1930s when Nicaraguan peasants mobilized against local landlords and agrarian capitalists under the command of General Sandino. This attempt at transforming Nicaraguan society was foiled with the murder of Sandino. Mass peasant mobilization and organization was revived and in 1979 the Sandinistas were able to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship (Ortega, 1990). This revolution caused "mass political activity independent of the large landowners and the clergy erupted in the countryside. This period witnessed extensive peasant and rural worker mobilizations in support of literacy

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[3] Recent reports on July 20, 2014 from Reuters claim that an FSLN bus was attacked and five people on board were killed and another 24 injured.

and public health campaigns" (Ortega, 1990: 122). The goals of the Sandinista

Revolution and its advancements were short-lived as there was constant threat from

Contra (short for Counterrevolutionary) forces to remove the FSLN from power.

The Contra forces were created soon after the Sandinista Revolution from

members of the old Nicaraguan National Guard, who were defeated by the Sandinistas in

1979. These forces formed in the early 1980s with support from the U.S. government in

order to restore a more conservative government (Sobel, 1995). The U.S. under Ronald

Reagan viewed the Sandinistas as a communist threat that must be stopped, and aided a

bloody and violent civil war that ended with the elections of Violetta Chamorro in 1990.

The Contra War claimed the lives of roughly 50 thousand Nicaraguans between 1981 and

1990 and many of the advances made in literacy and health were being stymied by the

conflict (Sobel, 1995). The Reagan administration had four important policy aims in its

support of the Contras:

> …to prevent Sandinista support of the antigovernment rebels in El
> Salvador; to pressure the Sandinistas to democratrize their policies and
> pluralize their economy; to force the Sandinistas to negotiate security
> arrangements satisfactory to the United States and the rest of Central
> America; and perhaps to overthrow the Sandinista regime. (Sobel, 1995:
> 303)

Both the Sandinista Revolution and the Contra War in Nicaragua have caused a large

amount of death and suffering. Throughout both conflicts the role that religion has played

is immense and will be a focus in the following discussions.

This Nicaraguan revolution and counter-revolution are key factors to explain the

lack of economic progress in this country. And even "[s]ome calculations put

Nicaragua's economy in 1990 on par with where it had been, on a per capita basis, in

1942" (Colburn and Cruz, 2012: 108). Comparing this level of poverty to Costa Rica, the most successful Central American economy, it is evident that conflict has disrupted the growth of Nicaragua.

> In 2009, the government of Costa Rica, Nicaragua's neighbour to the south, had a central budget of $7.5 billion, raised almost entirely from taxes. The same year, Nicaragua's central government had a budget of only $1.5 billion, of which $1.1 billion come from taxes and the remainder mostly from foreign donations and loans. This difference reflects the enormous disparity in per capita income between the two countries: In the 1960s, Costa Rica and Nicaragua had comparable per capita incomes; today Costa Rica's per capita income is somewhere between six and eight times that of Nicaragua. (Colburn and Cruz, 2012: 114)

This economic stagnation that has occurred since the 1960s came alongside political strife and violence. This has caused Nicaraguans to become pre-occupied with immediate needs and concerns, and they ask their politicians, "What can you do for me?" (Colburn and Cruz, 2012: 114). This short-term outlook on democracy has led to a high toleration of corruption and constitutional deceit which have continued to hurt both the economy and education system in Nicaragua up until today (Colburn and Cruz, 2012).

Throughout this period of low economic growth and poverty in Nicaragua, society and culture have been deeply influenced by differing theological perspectives. Roman Catholicism has been present for centuries, and within the last 50 years Protestantism has begun to have impact as well (Phillips, 2010). During this time many Christians moved from Catholicism to Protestantism (Gooren, 2010). This created a "new" wave of Protestant Christians and these were mainly "Pentecostals, charismatics, fundamentalists, or evangelicals" (Phillips, 2010: 21). The Contra War has exacerbated the poverty in Nicaragua and this has helped to shift the role that Christianity plays here. The influence of Christianity in Central America goes back to the colonization of the Americas, but the

most prescient changes to this thesis have occurred after 1965. This was prior to the Sandinista Revolution that toppled the Somoza dictatorship (Phillips, 2010). This is when the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church concluded and is the point of departure here for understanding the transformation of faith-based initiatives in Nicaragua.

Before this discussion occurs it is useful to outline some of the different categories of FBOs. Gerard Clarke has classified these into five different groups: faith-based representative organizations or apex bodies, faith-based charitable or development organizations, faith-based socio-political organizations, faith-based missionary organizations and finally faith-based illegal or terrorist organizations (Clarke, 2006). Faith-based representative organizations or apex bodies are those that rule on doctrinal matters and make significant decisions regarding the direction of a religion and interact directly with the state (Clarke, 2006). The Vatican in Rome plays this role for the Catholic Church. Faith-based charitable or development organizations "mobilize the faithful in support of the poor and other social groups, and which fund or manage programmes which tackle poverty and social exclusion" (Clarke, 2006: 804). The Nehemiah Center, EM and ACECEN fit best into this category. Faith-based representative organizations and faith-based charitable or development organizations are the two categories that best represent the types of organizations that are being examined within this thesis. However, these categories are not mutually exclusive and often organizations fit into more than one category. Also organizations from one group influence the activities of organizations within different categories. For example, the decisions made by the faith-based representative organizations often influence the work

of faith-based socio-political organizations which "interpret and deploy faith as a political construct, organizing and mobilizing social groups on the basis of faith identities but in pursuit of broader political objectives or, alternatively, promote faith as a socio-cultural construct, as a means of uniting disparate social groups on the basis of faith-based organizations" (Clarke, 2006: 804). The decisions of the Second Vatican Council have caused these groups to arise in response to changes that allowed for Liberation Theology and Base Ecclesial Communities (CEBs) to flourish. Also faith-based missionary organizations have similarities to, and often can overlap with development organizations. They may have similar goals overall but missionary organizations have a more explicit focus on spreading "key faith messages beyond the faithful" (Clarke, 2006: 804). These organizations are usually more evangelical in their approach to development than others. Finally, the faith-based illegal or terrorist organizations can experience some similarities to the socio-political organizations but use their faith as a justification to engage in armed struggle or violent acts to achieve their social goals (Clarke, 2006). It will become apparent within this historical review that these different categories of faith-based organizations are fluid and influence each other.

The Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church (1962-1965) introduced a new direction for the Church in Latin America, especially with regard to Catholic Social Teaching and Liberation Theology that arose thereafter. This had wide-ranging consequences for Nicaragua. James Phillips writes, "Since at least the 1960s, Catholicism in particular has been undergoing a remarkable transition in Latin America that promised (or threatened) to transform a theology and governance model based on hierarchy into one based on active grassroots participation" (Phillips, 2010: 15).

Liberation Theology arose in Central and Latin America in response to many different factors, both from inside and outside of the Church. It represented a shift from a conservative church that allied with the elites in society to one that suggests, "religion has a primary role to play in human liberation, and in that search for liberation, transmitting the Gospel message of salvation cannot be separated from the creation of a better life, here and now" (Levine, 1988: 241). This shift was felt in churches throughout Nicaragua and Latin America.

The Second Vatican Council had substantial influence on Catholic Social Teaching, and the perspective of Roman Catholic adherents shifted to place more prominence on life in this world rather than on the eternal salvation of souls. Two changes that have affected the way the Latin American Church interacts with the Bible, knowledge and learning are found in key documents of the council, *Dei Verbum* (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation) and *Gravissimum Educationis* (Declaration on Christian Education). In *Gravissimum Educationis* the importance of education in the life and development of humans to reach their potential is highlighted. It also stressed the need for teachers to be "imbuing their students with the spirit of Christ, to strive to excel in pedagogy and the pursuit of knowledge in such a way that they not merely advance the internal renewal of the Church but preserve and enhance its beneficent influence upon today's world" (Vatican Council 2, 1965: *Gravissimum Educationis*; Conclusion). The second major change allowed the preaching, teaching and study of the Bible to be done in the languages of the local people, and not only in Latin. Article 25 of *Dei Verbum* declares that,

> It devolves on sacred bishops "who have apostolic teaching" (7) to give
> the faithful entrusted to them suitable instruction in the right use of the

divine books, especially the New Testament and above all the Gospels. This can be done through translations of the sacred texts, which are to be provided with the necessary and really adequate explanations so that the children of the Church may safely and profitably become conversant with the Sacred Scriptures and be penetrated with their spirit. (Vatican Council 2, *Dei Verbum*, 1965: Article 25)

Both of these changes have promoted biblical literacy through Christian education in Nicaragua and Latin America among the lay people and the poor. This biblical literacy allowed for the Bible to be read from the perspective of the poor and oppressed, which helped spur the development of Liberation Theology (Berryman, 1987).

Allowing lay-people, anyone not holding a position of authority in the Church, access to the Bible and its teachings contributed to mobilizing poor Christian Nicaraguans to interpret the Bible from their own perspective. This perspective challenged the conservative teaching of the Catholic Church in a way that emphasized the "preferential option of the poor" (Gutiérrez, 1971). This was fostered by the development of CEBs (Smith and Haas, 1997). Daniel Levine provides the following definition of a CEB:

A common working definition of CEBs takes off from the three elements of the name 'ecclesial base community': striving for *community* (small, homogeneous); stress on the *ecclesial* (links to the church); and a sense in which the group constitutes a *base* (either the faithful at the base of the church's hierarchy or the poor at the base of a class and power pyramid). (Levine, 1988: 251)

These CEBs would meet with each other to study the Bible. These meetings were conducted from a dramatically different perspective than the conservative hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Latin America (Berryman, 1987) and "[t]he daily, lived experience and social conditions of ordinary people and communities was the context for

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living out one's faith. To change conditions that did not befit 'the dignity of the children of God' was to live faithfully" (Phillips, 2010: 18). The Bible studies would use a 'see, judge and act' methodology, and "[d]uring the authoritarian Somoza regime, this led to the prophetic denunciation of dictatorship and imperialism as 'structural sins' and the announcement of a socially just revolution" (Canin, 1997: 84). However for Liberation Theology to be defined and supported it required the support of some of the leadership from the Roman Catholic Church.

During the Council of Bishops in Latin America meeting held in Medellín, Colombia, in 1968 a position on pastoral care was developed that sympathized with the perspectives of the poor. Five years after this council, a Peruvian Roman Catholic priest, Gustavo Gutiérrez, first defined Liberation Theology. It arose as a school of thought among many Latin American Catholic communities and it understood the Gospel of Christ to have a 'preferential option for the poor.' (Berryman, 1987) This demanded that, "the church concentrate its efforts on liberating the people of the world from poverty and oppression" (Berryman, 1987: 1). The movement towards Liberation Theology within the Roman Catholic Church of Latin America went forward partly due to several events within the leadership. These were the Second Vatican Council and the papal encyclical *Populorum Progessio* (1967). Some key bishops supported this movement within the Church including Gustavo Gutiérrez, Leonardo Boff of Brazil and Juan Luis Segundo of Uruguay. Also in Nicaragua two of the *Frente Sandinista de Liberacíon Nacional* (FSLN) leaders, Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann (a Maryknoll priest) and Fernando Cardenal Martínez (a Jesuit Priest), were directly associated with Liberation Theology

(Berryman, 1987). Liberation Theology is characterized for the most part as existing within the Roman Catholic Church traditions.

In Nicaragua, Liberation Theology represented a dramatic shift for the Catholic hierarchy of the church who had aligned themselves traditionally with the Somoza regime in exchange for a privileged status in society. However, they were "[e]ncouraged by the presence of Pope Paul, especially following his encyclical *Populorum Progressio,* the bishops 'deeply and thoroughly analyzed the reality of Latin America', and 'denounced injustices in extremely vigorous language'" (Williams, 1985: 348). This mentality echoed that of much of Central America, notably with the Archbishop of El Salvador, Oscar Romero, who became a martyr for Liberation Theology. However it was not long afterward in Nicaragua for the hierarchy in the Catholic Church to become divided. The Papal visit to Nicaragua on March 4, 1983 and the mass of John Paul II in Managua sided with the more conservative faction of the Catholic Church angering many of those who fought hard to create a progressive society and theology (Williams, 1985; Kirk, 1985). Liberation Theology remained a divisive force in the Roman Catholic Church and Catholics put their support behind both sides during the Contra War.

As a theology, Liberation Theology is contested. Daniel Levine (1990) argues that its contested nature is partly due to the temptation to align it closely to revolutions and regime changes that have occurred alongside its growth. He writes,

> Of course, changing regimes is not all there is to politics, and liberation theology's political impact lies elsewhere: not in direct political outcomes, but rather through its role in changing Latin American Catholicism. Liberation theology is part of a larger process that has spurred churches to press new issues and break (or at least question) long-standing ties with power and privilege. The poor have become targets of a new kind of church attention, with special concern for their promotion and

empowerment, making organization both legitimate and possible for
groups hitherto marginal and silent. (Levine 1990: 231)

It is useful to understand that Liberation Theology is not merely a political tool
but is best described as a process that spurs churches to press new issues (Levine,
1990). Understanding Liberation Theology as a process helps to reveal how it has
influenced the work of Protestant churches in Nicaragua.

In Nicaragua, CEPAD (*Comité Evangélico Pro-Ayuda al Desarrollo* [Protestant
Committee for Development and Aid]) has approved certain aspects of Liberation
Theology since the organization was founded after the 1972 earthquake in Managua
(Gooren, 2010). Although CEPAD sympathizes with ideas from Liberation Theology it
does not adopt the theology as its own. Rather it merely borrows the stress that Liberation
Theology has on liberating those in poverty (Phillips, 2010) While both Catholics and
Protestants understand the importance of Jesus' life and mission for liberating the poor,
their approaches in resolving this are different. Protestants focus primarily on personal
transformation and liberation, allowing transformed individuals to cause society to be
improved. Protestant Charismatic Christians make up a large proportion of *evangélicos,*
the local terminology for all Protestants, in Nicaragua (Phillips, 2010). Gerrie Ter Haar
and Stephen Ellis write, "Charismatic Christians (of which there are large numbers in
Africa and in developing countries more generally) believe that personal transformation –
inner change – is the key to a transformation of a society. They stem from intellectual
traditions associated with particular religions that have been formed by local histories"
(ter Haar and Ellis, 2006: 355). This outlook on transformation, at an individual level
versus a societal level, is a key distinction between Protestant approaches to development

and Liberation Theology, which is more focused on the structural sin (or violence) at the societal level.

This Protestant approach has been viewed as an explanation for the lack of overt political activism against the Somoza regime among evangelicals. Christian Smith and Liesl Ann Haas make mention of this, "One of the reasons given for evangelicalism's rejection of political activism is that it locates the roots of social transformation in the personal salvation of individuals. Whereas Liberation Theology sees oppressive social structures as perpetuating sin, and therefore focuses immediate attention on the structural transformation, evangelicals are viewed as believing that structures will be transformed only when people are transformed" (1997: 441). This analysis will be further confirmed when the approach of TD is examined and the perspective on reclaiming an individual's identity and vocation is made.

The growth of Liberation Theology and Biblical literacy in Nicaragua also occurred alongside a movement of people from Catholic churches to Protestant churches. Henri Gooren writes, "In 1963, no less than 96 per cent of the population considered itself Roman Catholic. In 2007, however, the Catholic population percentage has decreased remarkably to almost 57 per cent. Today there are approximately 2.65 million Roman Catholics in Nicaragua and about 1 million Protestants (INIDE, Census 2005)" (Gooren, 2010: 52). This growth of Protestant churches has been most prominent with charismatic and Pentecostal churches, such as the Assemblies of God (*Asambleas de Dios*) church and evangelical Baptist churches (Gooren, 2010). Some explanations that have been made for this Pentecostal boom are:

> intensive evangelization activities by an increasing number of churches,
> the emotional appeal of Pentecostalism (faith healing, speaking in tongues,

singing, swaying), dissatisfaction with Catholicism, different state-church relations, and changes in church leadership. Since the 1970s, the Pentecostal church, led by foreign (mostly U.S.) missionaries, came increasingly under Nicaraguan leaders. They could communicate much more directly with their friends and neighbours, which contributed to higher church growth. (Gooren, 2010: 52-53)

These reasons paint a portion of the picture of this rise but also contribute to some misconceptions about the Evangelical Protestant churches in Nicaragua. One such misconception that has occurred is the assumption that evangelicals are necessarily more conservative than their Catholic counterparts due to their affiliation with the U.S. (Smith and Haas, 1997).

This misconception is partly due to the U.S. impact on the Contra War that aimed to restore a conservative government in Nicaragua. The U.S. missionaries could then be easily mistaken as supporters of this perspective. However, the reality was more complex than this. Protestantism's relation to politics is influenced more by factors within Nicaragua than from outside of it:

As a religion for the poor – in fact, of the marginated poor – evangelical Protestantism's relation to the revolution is indirect, rather than direct: it creates order out of disorder, without overtly 'political' intentions, through the notion of individual responsibility and accountability. It thereby indirectly and unselfconsciously exemplifies certain revolutionary values. One could put this particular relationship another way: whereas liberation theology's relationship to the revolution is primarily ideological, evangelical Protestantism's relationship to the revolution is primarily sociological. (Lancaster, 1988 as quoted in Smith and Haas, 1997: 442)

This sociologically-based position of Protestants in Nicaragua lends to the image of them being more conservative but according to Smith and Haas, "In fact relative to Nicaraguan Catholics, in 1989, evangelicals surveyed were in many cases more supportive of the Sandinistas than were Catholics" (1997: 443). The relationships between religion and

politics are complex and are different in each context; they also are fluid and change across time and space.

Juanita Darling writes about how religion has interacted with the state via the media. She has highlighted how the rise of Protestantism has changed this relationship, from one where the state and church were inseparable to a relationship that allows for some separation between these two institutions:

> The Protestant wave that rulers of the Spanish Empire feared long ago is now engulfing Latin America, unbalancing centuries-long alliances, a change that is particularly evident in media. Secular media, such as Nicaragua's *La Prensa,* have loosened ties to the Roman Catholic Church, while church-owned media have become more independent of governments. (Darling, 2013: 103-4)

Within this Protestant wave the churches have been perceived to "share a more intense use of the Bible" (D'Exelle, 2013) than Catholic Churches. However this may be overly simplistic as both Catholic and Protestant believers are heterogeneous groups. The relationship between Catholic and Protestant perspectives have influenced each other in two key ways: Protestantism and its ideal of church-state separation on the Roman Catholic Church, and Catholic Social Teaching on Protestant churches.

Recently positions within Catholic Social Teaching have impacted Protestant traditions on charity and development, and specifically as they relate to TD. One such position can be discovered in Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth) and represents the views of the Roman Catholic Church with regards to development. This encyclical aims to reclaim the meaning of charity, so that it is no longer viewed as an act of pity but one of love. Instead of viewing charity as a salve for injustice, it views charity as "transcend[ing] justice and completes it in the logic of giving

and forgiving" (*Caritas in Veritate* 2009: Article 6). Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical also asserts that charity without truth, that is the truth of the Gospel, is insufficient: "In the present social and cultural context, where there is a widespread tendency to relativize truth, practicing charity in truth helps people to understand that adhering to the values of Christianity is not merely useful but essential for building a good society and for true integral human development" (*Caritas in Veritate* 2009: Article 4). It is necessary to notice the change in terminology from liberation to that of charity. Pope Benedict XVI was a staunch opponent of Liberation Theology as a cardinal and his understanding of the Roman Catholic Church's role in development is more conservative (Kirk, 1985). The Catholic Church has had much influence on society in Nicaragua and Catholic Social Teaching has also influenced the way that Protestants understand development work. Bryant Myers relies upon Catholic Social Teaching, and especially relevant to his revised version of "Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development" (2011) is this encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate.* Article 9 declares, "The church does not have technical solutions to offer and does not claim to interfere in any way with the politics of states. She does, however, have a mission of truth to accomplish… for a society that is attuned to man, to his dignity, to his vocation" (*Caritas in Veritate*, 2009: Article 9 as quoted in Myers, 2011: 51). This movement away from state politics by Pope Benedict XVI and towards individuals and their dignity and vocation reflects the approaches of the Protestant churches, especially when these ideas are put in the context of international development as enacted through TD.

Pope John Paul II wrote a follow-up to *Populorum Progressio* for its 20th

anniversary called *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (On Social Concern) in 1987. Article 41 of this

states,

> The church's social doctrine is not a "third way" between liberal
> capitalism and Marxist collectivism, nor even a possible alternative to
> other solutions less radically opposed to one another: rather, it constitutes
> a category of its own. Nor is it an ideology, but rather the accurate
> formulation of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of
> human existence, in society and in the international order, in the light of
> faith and of the Church's tradition. Its main aim is to interpret these
> realities, determining their conformity with or divergence from the lines of
> the Gospel teaching on man and his vocation, a vocation which is at once
> earthly and transcendent; its aim is thus to guide Christian behaviour. It
> therefore belongs to the field, not of ideology, but of theology and
> particularly of moral theology. (SRS, no. 41)

The perspective of John Paul II as seen in this quotation attempts to move the concerns of

the Vatican towards theology and away from ideology. This view of the world also fits

well within TD. Evangelicals, particularly Bryant Myers, have undertaken the approach

to development that is rooted in theology and not ideology.

Evangelicals who make up the largest proportion of Protestants in Nicaragua

(Gooren, 2010) were beginning to shift their perspectives on evangelism and social action

during this same 50-year period. The Wheaton Congress of 1966 was the first attempt by

Evangelical Protestants to develop a global position on missiology. This was done in

response to Vatican Council II and the World Council of Churches (mainline Protestant

denominations) holding congresses to further their positions on theology and missiology.

However this congress was not as successful as the ones that followed in formulating a

position on evangelism and social action. Efiong S. Utuk writes, "With regard to the

correlation between evangelism and social action, Wheaton also displayed an

unwillingness to situate the two on equal footing or even to consider them as indissolubly linked, biblical motifs" (1986: 207). This perspective has changed since then and has slowly moved from a conservative soul-first approach, which places evangelism and conversion as the only meaningful concern (i.e. soul care) (Phillips, 2010), to understanding theology in a more holistic manner which has been characterized as soul care/social care.

The second time evangelicals met together as a global community of churches was in Berlin five months after the Wheaton Congress of 1966. In the Berlin Conference the position regarding evangelism and social action was:

> indicative of the gradual shift evangelicals were making from a one-dimensional mentality to a double one. It was theoretically easy to affirm that evangelism and social action should not be separated, but very difficult to spell out what this indissolubility entails. It was easy to accept that the two ideas are, in the light of the Protestant principle of holism, mutually modifying, but nerve-breaking to come to a declaration that won a unanimous support. (Utuk, 1986: 211)

This idea of holism was considered but still was not accepted. It was at the next congress of evangelicals in Lausanne that a holistic perspective on social needs and evangelism began to gain some acceptance.

The Lausanne Congress in 1974 was a much more successful effort by the evangelicals to create a clear idea of how the church should respond to social needs with evangelism. Here the Lausanne Covenant was created and consisted of fifteen different points on evangelism and social action. This Covenant represents a turning point for the role of evangelicals in the world. First, evangelism "was no longer considered as the only focus of the Congress, but was placed in the wider context of the whole life and mission of the global church" (Utuk, 1986: 213). And second, when evangelism was mentioned it

was constantly referred to as "inseparable from social responsibility, Christian discipleship and church renewal" (Padilla, 1976: 11). The way that inseparability was being utilized here was still trapped within a modern worldview, which views the spiritual and material as distinct from each other. This worldview is noticed in John Stott's (the key figure at the Lausanne Congress) writings, "Social action is a *partner of evangelism.* As partners the two belong to each other and yet are independent of each other. Each stands on its own feet in its own right alongside the other. Neither is a means to the other, or even a manifestation of the other. For each is an end in itself" (Stott, 1975: 27). However, it was not until another congress was held in Wheaton in 1983 that a more holistic message of transformation, which views the material and spiritual as being inseparable, was brought forward (Myers, 2011). The culmination of these congresses into TD as an approach to tackling social, material and spiritual concerns will be examined next within a discussion of the theoretical framework. It will be shown how far Bryant Myers has moved the conversation on evangelism and social action through TD.

These changes that have occurred in both Catholic and Protestant churches have had a large impact on Nicaraguan society and culture. Michael Dodson credits a "religious awakening" with spurring on the revolution in 1979 that toppled the Somoza regime (1986). He also goes on to write, "Perhaps the most decisive innovation was putting the Bible directly into the hands of peasants and working-class people. The Bible was translated into the vernacular and the Mass offered in Spanish, giving the poor direct access for the first time" (Dodson, 1986: 39). This doctrinal change by the Vatican changed the course of Christianity in Nicaragua for FBOs and the local people. The theological positions that have shifted during the different Evangelical Congresses have

had an effect on the forms of development work provided by the global North, and this will be seen further in the discussion of TD. However, *evangélicos* in Nicaragua often already understood the need for social action and evangelism to be linked before the larger Evangelical Congresses affirmed this. One such example is the aforementioned CEPAD, which is "a Christian organization institution working to serve poor communities, promoting justice, peace and equitable solidarity with the aim of improving quality of life" (CEPAD 2005 as quoted in Phillips, 2010: 23). This organization is typical of the new directions that theology was introducing into the development context of Nicaragua.

Another organization that came along later and is rising in prominence within Nicaragua recently is the Nehemiah Center. It began as an idea after Hurricane Mitch in 1998 to develop a community of FBOs that could collaborate and share resources together under one common mission and vision, the transformation of society from a biblical worldview. Missionaries, Christian FBOs and Nicaraguans, recognized the need for this center as the Protestant churches had been fragmented and politically divided ever since the Sandinista Revolution in 1979 (VanKlompenburg, 2011). The political situation within Protestant Nicaragua was complex:

> CEPAD tended to support the Sandinista government while another organization of pastors and churches, *Consejo Evangélicos de Nicaragua* (CNPEN) tended to oppose the government. The political divisiveness in the country—clearly intense at times—was apparent not just between denominations, but often within denominations, even within individual churches and individual families. (Van Klompenberg, 2011: 25-6)

The idea behind the Nehemiah Center arose out of this context in 1999 to reconcile relationships among Protestants and approached development from a neutral position

politically that relied on concepts from TD instead. This idea was put into action and in 2007 the Nehemiah Center was built (Van Klompenberg, 2011).

Overall there was a movement taking place in both the Catholic and Protestant churches from an "older" more conservative theology that

> …(1) emphasized the soul and devalued the importance of material betterment, (2) relied on abstract 'universal' philosophical principles as a starting point for faith, (3) employed a methodology that insisted on the universal applicability of such abstract principles, (4) embodied a view of creation and the moral order that was hierarchical and ordained by God, and (5) emphasized voluntary charity toward the poor. (Phillips, 2010: 27)

This movement went towards a "newer" more liberal theology that influences the work of FBOs today, such as the Nehemiah Center, EM and ACECEN. This "new" theological perspective:

> …came to the fore in Latin American Christianity in the 1960s that (1) emphasized the human being and human experience as an integral material and spiritual whole, (2) saw the lived, daily experience and conditions of people and communities as the starting point for faith and reflection, (3) turned to the social sciences and social analysis instead of abstract philosophical principles as a basis for its methodology, (4) embodied a view of creation and the moral order that emphasized the social, communitarian and participatory nature of faith and salvation (liberation), and (5) went beyond voluntary charity to place social justice as an imperative for living the Christian faith. (Phillips, 2010: 28)

This "new" theological perspective's influence is evident in the FBOs that were researched in Nicaragua and also its impact is seen in TD and its approach to development and faith. The way in which these "new" theological perspectives are understood by evangelicals and progressive Liberation Theology Catholics remains distinct, as evangelicals tend to focus on individual transformation and Liberation

Theology Catholics focus on the overall structures as the object of transformation (Smith and Haas, 1997).

Chapter 3: The Transformational Development Framework

International Development Studies is an academic discipline where there is often a disconnect between theory and practice. One consequence of this disconnect is the use of what Andrea Cornwall (2007) calls "buzzwords." A buzzword is a word that is commonly used to convey legitimacy to something or some project without clearly defining the operational practice that the word takes on (Cornwall, 2007). Cornwall writes, "Development's buzzwords are not only passwords to funding and influence; and they are more than the mere specialist jargon that is characteristic of any profession" (2007: 471). These words have the power to put the work of development beyond reproach (Cornwall, 2007). Within TD many of these "buzzwords" are used and these words are "what the philosopher W.B. Gallie (1956) termed 'essentially contested concepts': terms that combine general agreement on the abstract notion that they represent with endless disagreement about what they might mean in practice" (Cornwall, 2007: 472). Bryant Myers' book, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*, (1999, 2011) uses many of these words but also attempts to operationally define them from a Christian and biblical perspective. Operationally defining a word requires that its meaning be understood in relation to how it is used in practice.

This process of reconstructing the meanings of words begins at the outset of Myers' book. He outlines the need to properly define and utilize the concepts of development, evangelism, and Christian witness. For Myers, "development" is a concept that contains a vast history of negative connotations. Chief among them is its association

with modernization or Westernization (Myers, 2011: 3). Other Christian development academics are also concerned with the usage of development. For example, the Micah Network Declaration on Integral Mission, which now includes over 562 organizations from 85 countries (micahnetwork.org) including the Nehemiah Center in Nicaragua, writes,

> We object to any use of the word 'development' that implies some countries are civilized and developed while others are uncivilised and underdeveloped. This imposes a narrow and linear economic model of development and fails to recognize the need for transformation in so-called 'developed' countries. (Micah Network, 2001)

However Bryant Myers takes a different approach and does not disregard the use of development outright. Instead he operationally defines this term in conjunction with the word *transformational* in order to rehabilitate the word development (Cornwall, 2007) so that it no longer operates solely within a secular realm. He is concerned with the distinction between the spiritual and material worlds that he claims is so prevalent in academia (Myers, 2011: 1). Myers writes, "I use the term *transformational development* to reflect my concern for seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially, psychologically and spiritually" (Myers, 2011: 3). The approach that Myers brings into development studies has gained acceptance among many Christian FBOs such as World Vision and Food for the Hungry. It also includes the ones in this study, EM, ACECEN and the Nehemiah Center. TD has been well accepted by the Christian development community but has not gone through the same rigorous critique and analysis that most theories on development are subjected to. This theory will be the principal unit of analysis within this thesis and will also its practice will be examined from a perspective that is sympathetic to its claims and principle.

TD has gained traction among FBOs because it provides them with a uniquely Christian approach that is based on biblical principles. It also works hard to connect theory and practice, which, as previously mentioned can often be the bane of development studies. This chapter will first look at the theories of development that TD uses and adapts to fit within a holistic and biblical framework. For TD, holistic means that the spiritual and material worlds are connected and inseparable (Myers, 2011).

Before a more extensive examination of TD is undertaken it is necessary to distinguish the role of the researcher, as no research in the social sciences can ever be free from subjectivity (Maguire, 1987). As a Christian, this development theory and framework operates well with my own perspective and worldview. Therefore my own worldview predisposes me to be more willing to accept its perspectives and prescriptions. However, as the researcher, one has to be careful that, just because a theory fits within one's worldview, it might not fit well within the worldview of those it claims to be helping. By using TD both as the lens that examines, and as the object of examination, it was possible to research these Christian organizations in a unique manner. The aforementioned discussion of buzzwords is useful for maintaining a critical perspective on these organizations as well. There also is the recognition by the researcher that the church is a flawed institution that needs continual improvement, and, as a Christian, one should be concerned that the church fulfills its intended purpose as reflected in Micah 6:8b, "to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (NIV, 2011).

3.1 - The Motivations behind TD

Development Studies has experienced an influx of scholarship on FBOs within the last decade (Clarke, 2006; Selinger, 2004; Tyndale, 2003). This scholarship has often reflected the relationship between religion *and* development. This perspective assumes that these two subjects are separable. However, many FBOs work under the assumption that religion and development are inseparable, intertwined and co-dependent (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012) and for this reason more focus should be spent on studying religion *in* development (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). The FBOs selected as a case study for this thesis view faith as an inseparable and an integral part of development. This perspective influences the process and implementation of practices that they employ (Sugden, 2003). In 1999 Bryant Myers introduced a key text that introduced the theoretical approach to development known as *Transformational Development* (TD). TD operates under the aforementioned assumption, that is, religion and faith are inseparable from development (Myers, 2011). In 2011, a revised and expanded version of this landmark text was introduced.

The primary motive for creating TD as a framework for development practice is a realization by Bryant Myers and others within the Christian community that the modern worldview does not work in many contexts around the world. Ellis and ter Haar (2004) say, "For most people in the world, including in Africa, 'religion' refers to a belief in the existence of an invisible world, distinct but not separate from the visible one, which is home to spiritual beings that are deemed to have effective powers over the material world" (2004: 14). The modern worldview that Myers takes issue with was born out of Western historical experience, notably the Enlightenment. From this period, "one of its

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most enduring features has been the assumption that we can consider the spiritual and physical realms as separate and distinct from one another" (Myers, 2011: 5). Myers argues that this is different from many peoples' current worldview and that this should not be how the world is viewed. The goal of "Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development" and this theoretical framework is not to disregard all ideas and theories born within this modern worldview but to rehabilitate them so that they can operate within a holistic worldview that is based on the Bible.

Wayne Bragg first used the term, *transformational development,* in 1983 while he was director of the Hunger Center at Wheaton College. This phrase was used in a consultation entitled, "A Christian Response to Human Need" and was controversial in evangelical circles because it called for "an understanding of development that went beyond social welfare by including justice concerns…" (Myers, 2011: 153). Bragg's perspective was controversial because of the redistributive nature of his proposal. During the Cold War any talk of redistribution was seen with suspicion and his ideas were largely dismissed. A key criticism of Bragg's approach is his "romanticisation of the poor" (Myers, 2011: 154). Myers summarizes this romanticisation as the following, "There was no space for the contribution the poor make to their own poverty; all sin, including the temptation to oppress others, seemed to belong only to the non-poor" (Myers, 2011: 154). Despite the shortcomings in Bragg's approach, he did open the door for a new approach to development thinking among evangelical Christians, one that recognized that the material conditions and power relationships of this world are not separate from the theology of the church.

The importance placed on this inseparability is central to TD and it can be seen within Myers holistic definition of poverty. Within TD, poverty is defined as more than material deprivation, which is considered to be only one facet. The core causes and effects of poverty are due to broken relationships. Myers calls this, "the point of departure: Poverty is a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of shalom in all its meanings" (2011: 143). For TD defines shalom[4] as

> …just relationships (living justly and experiencing justice), harmonious relationships and enjoyable relationships. Shalom means belonging to an authentic and nurturing community in which one can be one's true self and give one's self away without becoming poor. (Myers, 2011: 97)

Therefore for Myers the opposite of shalom is poverty. The "buzzword" of all buzzwords, poverty, and its definition by Bryant Myers will be the point of departure for this chapter on TD.

3.2 Understanding the holistic view of Poverty

TD builds upon five different frameworks for understanding what poverty is: Robert Chambers'—Poverty as entanglement, John Friedmann's—Poverty as a lack of access to social power, Isaac Prilleltensky's—Poverty as diminished personal and relational well-being, Jayakumar Christian's—Poverty as a disempowering system, and

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[4] Shalom is a Hebrew word that is often used in greetings, and it can be defined as "peace and prosperity". The usage of shalom in Jeremiah 29:7 (Hebrew Names Version) is an example of its usage: "Seek the shalom of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in the shalom of it shall you have shalom." And the New International Version (NIV) has exchanged shalom for peace and prosperity and in Jeremiah 29:7 it is written, "Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." A common understanding of the Hebrew usage of shalom is "peace and prosperity."

Ravi Jayakaran's—Poverty as a lack of freedom to grow (Myers, 2011). These five

frameworks all add important and different aspects that culminate in Myers'

understanding of holistic poverty as broken relationships.

Robert Chambers views poverty as being trapped in a system, which he calls a

"poverty trap" (Chambers, 1983). The key unit of analysis for Chambers is not the

individual, the community, the state, or the world, but the household. For Chambers it is

the household that "is poor in terms of assets and is physically weak, isolated, vulnerable

and powerless" (Myers, 2011: 115). TD adds one more dimension to Chambers' view of

poverty; this is spiritual poverty. This means that in addition to material poverty, physical

weakness, isolation, vulnerability and powerlessness, the household,

> …suffers broken and dysfunctional relationships with God, each other, the
> community and creation. Its members may suffer from spiritual
> oppression in the form of fear from spirits, demons, and angry ancestors.
> They may lack hope and be unable to believe that change is possible.
> They may never have heard the gospel or have only responded to a
> truncated version of the gospel that lacks transforming power. (Myers,
> 2011: 115)

Myers adds this aspect because it expands Chambers' definition of powerlessness, which

looks only at the social systems that inhibit the household in the material world. TD takes

this framework and makes it holistic by showing that the material and spiritual worlds are

inseparable and spiritual dimensions affect the livelihoods of the poor concretely.

There are clear connections between Chambers and Friedmann's view of poverty.

John Friedmann understands poverty to be a lack of access to social power and writes,

"The (dis)empowerment model of poverty is a political variant of the basic needs

approach. It is centered on politics rather than planning…. The starting point of the model

is the assumption that poor households lack the social power to improve the condition of

their members' lives" (Freidmann, 1992: 66). This approach is more innovative in its understanding. Poverty is viewed as more than a lack of things or knowledge. It places the sources of poverty into a social system, a system that includes the "role of government, the political system, civil society, and the economy, [which is] integrated into the global economy…" (Myers, 2011: 119). However Myers argues that Friedmann, like Chambers, falls short because he does not include a spiritual dimension into his understanding of poverty. According to Myers, "A spiritual dimension is needed to account for the fact that social institutions frequently frustrate even the best and most noble intentions of the people who inhabit and lead them. Without a theology of principalities and powers, it is unclear why good people cannot make social institutions do what they were set up to do" (Myers, 2011: 120). Friedmann omits the holistic perspective that TD is focused on, but is useful in expanding the definition of poverty.

Isaac Prilleltensky's framework of 'Poverty as diminished personal and relational well-being' adds another dimension to poverty that has historically been ignored in international development. This dimension is adapted from the field of community psychology. This perspective on poverty has gained acceptance in the development community more broadly after the 2000 World Bank publication, *Voices of the Poor*. Within this study the researchers found that the poor often spoke of psychological dimensions of poverty such as powerlessness, a lack of voice, humiliation and shame, which were felt on a personal level. These could manifest themselves in similar ways to problems of mental health that are more familiar to those in the global North. For example this could include: addictions to alcohol or drugs, domestic violence or as depression (Myers, 2011). Prillenltensky draws on this study and Amartya Sen's

landmark work, *Development as Freedom,* which speaks of expanding capabilities for development. Myers notes, "The new piece that Prillenltensky adds, the relational domain, focuses on the psychological impacts of material poverty and of unjust and oppressive power relationships on the poor, especially their view of themselves and hence their potential for agency" (Myers, 2011: 122). This piece is relevant to TD's holistic definition of poverty and its foundations being in broken relationships.

Jayakumar Christian, who was a colleague of Bryant Myers at World Vision, developed a framework for understanding poverty that draws upon both Chambers and Friedmann but he also adds a spiritual aspect. This is captured in his position that the non-poor, those who are materially rich, have god-complexes that place the poor into captivity and powerlessness: "The non-poor understand themselves as superior, essential, and anointed to rule. They succumb to the temptation to play god in the lives of the poor, using religious systems, mass media, the law, government policies and bureaucracies as tools. These people create the narratives, structures, and systems that justify and rationalize their privileged position. The result is that the poor become captive to the god complexes of the non-poor" (Myers, 2011: 124). This is an important dimension to add into the causes of poverty, recognizing the negative role that the global North can play and calling for the non-poor to reevaluate their assumptions of superiority. This misrecognition of others relates to the perspectives that Charles Taylor puts forward in *The Politics of Recognition*. He writes, "Within these perspectives, misrecognition shows not just a lack of due respect. It can inflict a grievous wound, saddling its victims with a crippling self-hatred. Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need" (1994: 26). Without a transformed view and recognition of the poor, the

non-poor will continue to contribute to the poor having a 'poverty of being'. This was a phrase coined by Augustine Musopole, who writes, "This is where the African feels his poverty most: A poverty of being, in which poor Africans have come to believe they are no good and cannot get things right" (Musopole, 1997 as quoted in Myers, 2011: 127). TD calls this the 'marred identity of the poor' and it is sustained by both the oppressive systems (or web of lies) created by the god-complexes of the non-poor and a lack of finding each individual's identity and worth as being created in the image of God and being one of His children (Myers, 2011). This framework points to the evangelical nature of TD and the importance of sharing the Gospel.

Finally, Myers draws upon a framework developed by Ravi Jayakaran called, 'Poverty as a lack of freedom to grow.' Jayakaran sees the poor as being "wrapped in a series of restrictions and limitations in four areas of life: physical, mental, social and spiritual" (Myers, 2011: 131). This view is slightly different from the others because it looks at the need for each individual to be liberated from these oppressive limitations. Also his perspective echoes one difference that has been discussed, that is, the differences between Evangelical and Catholic perspectives on power and politics in Nicaragua. While evangelicals often look to the need for the transformation of individuals in order to change the system, Catholic Liberation Theology looks at changing and transforming the system as the primary goal (Smith and Haas, 1997). What Jayakaran offers to TD is two things: "First, he locates the causes of poverty in people, not in concepts or abstractions… Second, Jayakaran alerts us to the fact that these stakeholders, the sources of oppression, are often themselves operating within 'bundles of limitations' kept in place

by still-more-powerful stakeholders" (Myers, 2011: 132). These five frameworks all add to each other and influence the holistic understanding of poverty that TD puts forward.

For Myers it is important to define poverty because, "Our understanding of why people are poor shapes our understanding of transformational development, the better human future it seeks, and the methods we must apply to get there" (Myers, 2011: 133). This search for a holistic and deeper understanding of poverty should then help to prescribe better ways to find human flourishing and peace, which TD calls shalom. But, Myers offers a caveat in understanding poverty, highlighting the need for humility and calls for a constant checking of where biases lie. He writes, "Like our understanding of the nature of poverty, our understanding of the causes of poverty tends to be in the eye of the beholder" (Myers, 2011: 133). Without this critical perspective the efforts to alleviate poverty may in turn help to sustain the same structures that keep it in place. This leads us into a discussion within TD about the "poverty of the non-poor."

"Poverty of the non-poor" may sound like an oxymoron, but it actually shows how our language is not adequately equipped to deal with the holistic nature of poverty that TD puts forward. This different form of poverty is found in those without material need and is one that is juxtaposed with the materially poor. Myers quotes Kosuke Koyama (1979: 4-5) who writes:

> Man cannot live without bread. But, man must not live by this essential bread alone. Bread-alone, shelter-alone, clothing-alone, income-alone, all these alones damage man's quality of life. Strangely, these good values contain danger elements too. Man is supposed to eat bread. But what if bread eats man? People are dying from over-eating today in affluent countries. Man is supposed to live in the house. But what if the house begins to live in man? … Man needs bread plus the word of God. (Koyama as quoted in Myers, 2011: 148)

Koyama shows here how the non-poor also suffer from a form of relational poverty, one where their relationship with God has been emptied and consumed by materialism. This also echoes concerns with over-development, the idea that those in the global North have lost sight of what true development is and are moving away from what should be considered the utopia. Owen Willis (2009) writes that this critique of the non-poor is something that faith-based approaches to development are well equipped for. He writes, "It is to be hoped that the rich traditions of the great faiths will eventually influence a reexamination and reformulation of development itself, to allow for more holistic definitions of poverty and wealth in a world of not only underdevelopment but also overdevelopment, thus liberating rich and poor to explore the bounds of human possibility informed by faith and science, religion and development" (Willis, 2009: 13). TD claims to offer this more holistic definition of poverty, this poverty that affects us all. Myers summarizes TD's view of poverty, as, "At the end of the day, the cause of poverty of the non-poor is the same as that of the poverty of the poor, only differently expressed. The poverty of the non-poor is [also] fundamentally relational and caused by sin" (Myers, 2011: 148). The result is broken relationships, relationships that are distorted by Myers' definition of sin[5].

As repeatedly mentioned, TD views poverty holistically. This means that it is not just a material concern but it is also a spiritual and relational concern (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012). The World Bank series, "Voices of the Poor", provides rationale for the perspective that poverty is more than a lack of material resources, but that poverty is also a loss of dignity, self-worth, as well as providing feelings of powerlessness and shame

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[5] Sin is a contested concept within Christian communities and is a buzzword as well. Myers defines sin as anything that goes against God's intended plan for humans.

(Corbett & Fikkert, 2012). TD recognizes the multifaceted nature of poverty and states that it is due to the existence of four key relationships that are broken: relationships with God, with self, with others, and with the rest of creation (Myers, 2011). These relationships interact with each other and create the poverties of the world that we live in, "The way that humans create culture—including economic, social, political, and religious systems—reflect our basic commitments to God, self, others, and the rest of creation" (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012: 56). For TD the key to eradicating the multiple forms of poverty is to restore these broken relationships and Bryant Myers states that "Poverty is the result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of *shalom* in all its meanings" (Myers, 1999: 86). The Hebraic usage of Shalom, peace and prosperity, which Myers has adopted, requires that all relationships need to be reconciled, including those of the poor and the non-poor.

3.3 Theoretical Approaches for Restoring Broken Relationships

For TD, the way to restore these broken relationships and therefore bring shalom is through both biblical principles and using tools learned in the social sciences (Myers, 2011). According to Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert in, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor… and Yourself*, original sin is the reason for the broken relationships that cause the suffering of this world. This book is used by the organizations that were researched, and draws heavily from Myers. Corbett and Fikkert claim that it was the fall into sin by Adam and Eve that distorted and broke the four foundational relationships mentioned above (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012). These

relationships were broken in the whole world, not just the developing world, and therefore a central theme of transformational development is that "until we embrace our mutual brokenness, our work with low-income people is likely to do far more harm than good" (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012: 61). Therefore, the concept of "walking with the poor" and reconciling relationships found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and portrayed within TD is the way that Myers argues that Christians should view development work (Myers, 2011).

The idea of transformation, of changing from one state to another, is central to TD. There are many changes that need to occur and together all of these make up a more holistic approach to transformation. Myers asserts that this idea of transformation must be taken holistically and this can best be done through 'biblical transformation'. He writes,

> If we see people as lost souls, then transformation is about saving souls. If we see people as suffering from hunger, then transformation is about feeding them. If the problem is unjust systems, then the tools of transformation are community organizing, advocacy, or political activism… Each of these views is true, but each is also incomplete. If we can accept that biblical transformation addresses all these dimensions of human life, we can take another step toward a more comprehensive, holistic view of transformation. (Myers, 2011: 151-152)

To approach this comprehensive, holistic view of transformation each of these incomplete views must be joined together in order to restore and reconcile relationships. If this is not done transformation will be fragmented and reduced to "evangelism to save the soul; to social work, medicine, or psychology to save the person; to political activism or peacemaking to restore the social system; and to environmentalism to save nature" (Myers, 2011: 152). However TD counters this reductionist approach from its view of

broken relationships, all the relationships (God, self, others, community and environment) can be understood as connected through a biblical lens.

TD draws upon the Bible as its ultimate guide and as the underlying truth that unites these different perspectives, but first Myers looks at the perspectives that are offered by prominent academics and development practitioners. TD draws upon several perspectives and approaches to practicing development: Wayne Bragg's 'Development as Transformation', David Korten's 'People-centered Development', John Friedmann's 'Development as expanding access to social power', Issac Prilleltensky and Geoffrey Nelson's 'Development as enhancing personal, collective, and relational power', Robert Chambers' 'Development as responsible well-being', Amartya Sen's 'Development as freedom and rights-based development', and finally Jayakumar Christian's 'Development as a kingdom response to powerlessness' (Myers, 2011). Myers asserts that, "Putting all of these ideas together, we have a framework for transformation that points us toward the best human future—the kingdom of God. This future is framed by the twin goals of transformation: changed people, who have discovered their true identity and vocation; and changed relationships that are just and peaceful" (Myers, 2011: 202). These perspectives feature some prominent development academics but also perspectives from the Christian development community and the field of psychology.

Wayne Bragg's "development as transformation" is included because it brought with it a change in development thinking among evangelicals, offering a challenge to the more conservative "soul-first" theologies often held by US evangelicals (Myers, 2011). "Soul-first" theologies view religion and faith as necessary for the spiritual realm but not the material realm. They are often guided by the belief that life in this world matters

inasmuch as your "soul is saved" (Phillips, 2010). "Soul-first" theology has been the viewpoint among many conservative Catholics as well, and it was not until the 1960s (after the Second Vatican Council and developments in the social sciences) that a shift in theology occurred (Phillips, 2010). Bragg had paved the way for Evangelical Christians to work with the social sciences to bring justice to the poor, however his perspective still fell short. It 'romanticized' the poor and did not view them as possibly having a role in their own poverty (Myers, 2011).

David Korten's perspective on development is useful because it focuses on improving the lives of people instead of the economy. Korten defined development as "a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations" (Korten, 1990: 67). This definition highlights the importance of seeing development as a process and one that focuses on improving the capacity of individuals and institutions to make a future that is "justly distributed" or equitable, "sustainable" or environmentally responsible, and "consistent with their own aspirations" or giving the local people involved ownership of the project (Myers, 2011). Critiques offered to Korten's perspective by TD are that it romanticizes the idea of local ownership, without recognizing the capacity that oppressive structures may be built into these local worldviews. Another source of inspiration for TD, Jayakumar Christian, argues that "accepting local worldviews uncritically is sometimes a source of poverty, not an answer to it" (Myers, 2011: 157). Also Myers has reservations about Korten's sole focus on

causes and not symptoms, he holds the view that development work is not separate from relief and those suffering now should receive material support as well.

John Friedmann sees the cause of poverty as having a limited access to social power and, therefore, his solution for bringing development requires that access to social power be expanded. This is "a process that seeks the empowerment of the households and their individual members through their involvement in socially and politically relevant actions" (Friedmann, 1992: 33). This goal of expanding social power is different than Korten's approach because it does not call for a direct challenge to the social structures but instead calls for the poor to find their own space within these oppressive structures. Friedmann writes,

> The objective of an alternative development is to humanize a system that has shut them [the poor] out, and to accomplish this through forms of everyday resistance and political struggle… Its central objective is their inclusion in a restructured system that does not make them redundant. (1992: 13)

Although Friedmann minimizes the oppressive and self-serving nature of the non-poor who control the larger systems which impoverish the marginalized and he does not include spirituality in his analysis, he does offer a challenge for Christians, particularly evangelicals, to heed in development work (Myers, 2011). Myers writes, "If Christians cannot develop a truly Christian theology of political engagement on behalf of the excluded, then they will have nothing to offer the poor in this critical area of life" (2011: 162). TD understands political engagement as necessary for creating shalom.

Isaac Prilleltensky and Geoffrey Nelson are both psychologists who together offer a valuable perspective for holistic development. They consider the source of poverty to come from a, "diminished identity caused by oppression caused by unequal power

relations" (Myers, 2011: 162). Of particular interest to Myers is Prilleltensky and Nelson's argument that relationships need to be repaired and this is done through expanding the power of the poor in ways that enhance their collective well-being instead of creating avenues for oppression and domination. Myers furthers the claim that the power of the poor needs to be expanded in a positive manner and argues that "without a kingdom understanding of power, this ambiguity [well-being versus oppression] is almost always fatal in a sinful world" (2011: 163). Their contribution remains valuable due to the stress placed on reconciling relationships, which fit well with TD's view of holistic poverty as being fundamentally relational.

Robert Chambers understands development to be "responsible well-being" and attempts to move away from the restrictive categories of wealth and poverty. Chambers writes, "Unlike wealth, well-being is open to the whole range of human experience, social, psychological and spiritual as well as material. It has many elements" (2005: 193). This shift challenges the notion that the non-poor are on the right path to development. By redefining development as "responsible well-being", Chambers is able to put the onus on everyone to be "self-critically aware of their roles and their potential for enabling a more inclusive well-being for all" (Myers, 2011: 165). The two things that Chambers considers as necessary for responsible well-being are: livelihood security and the capabilities to achieve security (Myers, 2011). Livelihood security, as defined by Chambers, is,

> …adequate stocks and flows of food and cash to meet basic needs and to support well-being. Security refers to secure rights and reliable access to resources, food and income and basic services. It includes tangibles and intangible assets to offset risk, ease shocks and meet contingencies. (Chambers, 1997: 10)

The capability to achieve livelihood security for Chambers is adapted from Amartya Sen. What Chambers adds to Sen's approach, which will be discussed next, is the concept of 'values formation' (Myers, 2011). He holds the position that people's capabilities are expanded "through learning, practice, training and education" (Chambers, 1997: 11 as quoted in Myers, 2011: 165). The idea of values formation within education is an aspect of TD that will be extensively discussed in this thesis. It is a key component that connects Christian education to TD. However, Chambers falls short in his approach because he does not adequately consider the role of the spiritual world. The lack of recognition for the spiritual has been a continual theme within secular perspectives on development and perhaps provides the main gap that TD attempts to bridge in its search for a holistic approach.

Amartya Sen has been an influential figure in development studies, and his book "Development as Freedom" has helped to move the focus away from economic growth to human development. Sen's 'rights-based approach' works well with the Christian perspective offered by TD. It highlights the importance of each individual and their need to be free to live a life that affords them dignity. This cannot be done by solely advocating for human rights but requires that there be a "supportive social environment" (Myers, 2011: 167). Individual freedom is valued but only inasmuch as it supports and increases the capacity for freedom for all. Sen argues that there is a set of 'instrumental freedoms' that have to be met before people have the capacity to truly be free. These instrumental freedoms are: "(1) political freedoms, (2) economic facilities, (3) social opportunities, (4) transparency guarantees, (5) protective security" (Sen, 1999: 10). These freedoms are connected and strengthen each other. They both work together to expand

human freedom overall (Sen, 1999). However they still do not include a spiritual

dimension. Myers calls this a 'blind-spot' and the spiritual dimension is required for

human freedom to be attained (Myers, 2011).

Jayakumar Christian introduces the importance of powerlessness within the

Gospel and considers development to be a "kingdom response to powerlessness" (Myers,

2011: 168). This response, which looks to empower the poor, includes three

commitments: (1) dealing with relational poverty, (2) dealing with micro-, macro-,

global, and cosmic forces that uphold powerlessness, and (3) rereading history from a

biblical perspective to challenge "the time element in the process of disempowerment"

(Myers, 2011: 169) of the poor. Jayakumar Christian explains what is meant by these

three commitments,

> As a people concept, powerlessness describes the experience of persons in
> households and communities. As a people concept, powerlessness is about
> real people living in real living space with micro, macro, global and
> cosmic dimensions. As a time-related concept, it encompasses the forces
> in history, present realities and perceptions about the future. As a spatial
> concept, it includes geographical location, nature and environmental
> dimensions (Christian, 1994: 332).

Jayakumar Christian adds to the other approaches a focus on the kingdom of God, the

ultimate utopia for TD (Myers, 2011). The spiritual dimension makes TD more holistic,

by reaffirming that the spiritual and material are inseparable. Bryant Myers summarizes

Jayakumar Christian's vision for humanity: "We are to be citizens of the kingdom on

earth, people living in just and harmonious relationships with God, self, each other, and

the created order. This is what being truly human means. This is what human agency or

freedom is for" (Myers, 2011: 171). However Myers moves the discussion further by

claiming it is also necessary to reestablish the identity of both the poor and non-poor in respect to their vocation, or what they do (Myers, 2011).

3.4 TD and ushering in *Shalom*

In the introduction to this chapter, the notion of properly defining and rehabilitating buzzwords was discussed. After examining the perspectives that support TD, it is necessary to see how TD gathers these frameworks on development and uses them to create its own model. The words that TD spends the most effort on incorporating and operationalizing from are: identity, empowerment, agency, sustainability and, last but not least, transformational development (Myers, 2011). These words are often used in conjunction with each other and cannot be viewed as necessarily distinct concepts. For example the way that TD understands 'identity' has direct implications for what it means to 'be empowered', and both of these concepts are also defined from a Biblical perspective (Myers, 2011).

Identity for TD is a starting point. It is first necessary for individuals to discover who they are. This discovery is made through understanding what their story is, and how it fits into the community's story and then into God's story. God's story, the Bible, is where Christian development practitioners must point people's identity to. Myers writes, "Only by accepting God's salvation in Christ can people and the community redirect the trajectory of their story toward the kingdom of God. This is the bottom line of every community's story, poor and non-poor" (Myers, 2011: 175). Therefore, for TD someone's identity cannot be understood apart from its relationship with God. Kwame Bediako (1996) views this as a vital part of TD and writes "their human dignity and

identity are intrinsically related to God in Christ through his redemptive purpose in salvation history" (1996: 8). Bediako also has introduced dignity, which extends identity in that it includes both knowing who you are and what you are worth. Identity is not included as just a buzzword but TD has rehabilitated identity for its own uses. For TD the appropriate way to help people restore identity and instill dignity is by sharing that they are made in the image of God and worthy to be saved by Christ's death on the cross (Myers, 2011). Pointing to the Christian God in a way that does not belittle people's histories is difficult; it requires humility and being self-critical on the part of the development workers. They have to realize that their own identity as Christians may need restoration and a recognition that as the non-poor they may hold an inflated view of themselves (Myers, 2011).

Discovering identity and dignity are the two first steps in empowerment for TD. Andrea Cornwall considers *empowerment* to have "perhaps the most expansive semantic range of all those considered here" (2007: 472). To properly understand TD's definition and its operationalization of *empowerment* it has to be acknowledged that this can only be achieved by examining its meaning as a product of identity and dignity. "Finally, with a rediscovered identity and a character to match, transformational development works to *empower* people to live out these values in search of their new vision" (Myers, 2011: 179). Therefore *empowerment* is a process that occurs simultaneously with one's discovery of *identity* and *dignity*. It is the sense of having purpose that further empowers people. A variety of development techniques are put forward to help facilitate this search for purpose: Community organizing, Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Positive Deviance (PD). These participatory techniques

have the common goal of including the community and individuals within the community throughout the whole process of development (Myers, 2011). This leads into a discussion of *agency*, another word that needs exploration and defining.

Agency is also related to the concepts previously mentioned, and it is put into practice in a similar way as the concept of empowerment. However TD uses the concept of agency to stress the importance of listening to women and children in a community (Myers, 2011). All development programming must contribute to affirming their role in the story of a community. Myers asserts, "Deliberate and creative efforts need to be made so that [women's] views and their stories are allowed to be heard" (Myers, 2011: 275). This is also the case with children who can often be portrayed as passive recipients of aid. TD counters this portrayal and calls for a change, "We need a change in thinking that allows us to see children as potential agents of transformation" (Myers, 2011: 277). The change in thinking about women and children is achieved by intentionally considering both the views of women and children and also through monitoring and evaluating their involvement and transformation separately from men (Myers, 2011).

Sustainability is broken into three distinct but related categories: mental, social and spiritual. Mental sustainability relates to understanding what your true identity and purpose is and also where your worth comes from. Social sustainability is related to David Korten and John Friedmann's perspectives and requires that the individual, the household and the community find their place and have a voice in the larger structures that previously may have oppressed them. The idea of spiritual sustainability is unique to faith-based approaches to development. It affirms the role of churches in supporting the beliefs and perspectives of people so that they can continue to restore relationships and

usher in transformational development. Myers quotes Lesslie Newbigin's view on the

role of the church to elaborate,

> The major role of the church in relationship to the great issues of justice
> and peace will not be in its formal pronouncement, but in its continually
> nourishing and sustaining men and women who will act responsibly as
> believers in the course of their secular duties as citizens. (Newbigin, 1989:
> 139 as quoted in Myers, 2011: 199)

The way that TD operationalizes the concept of sustainability is therefore threefold: (1)

the individual by helping him or her to find their true identity; (2) the community through

empowering them to have a voice in the political systems that they belong to; and (3)

both the individual and the community through the church which sustains their vision for

restoring the broken relationships that cause poverty (Myers, 2011).

TD is the restoration of relationships through the aforementioned processes in

order to create shalom. TD has been operationalized through the practices that are used to

help people find their identity, be empowered, realize their own agency, and to be

sustainable all in the pursuit of the ideal of shalom. This is achieved through a constant

recognition on the part of the development worker that everything should be done in a

way that is a witness to the Gospel. The concept of 'Christian Witness' (CW) comes in

here. CW is different from evangelism and does not take a 'go and tell' approach, it

operates in the same way as the approach for development that TD takes.

CW is different from the "go and tell" approach of evangelism in that instead it

calls for the development worker to "recognize the fingerprints of God" (Myers, 2011:

322) in everything. CW requires humility and an appreciative frame of mind for the work

that has been already done in the community. Myers writes, "Thus we can use our

development processes as a way to help people draw closer to God by recognizing God's

work in their past" (2011: 323). This can be incorporated into AI and the development

methods that are associated with an appreciative frame of mind. Therefore CW is meant

as a way to develop conversation on the Gospel, not as a way to force it on people. CW is

similar in its approach to evangelism as TD is towards social action,

> The fact that the goals for Christian witness and the goals for
> transformational development are the same, except for focus, should be
> reassuring. They can only be the same if we have overcome the dichotomy
> between the physical (development) and the spiritual (Christian witness),
> the modern problem with which this book has been struggling throughout.
> (Myers, 2011: 317)

CW is also what makes TD *transformational* and it is also the way in which the main gap

that this approach attempts to bridge, the separation between the spiritual and material, is

achieved.

Chapter 4: Is Christian Education in Nicaragua a Good Example of

Transformational Development?

4.1 The relationship between theory and practice

To test the relationship between theory and practice from a TD approach it is useful to examine Myers' own litmus test for assessing whether development work is transformational and holistic:

> This means that the best test for holism is a negative test. If there is no work directed at spiritual or value change; no work involving the church; no mention of meaning, discovery, identity and vocation, then one should be concerned that the program is not holistic. The next step is to talk to the development promoter and the people. If they show no thinking that is holistic, then there is a problem. (Myers, 2011: 202)

The central research question, "Do the efforts by Edudeo Ministries, the Nehemiah Center and ACECEN follow the principles and practices of transformational development in their work with education?" asks whether there is a disconnect between theory and practice. First, we need to decide if holistic development is occurring and second if that resembles the descriptions of holism as found within TD. The secondary research questions: (1) How does the partnership and relationship between EM, the Nehemiah Center and ACECEN operate? (2) Does the curriculum in the Christian schools reflect the principles of TD? (3) Are the parents satisfied with the education that their children are receiving and do their responses reflect the goals of TD? These questions support the central research question and tease out where a possible disconnect may occur. In the third chapter the principles of TD were laid out and some specific ways that these principles could be operationalized were highlighted. All three organizations, EM, the

Nehemiah Center and ACECEN, profess to have an understanding of TD and attempt to use it as a guide for their work with education and development. This chapter will first briefly look at how each organization incorporates concepts of TD in their mission statements.

Through listening to the perspectives of those who claim to hold a worldview that does not separate the material and spiritual and where faith is integral to development it can be better understood how theologies play a role in the work that is being done:

> Development, from a religious perspective, is more than a set of technical benchmarks. For many religious believers, the road to development is at least as important as the final destination. For them, development is an integral process that implicates the full range of human existence, including its perceived spiritual dimension. In such a view, lasting and effective social change is dependent on the inner change or transformation of individuals. (Ellis & ter Haar, 2007: 395)

This form of development is being examined through the work of EM, the Nehemiah Center and ACECEN.

The Director's message from EM found on their webpage (edudeo.com) is,

> Education rooted in a Biblical worldview penetrates the heart and summons people to God's call to repentance and *transformation* by telling the Biblical story. Teaching about creation and the fall, about good and evil, brings each student to a realization of God's redemption of all things through Jesus Christ. It reveals how they can be part of this grand story, impacting their families and communities with the message of the Gospel. Christ-centered education permeates an outlook on life that *cannot be separated* from God, and therefore affects real, sweeping, everlasting change. Christian schools *transform* culture and play a vital role in strengthening the church and family, shaping and preparing the next generation of leaders. (edudeo.com as accessed June 2014)

Within EM, Myers' text is heavily relied on. This is evident in this message. It speaks of transformation, looking at life in a holistic way, and stresses the importance of stories and worldviews.

The Nehemiah Center even has a more direct reference to TD and was established as a center for organizations that specifically adhere to this theoretical perspective. On their home page it is written, "The Nehemiah Center is a community of service and learning, which trains lay and pastoral leaders in an integral, biblical worldview and encourages local, national and international collaboration for a Christ-centered, *transformational development* of communities and nations" (nehemiahcenter.org as accessed June 2014, italics added). Also ACECEN, which operates as the partner to and is supported by EM in Nicaragua, is based in the Nehemiah Center. The following quotation describes their organizational structure,

> The Association of Evangelical Christian Schools of Nicaragua
> (ACECEN) fulfills the transformational work in the area of education for
> the Nehemiah Center… ACECEN works with each of its affiliate schools
> in the growth and strengthening of education based on Christian principles
> and the integration of a Biblical worldview. It also promotes the integral
> development and improvement of each Christian school so that it instills in
> each child, adolescent, parents, teacher, and community, an integral
> Christian transformation. (Nehemiahcenter.org as accessed June 2014)

The organizations claim to use and understand what TD means[6] and they project this message on to the donor communities located predominantly in Canada (edudeo.com as accessed June 2014). Testing what TD looks like in practice will be achieved by listening

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[6] One of the key guiding values for the Nehemiah Center and the organizations that work within it is holistic TD, "A process through which communities learn to take responsibility for their own lives and resolve their own problems based on a biblical worldview and grounded in God's purpose for their lives. Holistic transformational development results in fresh knowledge and ideas, justice and peace in social relationships, the development of new resources and adequate material well-being, as well as spiritual growth and leadership development in local churches" (nehemiahcenter.net/about-us/values/ as accessed June 2014).

to the stories of those who work with these organizations, the teachers who are trained by these organizations and the parents of students at the schools that are being supported.

4.2 Telling the story of the development workers

TD is about stories. Within the chapter titled "Theology, Poverty and Development", Bryant Myers' makes it clear that the biblical story and its theology cannot be ignored, but he also shows how they cannot be understood without accounting for lived experiences in relation to this biblical story.

> We learn that it is not my story, or your story, or our story that is the main story, the story that gives all other stories their true meaning. Meaning and moral frame only comes from the story of God's project in history. To pursue human transformation as Christians means understanding where humanity is coming from, where it is going, and how it can get there. To do the work for transformation, we have to embrace the whole of the biblical story, the story that makes sense and gives direction to the stories of the communities where we work, as well as to our own stories. (Myers, 2011: 58)

This emphasizes discovering how each person's story fits into what TD deems to be the grand story: God's story. The development workers who have been interviewed have already spent time searching for their own story within the divine story and these seven people interviewed were eager to participate. Through semi-structured interviews these seven development workers explained their motivations for working and life, about the organizations that they work for, who these organizations target, what they understand about Christian development and TD, and what their vision of an ideal community would be (see Appendix 5). These stories help to paint the picture of what faith *in* development is when applied through TD.

Perspectives from Edudeo Ministries

The motivations driving the EM worker in Nicaragua and the Executive Director of EM in Canada differed, but both expressed their interest in working for God. How each person came to this realization provides insight into the motivations of the whole organization. This can be summarized as sharing a holistic vision of the world in which the spiritual and material aspects of life are inseparable. On the website (edudeo.com as accessed June 2014) a prominent graphic and slogan is "education + gospel = transformation". The gospel, as it is found within the first four books of the New Testament, is of central importance to the work of this organization. Sometimes this perspective had to be learned and realized through practice. For example, the EM worker in Nicaragua described being motivated by his church but not really understanding God's role in everything, and through working with EM and the Nehemiah Center he has learned a new perspective, a more holistic one, where "…God sees how everything is working for Him: our job, our life outside of the church, everything, our business and education" (EM Worker Nicaragua). His recognition of his "calling" only came after working with this organization in which he learned that his life could not be lived without an acknowledgement of God, or the spiritual world. A holistic view of the world in which the material and spiritual worlds are inseparable is central to TD (Myers, 2011) and this interviewee came to this understanding through working with EM in the Nehemiah Center.

The Executive Director in Canada was motivated to work for EM because of this holistic perspective prior to taking on this role,

> And so I found out a little more about it and I was intrigued with what the organization did. Still reaching out to children, which, was essentially

what I was doing at Mission Services but the global perspective intrigued me, the integration of the Gospel intrigued me, kind of that mission… basically looking at global missions and using Christ-centered education as the vehicle to bring the message of hope. (Executive Director EM Canada)

The combination of the Gospel with education really motivated him to apply for this position. The motivations for beginning to work for this organization (in the case of the Canadian) and to continue to work for this organization (in the case of the Nicaraguan) affirm their commitment to one of the most basic principles of TD, that the material world cannot be separated from the spiritual world (Myers, 2011).

When asked to provide information about the organization they worked for and how it interacted with others in the Nehemiah Center, elements of TD were at the forefront, especially the importance that is placed on relationship-building (Myers, 2011). EM placed a lot of emphasis on relationships and working *together*. After being asked what the biggest achievements of EM was, the Executive Director said,

Clearly, the most important achievement we've made as an organization, particularly since the re-brand and the international structural change[7] is our focus on relationship building with our partners. It's something we take very seriously, for us to serve with integrity we need to gain a deeper understanding of who our partners are and what their challenges are and what their opportunities are, what their situation is like, what their context is. So we've made a huge commitment to just develop that relationship with our partners. (Executive Director EM Canada)

There was consistency within EM on this point and this provides more legitimacy to the claim that relationship building is their focus. In Nicaragua, the EM representative echoed this when he expressed,

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[7] EM used to be World Wide Christian Schools (WWCS) Canada and answered to WWCS USA and not directly to the partner organizations in the developing countries.

I think one of the most important things that Edudeo is following in that *transformational development* process in Nicaragua in our communities is that we partner with the communities, with the people, the local people, the local leaders and instead of coming with something and telling them what to do, we actually partner with the people, with the local leaders here. And in that way we can work together and I think listening to the people is one of the… is very important in the transformational development process. Listening and working shoulder by shoulder instead of one over the other one, it is like we are *walking together*. So through ACECEN that is how we partner with the local leadership. ACECEN is a very important partner and this ACECEN is our source of information and our source of projects and our source of people and for getting into communities. (EM Worker Nicaragua – italics added)

This idea of partnership and relationship-building with local communities expands on the response by the Canadian director and places his words into the context of Nicaragua. The stress on building relationships within the Nehemiah Center and EM's partner organization ACECEN is first and foremost.

The manner in which EM gains its most complete picture of impact and outcome is not through quantitative means but through stories and testimonies of the people involved. According to the development worker in Nicaragua,

I think we actually measure the results through the testimonies of the people in the community and we receive feedbacks from ACECEN. We hear those stories that are happening in the schools and how it is affecting the teachers, the students and parents. And the facilitators go to these people and they listen to them and ask them good questions about what is happening in their lives and you can see how they are changing their way of thinking, how they are changing their relationship with God, with their students, relationship with their parents, with their children. So there it is, transformation is happening. (EM Worker Nicaragua)

This approach to measuring results uses TD in two important ways, first, it stresses listening to the community and hearing their stories and, second, it does this in a manner

which reflects the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach briefly mentioned in the third chapter. The AI approach does this by,

> Setting aside the metaphor of a machine and a problem-solving approach, AI begins not with analysis but with a holistic view of what already is and seeks answers to a new set of questions: What made social organization possible here? What allows the community to function at its best? What possibilities await the community that will allow it to reach for higher levels of health, vitality, and well-being? The focus of the appreciative approach is the discovery of what gives or enriches life, of what creates energy and enthusiasm. (Myers, 2011: 259)

For the Nicaraguan EM worker it is important to evaluate impacts in such a way that appreciates what has been done so that the schools, ACECEN, and the individuals can be affirmed in their ability to create positive change.

TD has a holistic understanding of poverty, defined as broken relationships between us and God, others, the community, and the environment (Myers, 2011). Conversely a life without poverty is one where there is shalom, peace and prosperity. The interviewees were asked, "What their vision of an ideal community in Nicaragua would be?" (see Appendix 5) By listening to what their picture of an ideal community is, their values and utopian ideals can be discovered. Also by viewing their utopian vision, their idea of a dystopia (or life of poverty) can be imagined. For example, if the answers stressed the importance of material possessions then their vision of poverty could be defined as a lack of material possessions and conversely an abundance of possessions is the absence of poverty. The Executive Director in Canada demonstrated his understanding of poverty and what an ideal vision of a community should be as they relate to TD. Throughout the interview he made mention of reconciling relationships to God as a way to decrease poverty, "For us it is not about moving people from tin shacks

to brick bungalows, because we live in brick bungalows in this country and we have a lot of our own issues, they're different. But ultimately I would say it is pointing people to the one who reconciles all things" (Executive Director EM Canada). Also the end goal of this process of reconciling relationships for him will end up in the following ideal community, "One where there is *shalom*, with people and institutions thriving and where no one is left behind" (Executive Director EM Canada, italics added). The Nicaraguan worker from EM also focused on this relational aspect of development as well. This was something that he thinks Nicaragua does better than some more 'developed' countries. He responds to this question by saying, "[Laughs] My vision… Umm, besides all the good things that everybody wants for their communities like leaving poverty, umm. I think there is one thing that I wouldn't like it if Nicaraguan communities lost, that is there simplicity of living and that relational life that they have. I think that I wouldn't like it if Nicaraguan communities lost that" (EM Worker Nicaragua). This importance of relationships and relational living are what makes an ideal community for him, not an extravagant lifestyle with many material possessions. Even though he does not directly equate broken relationships with poverty, his view that a community can only be ideal if that is the focus reflects an understanding of this.

Even though EM understands the concepts of TD both their representatives from Nicaragua and Canada were willing to admit the difficulties of putting this approach into practice. The following quotation from the Executive Director uses an analogy of a relationship, which is fitting for several reasons, and says this about their approach with TD,

> Sure, this is our focus. We are going to wire some money and really as we
> develop these relationships it's kind of like dating somebody. You think she is

perfect and beautiful, and she may be, but as you start dating you go, 'Oh man, this is a bit quirky or the relationship with her dad is a bit off." But that is all fine and beautiful; nobody is perfect. We are beginning to court some of our partners, we think we know what we are doing but we're identifying many different challenges, not only within the partner organizations but within those communities and what they're facing. I would say we strive towards that; we're at a 1:1 level in many ways and in not only us working that out but more importantly our partners working out some of those. Because we do talk about community transformation, and that requires some community or transformational development. (Executive Director EM Canada)

EM is realistic about the disconnect that there can be between theory and practice. However they do demonstrate that, as an organization, they are striving to reflect the principles of TD and bring a holistic and Christian response to poverty through their work with education.

Perspectives from ACECEN and the Nehemiah Center

EM has not struggled with these concepts alone but has learned through working with its partner organizations in Nicaragua, both the Nehemiah Center and ACECEN. For example, the EM worker in Nicaragua had the following to say about the Nehemiah Center when asked if he had anything else to add, "Ummm, what would I like to add? I think the Nehemiah Center is ummm, the Nehemiah Center community is a really good example of what working together can achieve" (EM Worker Nicaragua). The Nehemiah Center is a community of organizations, which approach development through a Biblical perspective that reflects the principles of TD. Within this community is ACECEN, which aims to bring transformation through education and is one component of the Nehemiah Center's mission of reducing poverty holistically, in both material and spiritual ways.

There were five ACECEN facilitators and one representative of the Nehemiah Center interviewed.

ACECEN is an organization that serves the Christian schools by providing a network through which each individual school can share resources and knowledge, and be provided with teacher training and curriculum development. They also evaluate the progress, assets and needs of each school. Here is a good description of the scope and size of ACECEN's work in Nicaragua, which was provided by one of the facilitators:

> I accompany 11 schools, we tend some schools that are serviced directly and other through regional meetings: in total there are 120 schools of which 85 are served in a direct way, month to month. The rest are served by meetings but we do not have the capacity or sufficient facilitators to cover all schools, we have a lot of work in this regard, because we have been making progress little by little in the facilitation of the resources but at the moment we have 9 facilitators to cover so many schools and the dream of ACECEN is to have more competent facilitators to which we have been disciple-ing to teachers in some schools and they too can be facilitators for needy schools, by the time we have only assigned by each facilitator between 10 to maximum 15 schools. (ACECEN Facilitator 2)

The workload of each facilitator is quite large and recently the main focus has been on the professional development of teachers, especially in showing them a way to bring a holistic and quality education to each student.

Many facilitators experienced a direct call from God to do work with Christian education and ACECEN. For example, one facilitator became emotional and poured out why she believed that God was directing her. This was her response,

> My passion for children, my career is architecture as you already know but as a result of a difficult test that faced my husband and I, as in the death of our daughter, then the Lord awoke in me the desire and passion for children, the need to love them and understand them. And what better way than through the education system? Because it is a formative work that transcends from generation to generation. This motivated me to want to

put the fingerprint of God in the heart of the children, because the fingerprint of God is something that transcends even when I do not exist, the footprint will always be there and the children are going to be able to pass that on to their generations, to their children until Christ comes. (ACECEN Facilitator 5)

This response shows the emotional nature of her reasons to work. She desired to communicate her conviction for her work and tell her story which was based on her lived experiences as a Christian. This calling and purpose seems to be stimulated in part by the view of their role as 'agents of transformation.'

This terminology reflects a good understanding of TD, as 'agents of transformation' the facilitators understand themselves as having a role in improving and restoring relationships not only in schools but in their families and communities too. ACECEN and the Nehemiah Center use this terminology and the facilitators have taken it on as part of their identity. When asked of their familiarity with TD one facilitator mentioned her role as an 'agent of transformation.' She says, "Yes, because that is what they want to do with each facilitator, that we be *agents of transformation* in the place where we are, not only in the school but also in the personal areas, in our homes and communities to help redeem all things" (ACECEN Facilitator 3 – italics added). Overall it was evident that ACECEN facilitators felt a deep purpose in the work they were doing and felt that they as individuals were valued as being 'agents of transformation.' Their role as agents of transformation requires that they *live a life* that shares the gospel, not just through telling people what to believe.

This approach to evangelism has similarities with Myers' notion of CW, which requires showing that Christ and the Gospel are present in all areas of life. One facilitator expressed, "Christian development is something *integral*, it is something that is in

everything in both a social and economic but is mainly spiritual, is to develop in all areas, always showing Christ as the only model, as the goal, that we want to achieve" (ACECEN Facilitator 3 – italics added). Her understanding of Christian development has its roots in the ideas of TD and Integral Mission, which are perspectives that the Nehemiah Center operates within. However, she does place a stress on the role of evangelism in Christian development when she expresses that its role is "mainly spiritual". This view reveals that the idea of the material and spiritual worlds as being connected is still hard to comprehend. But her strong position that "Christ as the only model, as the goal…" is the same as that of TD and its usage of CW. Myers writes, "Ultimately, the best of transformational development deeds are ambiguous. Good development is being done every day by Buddhists, Muslims, and atheists. The driving force for Christian witness in the context of transformational development is to be sure that credit is given where credit is due" (Myers, 2011: 351). The ACECEN facilitators continually give credit to Christ for the work that they have achieved. In this way they are practicing CW in a way that reflects the principles of TD.

The ACECEN facilitators had a similar vision to the workers of EM in regards to what an ideal community in Nicaragua would be, but were not as familiar with the terminology of TD and did not have the same focus on relational aspects of poverty as EM. ACECEN facilitators stressed that an ideal community is impossible without God, and in this way they reflected a broader and more basic understanding of Christian development. The ACECEN facilitators were not devoid of a TD perspective when it comes to an ideal community though. For example ACECEN Facilitator 4 highlighted the

role that disobedience to the Christian God plays in causing poverty and how by aligning with the principles of the kingdom of God can usher in an ideal community. She said,

> An ideal vision of community would be that we are obedient to the Lord, if each one of us would succeed there would not be so much corruption, there would not be so much crime and so many abandoned children, the ideal would be that, but we know that we are affected by sin and that is where we come in, it would be an illusion to say that we are going to change the world but if you at least try to fight for something and ask the Lord to guide us and give us wisdom to make a difference and be able to influence others in a positive way. (ACECEN Facilitator 4)

Her understanding of an ideal community is one where there is a restored relationship with God and He is the source of wisdom and guidance. She also demonstrates here that creating an ideal community is a process and requires hard work. For her you need to "fight" for this community and "ask" God for wisdom. For her and the other facilitators a constant reliance on God, which aligns well with CW and TD, is necessary.

4.3 Telling the Story of School Directors

The school directors offer a unique perspective to what TD can look like in practice. Through being in close contact with ACECEN and overseeing an entire school, they were well positioned to identify some of the strengths and weaknesses that are being faced by Christian schools in Nicaragua. There were six directors of schools interviewed; one interview was conducted with a former director of a school in Estelí and the current director of a school in Matagalpa together due to time constraints. The data for these stories rely on five transcripts with six participants interviewed. These directors oversaw a wide variety of schools, both geographically and socioeconomically. They each presented a unique view of Christian education in Nicaragua.

The school directors had a different connection to TD than the teachers, parents and development workers. They were not explicitly 'agents of transformation' like the development workers, nor were they mainly beneficiaries of this theoretical approach and mindset on development. They navigated their own path between the theory and the practice of TD. These school directors served a practical role in overseeing the day-to-day operation of a specific school, and also worked with the ACECEN facilitators to develop a vision and direction for their school. Their role in the process of TD is unique and an important one to be considered.

When asked of their motivations to be doing what they do, two themes made themselves most apparent. These are: a deep love for children, and a belief that they are doing God's work. For example, one director stated clearly, "I like working with children. I love it" (School Director 3). Another director who received her degree in education from a US university and was the only one who did not grow up in Nicaragua, said how, after Hurricane Mitch, which devastated regions of Nicaragua in 1998, she felt called by God to serve in mission work. After visiting the country of her birth she felt an even stronger calling to stay and work in developing a school for those with no access to education (School Director 1). The school directors all realized the importance of education in the development of a child and understood this education to be incomplete without God.

Here is a quotation from a director who divulged more about the process of how these convictions have been strengthened through working with the Nehemiah Center:

> After we started to work with an organization that is called the Nehemiah Center that began to train us in the vision of Christian schools. As I have been growing up I have come to realize that God is the owner of the education and God through education wants to establish his kingdom,

> actually at this time I love and I feel that I would not be fulfilled doing
> anything other than education. I have understood along these years that
> education is the development of the families, societies, but even I
> understand that it is a holistic development when that Christian education
> is, then it is something which I have to evaluate in my entire life, if I had
> to move to perform another task, really I feel that this is what I enjoy,
> working for the kingdom through Christian education. (School Director 4)

She demonstrates so much in this quotation. She shows the instrumental purpose of the Nehemiah Center, which is to walk alongside these schools (through ACECEN) and transform people to view the world through a holistic perspective with God at the center. She also highlights finding one's true vocation throughout this quotation, which is a key component of TD. Myers writes how a future that resembles the kingdom of God is "framed by the twin goals of transformation: changed people, who have discovered their true identity and vocation; and changed relationships that are just and peaceful" (Myers, 2011: 202). Here it is seen how identity and vocation can be transformed through working with an organization that uses TD. Next it will be shown how these changed people work together to make relationships more just and peaceful.

To understand how these schools work on relationships there must be some knowledge of what is "broken" in these relationships. The school directors offered some insight into this when they provided some demographics of their school populations. The school directors highlighted several themes of brokenness: single mother homes, behavioural issues, special needs children who are marginalized by their communities and children from low-income households. For them this transformation from brokenness to restoration can only be achieved through a holistic education that includes the spiritual aspects of life. A school director from the Managua region observed the following about the demographic situation, "There are about 500 students, and most aren't Christians and

come from a pretty difficult context, some have been gang members, others have parents who are divorced or they are living with another family, the economic situation is very low, they are low-income students…" (School Director 6) For this director the role of the school in impacting these students is "…to transform the person from a biblical perspective, we could see that the students have put their lives in the service of God, students who were into drugs, stealing, and the Lord transformed their lives" (School Director 6). The school directors are familiar with the language of TD and this is mainly through their association with ACECEN and the Nehemiah Center. They have received guidance from these organizations and use its principles in their schools. Thus, the TD approach is demonstrated thoroughly through ACECEN and the Nehemiah Center.

A semi-rural school near the town of Darío provided some tangible ways in which they are tackling the brokenness associated with children who face behavioural issues and also with children who have special needs. This school has more resources than most schools within ACECEN and receives external funding from a church in the U.S. to support this. Here they have hired an on-site Christian psychologist who works with students and their families. They also have incorporated special needs education into their school. This is needed in Nicaragua as there is a stigma attached to learning disabilities that hamper students who face them from being included in the school systems (Field notes – October 15, 2013) The director of this school recognizes the need for these services but understands the great difficulty associated with providing them. She says that one of the biggest achievements of the school is, "Well I think family, [and] society reflects what is going on in families. And there are families with many issues and we have a psychologist here, Christian psychologist that helps families go through different

situations that they are facing. So once that family is healing or growing, then I believe

society starts to heal and grow as families start to be transformed" (School Director 1).

These difficulties included drug usage, broken families, and stigmas that surround

children who face learning disabilities. Through the work of the psychologist at this

school many of the students and their families have benefitted.

According to this director this has not been achieved through just the work of a

psychologist, since they have also had to rely on both God and the Nehemiah Center for

assistance. She says,

> And we have students that are really hard to work with. We have high
> school kids who have just gone through so many difficult issues in their
> life that umm, making a decision of how to work with them is not easy.
> Once we face drugs, once we face things like that it takes asking God
> because we didn't know what we were doing when we came here and we
> have been able to see how its been all by God's grace… And we have
> seen God's hand in everything but we still need to every day to seek
> people out to come beside us and share more than their wealth financially
> their wisdom, their ideas; because we are trying to grow each day. And
> that's what Nehemiah Center has been to us. Nehemiah Center has been
> there to guide us in those aspects where we have no idea of how we
> should act in some respects. They come and we can go to them and ask
> for advice and they can give very wise advice because they have worked
> for years and years and years with different types of development.
> (School Director 1)

This school director has expressed that both God and the TD perspective that the

Nehemiah Center through ACECEN offers them has been of great benefit. Her constant

pointing to God as the source of their success demonstrates that she employs a mindset of

CW in her work, which, Myers (2011) considers to be an integral part of TD.

Not every school has the same capacity as this school near Darío, and this was

one of the most noticeable things about the Christian education system in Nicaragua. The

disparity between resources and educational quality is vast, and this usually can be seen between rural and urban schools. The rural schools are quite small and often are *multigrado* (multiple grades in one classroom). Although no interviews were conducted with such a school, these schools were observed during a trip with EM educational experts. One such school was located east of Matagalpa. This school was located in a rural cooperative community consisting of 25 farming families; this community was established with the assistance of Acción Médica Nicaragua and is sustained by World Relief. World Relief works within the Nehemiah Center and this is how EM and ACECEN have made inroads to provide assistance and resources to this school. This school is in a location that the government would not be able to provide for and students previously had to walk two hours to school each day. Here there is only one teacher for four grades and another for pre-school. They operate from a two-room schoolhouse with rudimentary supplies. This disparity and the ability of ACECEN and the Nehemiah Center to reach rural and remote schools is a very difficult task, but an ACECEN director has been able to offer training to this teacher once a month and they are delivering useful supplies to this remote school. To teach four grades (around 30 students) in such a small room with one teacher is very demanding and the educational outcomes of these students will likely still fall far behind those in urban schools (Field Notes - October 30, 2013).

The school directors each brought forward their own views on what makes development Christian. During the interview this question was asked prior to their understanding of TD. This was done in order to see if they associate Christian development with TD specifically or if they have a more general perspective of what Christian development means. For the school director from Darío, Christian development

with education means, "And then what we are able to take to the students and to the kids is the transforming power of Jesus Christ, which is so much different than regular humanistic education that fills up your brain but doesn't transform it" (School Director 1). For her no development can be Christian unless Jesus Christ is at the core of the work being done, this stresses the notion of CW that TD requires. The director of the school in León claimed that Christian development is set apart from secular forms of development, "…in the way you treat people, it is to understand God in a historical way from your own environment and then it is be helping the community and seeing the way God would do it" (School Director 2). This response also demonstrates one of the principles of TD, which was adopted from Jayakumar Christian, and this is the importance of "…rereading history from a biblical perspective…" (Myers, 2011: 169). and also is related to finding one's identity through seeing God's story from within one's story and perspective (Myers, 2011). The school directors all provided descriptions of what Christian development is and demonstrated themes associated with TD. Another School Director's perspective on Christian development nicely summarizes the key themes that each of the directors were trying to get across, "Development is to grow and it is the idea to grow in Jesus Christ that makes it Christian development, that's what we try to do in this school with teachers, students and parents: to grow for the benefits of the community" (School Director 5).

When asked of their knowledge of TD directly, the responses were more hesitant and this corresponds with their role, which is primarily overseeing the operation of a school. Those who worked directly for ACECEN, EM or the Nehemiah Center displayed more knowledge of the theories within TD. Four out of six directors interpreted TD as

being focused on having a biblical worldview in education. For example, one director commented, "Yes, everything we do is for God and with the idea of transformational development we have changed the vision and we now know God's Word is the center of education in the school. That has greatly helped train students and teachers to be committed to the kingdom of God and society. This has been seen in the classes, in the communities and in their families" (School Director 3). The stress on biblical worldview and how that is important for TD was also highlighted by many of the teachers who were interviewed as well.

The visions of an ideal community held by each of the school directors reveal their aspirations for a good society and also how that society is currently suffering. School Director 1 highlighted the importance of moving away from dependency to a community where there is a clear purpose, identity and vocation rooted in Christian values. School Director 2 placed emphasis on the value and dignity of each person and said, "I think that people have been devalued because now everything has either a symbol or *Córdoba* [Nicaraguan currency] attached to it, and I believe that development should be focused on the human being" (School Director 2). School Director 3 (from an impoverished school in the Managua region) wanted to see that the Gospel be shared so that the whole community could be saved and put their lives into service for others. School Director 4, a former principal of a school in the mountainous region of Estelí, held this vision of an ideal community:

> [It] would be a community that understands what is your *raison d'être* in this land, we did not come to this land by coincidence as a secular version of history might say, we are here because God has brought us here with an intention, then a community like this one that knows the intention can help to establish and expand the goals of the kingdom with everyone they run into. (School Director 4)

The fifth School Director (from Matagalpa) held a similar vision to this and also wanted to stress the importance of having Christian values of service for the benefit of others. Finally, the last director interviewed showed much familiarity with TD in her response and her vision of an ideal community would be one that is in service to the kingdom of God, "where there is not rich and poor but where there are humans with Christian values that can help make a difference in their homes and be agents of transformation for our country." She demonstrates her knowledge of TD terminology by using the phrase, 'agents of transformation', and she has a biblical vision of what society should look like, one with equality and where God is more important than material possessions.

4.4 Telling the story of Teachers

There were several teachers from each of the schools interviewed, although unfortunately some of the audio was incomprehensible from one of the schools. In total 20 teachers had their audio recordings transcribed and analyzed. These teachers are further removed from the theories of TD but closer to putting its principles into practice with children in education. They are beneficiaries of the work of ACECEN through professional development, curriculum training and support in understanding biblical worldviews. The questions that the teachers were asked focused on their motivations for teaching, their assessment of the school that they work in, and their thoughts on Christian education in general, how they operate with the FBOs (EM, ACECEN and the Nehemiah Center) and also how they incorporate a biblical worldview into their classrooms (see Appendix 4). The interviews conducted with the teachers represent their different roles in the process of TD and shed light on how the training from ACECEN has influenced

them. These teachers painted a picture of how TD theory meets TD in practice. The teachers interviewed came from a variety of backgrounds and offered a diversity of perspectives. Two common themes were made apparent: the love of teaching from a biblical worldview, and the positive reviews of the trainings that they received.[8]All 20 teachers offered a positive appraisal of these seminars. One teacher from Diriamba shared how these trainings gave her a renewed confidence in her ability to teach. She summarized the impact that these organizations had on her through the trainings in the following way, "As a teacher I have improved because I had my weaknesses but the training has been a fortress for my life, I am able, I can, I understand and I am not alone" (Teacher 1). The effects of these trainings on this teacher's life and educational methods are positive, and have brought both confidence and value to the work that she is doing. They also have provided her with the comforting knowledge that she is being supported.

Another teacher claimed that the trainings received from the ACECEN facilitators were beneficial and should be taught in all schools, not only Christian schools. When asked if the trainings had been good she said,

> Clearly, because it is a topic that many schools do not take and do not give importance too. If we integrate this into our classes we do not only help form children in their academic studies but also in the promotion of values that are from a Biblical perspective. Also they have helped us, the teachers, in our personal lives. My staff and I have liked them a lot because they have been of great benefit and it would be very good if all the schools could teach these workshops. (Teacher 18)

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[8] Another thing worth noting is that the teachers are not familiar with EM unless they are helping with a construction project. EM intentionally aims to keep a low profile in Nicaragua, while raising the profile of their partners (EM Worker Nicaragua).

This teacher feels that the training provide them with an important perspective to teach from and that the Biblical worldview perspective can be incorporated into their own lives both professionally and personally.

The perspective that this training promotes is that of a biblical worldview. This biblical worldview carries within it three key themes that are being taught in the classes. These themes are derived from different sections of the Bible and are known by the teachers as the creation, the fall, and the redemption of the world. This means that the teachers point to God as the creator of the earth and note that he made it perfect[9]; and also that humans have made the world broken through the fall into sin[10], but through the Gospel and Jesus the world can be redeemed[11]. This curriculum puts this holistic and biblical approach into all the subjects required by the Ministry of Education in Nicaragua (MINED). One teacher from Diriamba remarked,

> Also we teach according to the Bible and use the word of God as the basis of all knowledge, when you teach a child in science, the Bible also speaks of science and of all the materials, we work with a biblical worldview that is looking for a biblical teaching according to the subject that is required by the ministry of education. As the teacher, one needs to address these three moments: the creation, fall and redemption and based on these I am developing my topics. (Teacher 1)

This approach to teaching from a biblical worldview becomes most controversial when creationism is taught instead of evolution (Baker, 2010; Williams, 2008). A teacher from Estelí expressed, "…when we speak of science we can see how God from the beginning created the earth and that helps me apply the Bible into the content because the children

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[9] Genesis 1 - 2

[10] Genesis 3 – Malachi 4 (The entire Old Testament)

[11] Matthew 1 – Revelation 22 and into the present times (The entire New Testament and life of the Church since the birth of Jesus)

are learning about their class at the same time as the Bible so that they can know the truth" (Teacher 9). Teaching from a creationist perspective as opposed to evolution, as a lot of the schools seem to do, can cause some problems for students pursuing a degree in the sciences at the tertiary level where evolution is taught (Baker, 2010). In Nicaragua the strong adherence to a biblical worldview and the infusion of religious teaching in the classroom does not seem to be as controversial for teachers, parents or the students as it would be in the global North. However, the students may be better served if a more nuanced discussion of evolution and creation were incorporated. One where the dominant consensus on scientific teaching (evolution) is used but also still respects their own worldview and does not take away their control over education. Reconciling the tension between science and faith is something to which TD does not provide a resolution. The form of teaching that promotes creationism reflects TD and the importance it stresses on the biblical worldview however (Myers, 2011). This is an example of how the principles of TD are put into practice and how through their practice the controversial nature of a holistic worldview, where the material and spiritual are inseparable, is noticeable.

Not every class and subject has the same interaction with a biblical worldview, as the science classes do. The social sciences and the arts are better positioned to connect faith and the subject material. One of the teachers interviewed said,

> Through the social issues that are reflected in the Bible, there are times
> that it's complicated because my class is something practical and it is
> hard to show the significance of something theoretical. And speaking of
> the creativity that God used to create all things but I'm always looking to
> connect the issue with the biblical teaching. The student makes drawings
> or dramas that reflect with their own reality and to recognize God as the
> main actor in the history of their own lives. (Teacher 8)

This teacher understands the complexity of a biblical worldview and appreciates the nuances and difficulties of incorporating it into the class material. He knows that teaching from a biblical worldview is more than just adding a Bible verse or two into the class. However he has appreciated wrestling with these issues and had positive things to say about the way that the Nehemiah Center and ACECEN have provided training for understanding Biblical worldview. He replied with the following when asked about his interaction with the training sessions offered by ACECEN, "Yes, I never thought how to involve other classes with the Bible and I never saw this until now, I thought it was beautiful. It would be good if this could reach all schools and teach them that it [Christianity] is not a religion but a way to learn, know and follow Jesus" (Teacher 8). This perspective on teaching about Christianity is similar to perspectives introduced in Liberation Theology and critical pedagogy which "emphasizes that pedagogy must be spiritually restorative as well as politically transformative" (Kanpol, 1996: 107).

However, not all teachers come from an evangelical perspective and for them Biblical worldview is difficult. Another teacher expressed that even though she thinks that the values taught in the school are good, as a Catholic and not an *evangélico,* it is more difficult for her to manage this biblical worldview. This teacher added, "Every day I incorporate a biblical text to teach, and in my case I manage much of the Bible differently because I am not an *evangélico,* I am a Catholic. However I have respected and complied with the rules of the school" (Teacher 4). Throughout the interviews that took place there was the sense that overall the teachers were excited to teach from this perspective but they were also wrestling through issues in how to implement it and sometimes found it difficult to adhere fully too, as shown by this Catholic teacher.

The schools do not hide from parents that they are teaching from a biblical worldview. This openness was clearly stated by a teacher from the school in Diriamba, "We also speak to the parents at the first meeting and let them know that this is a Christian school and things will be taught on the basis of the Bible because they [their children] are going to know all the scientific truths as they are according to the Bible" (Teacher 1). This openness about their teaching methods makes the scientific teaching less controversial. The parents, as will be seen next, appreciate the perspectives and Christian values taught in these schools whether they self-identify as Christian or not.

4.5 Telling the Story of the Parents

Parents of students from six schools (none were able to be interviewed in Darío) across Nicaragua were interviewed and as a group were able to provide an assessment of the educational quality of the schools. A total of 18 interviews were conducted, but four were lost due to poor audio quality and an inability to transcribe them. Therefore, 14 interviews with parents were transcribed and analyzed. They were asked questions related to their reasons for sending their children to this school, their religious background, the extent of their involvement in their child's education and their views on Christian education more generally. The parents were best suited to answer the following research question, "Are the parents satisfied with the education that their children are receiving and do their responses reflect the goals of TD?" Through the responses of the parents a better understanding of the impact that this theoretical approach to development has had can be discovered.

The parents showed a general level of satisfaction with the education that their children were receiving. The most common reasons for this satisfaction were the smaller class sizes in these schools, the improved behaviour of their children, the close relationships among teachers, parents and students, a higher quality education with more classes offered (for example, computer class), and the Christian values that were promoted at these schools. Expression of dissatisfaction with the schools was uncommon and the only complaints were about school fees and in one case a parent wished the school had a larger amount of space (Parent 6). This overall satisfaction with the schools by the parents of the students is a testament to the efforts by ACECEN, the school directors and the teachers who work hard to provide conditions that are suitable for learning with a scarcity of resources.

The perception that their children were receiving a higher quality education at these schools was based on several factors: their children enjoyed attending school, the range of classes offered here and the greater attention that the students receive. This enjoyment of school is important for the student to succeed in school (UN Child Friendly Schools Report, 2009). One parent commented that her children love attending school and "They wake up early without the need for me to make them" (Parent 1). This same parent added that her children love to go over with her what they learn and are encouraged to do so by their teacher. She enjoys being involved in the education of her children and says, "I devote time to helping them to do the tasks and she shares what she had learned that day because the professor tells us when one child wants to talk with their parents about school they should pay attention because those who don't employ themselves this way are not building up their children" (Parent 1). Parental and family

support is an important factor in the education of a child. If the family is supportive it is much more likely that the child will succeed (EFA Global Report 2014).

Several parents made a specific mention about their child's love of computer class and are grateful that this course can be offered in these schools. Parent 5 expressed how her son especially enjoys the computer classes offered. The introduction of computer labs has been facilitated by the Nehemiah Center and ACECEN. Within these organizations there is a project known as *Red de Profesores de Computación* or REDPROCOM. This project works to educate teachers in computer literacy and provides technical assistance and up to date supplies for schools within ACECEN (Field notes – October 22, 2013). This project works with free software called EduBuntu that allows students and teachers an operating system that is geared towards education and is simple to use (https://www.edubuntu.org/about as accessed June 2014). This project is a valuable addition to these schools as it allows the students to be computer literate at a young age in an increasingly digital world. Computer class is one of the reasons that parents are willing to pay monthly school fees for their children to attend these schools.

The payment of monthly fees is a sacrifice for the parents and although it can be difficult the quality of education that they see in these schools makes it worthwhile to them. Parent 1 said the following about the trade-off between fees and quality of education, "One advantage is that the teachers are professionals and I've been able to see that my children have learned quite a lot here, and I have seen that my children have improved in their behaviour as well. A serious difficulty for me is the school payments though, because we have two children and sometimes we make only a little because we do not have a good salary" (Parent 1). This is a challenge to overcome for ACECEN but

there is no simple way for this to be achieved. The elimination of school fees would make the quality decrease sharply due to a scarcity of resources and increased outside donations either through USAID or MINED would reduce the growth in leadership among the ACECEN facilitators and the directors of the school. For ACECEN, the Nehemiah Center and EM school fees are viewed as an acceptable reality (Nehemiah Center Representative). Financial support from EM and other international donors, such as World Relief, have been able to lessen this burden and provide scholarships to the most vulnerable and marginalized children.

Despite these difficulties parents appeared to be satisfied with the education and especially with the Christian values that were being shown to their children. They appreciated the biblical worldview that was being taught in the schools. One parent, who was a devout Christian, has appreciated the growth in spirituality and faith that has been occurring in her son, and declared with excitement, "He would share with me the songs, he does not go to bed without praying first and he does not want to go to school without praying because the teacher teaches us that we must pray before we leave our homes and he asks us all who live in the house if we pray before we leave, he shares the gospel with everyone in the home" (Parent 2). According to her this growth in spirituality has been fostered by the emphasis on the Bible in the classroom. Interestingly even the parents who claimed to not be Christian or religious (a minority of them) still expressed satisfaction with the teaching methods and biblical worldview that the schools employ. For example a parent from Matagalpa who expressed that she was not religious or Christian chose to send her children to this school because "The focus of this school is to educate children through God's word and when they grow up they will have the

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knowledge to go in the right direction" (Parent 4). This may seem like a surprising

perspective to take when someone does not consider himself or herself to be Christian.

However, the attitudes toward Christianity in Nicaragua are different than in Canada.

Henri Gooren, who has extensively researched the changing nature of belief in

Nicaragua, has found that,

> [T]he percentage of people who say they are not affiliated with any
> religion has gone up from 0.2 per cent in 1980 to 12 per cent in 2007, with
> the biggest decrease during the Sandinista decade of the 1980s. However,
> these people are not atheists or even secularized: most still consider
> themselves Catholics or Pentecostals, but they no longer find it necessary
> to be a member of a church. (Gooren, 2010: 54)

The faith and belief that appears ingrained in Nicaraguans helps to explain how

TD as an approach to education operates successfully in Nicaragua. The local

people value spirituality and view it as an integral component of their children's

education so that they will "move in the right direction" (Parent 4).

When the parents were asked what they want their children to receive from this

education they overwhelmingly responded that they wanted two things: their child to

have a good career that is useful for society and good Christian values. Every parent

interviewed shared a similar goal for their child, be it the father who wanted his son to

become "a professional with values, and a responsible and committed parent" (Parent 3).

or the mother who expects her daughter will become a "professional committed to the

kingdom of God and to serve all in the society" (Parent 7). These parents were concerned

with the earning potential of their children and that they become good professionals. This

concern was met with an equal desire to have their children to grow up to love God and

be of service to those around them. These expectations reflect principles of TD, which

hold both the material, being a professional with a vocation, and the spiritual, loving God and others (Myers, 2011).

The parents were quick to extend gratitude to those involved in the operation of the school. This parent's response at the end of the interview when asked if there was anything that they would like to add was very typical. She replied,

> Well, for me it has been a great blessing and for us as parents. In fact we have never thought that our son would go to another school. On the contrary we are seriously considering adding a high school here so that these children can continue to receive the same attention from the teachers, director and personnel since they come to this school. The teachers are very well qualified and the director is focused on every student and I have felt very blessed. (Parent 5)

This thankfulness and support for expanding the school to serve the children when they reach high school is a testament to the respect that Christian education has been able to earn. The work of ACECEN, the Nehemiah Center and EM, through their reliance on TD as a development approach, is able to respect the autonomy of these Christian schools while providing useful support and assistance that has benefitted the teachers, parents and the students. The culmination of the stories that were told paint a picture of what TD is able to achieve. The Protestant schools have been beneficial to communities but still struggle with providing equally for everyone. TD and its focus on individuals and communities and not on the state decrease the ability to tackle inequality among different schools.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 – What does the future hold for education in Nicaragua?

Nicaragua is a beautiful country with a history of violence and revolution. More recently it has moved towards reconciliation and development. Within this country there is optimism and a youthful population with 50% of the approximately 6 million people under the age of 25 (CIA World Fact Book, 2014). The school directors interviewed spoke of the growing demand for quality education and how, through support from ACECEN and the Nehemiah Center, they feel better positioned to meet this. The school director from a semi-rural school outside of a town called Darío claimed that her school has been growing partly because of the high educational quality it receives. There is also higher demand for this school because of the Christian values and smaller class sizes. She says,

> I would say one of them is that God in His grace has allowed us to gain prestige. There are a lot of competitions that happen, academic competitions, and we have been able to obtain really good places in that. Both at a city level and a state level, and we have gone to nationals in some competitions. So people say that we are doing something good and want to send their kids here for that. Other people like the Christian values even if it isn't their own religion. Even if they are Catholic they say it's about the Bible and we have values. The other aspect is the small class sizes, because the public schools have about 50-60 students per classroom and we have from 25-28 in elementary and in high school we have up to 32 kids. We don't want to grow more than that because there is more control and attention to each kid. (School Director 1)

The parents of students often repeated these same reasons: Christian values, higher educational quality, and smaller class sizes, as their reasons for sending the children to these Christian schools. One school in the northwest of Nicaragua offers free adult

education and literacy classes on Saturdays and this has led to their school having a larger presence in the community, which in turn has seen their enrollment expand rapidly over the years. Currently this school is working directly with EM to construct six more classrooms on a new second floor to accommodate this growth (School Director 2). The Christian schools in Nicaragua are having a positive influence on their communities, but to accommodate this there are higher costs associated with these schools than the government schools.

Many of the Christian schools in Nicaragua receive some outside assistance (through sponsorship programs via EM or other FBOs), but they still rely on monthly payments from parents that range from 2-14$ US per student (Nehemiah Center representative). There is tension between receiving foreign assistance to keep costs down for those enrolled and maintaining local ownership and control over the direction they choose to take. EM, especially after the rebrand and renewed focus on partnering with local organizations, has been able to navigate this dilemma well. I had the opportunity to travel with, and be a part of, a team of people from EM to assess the assets and needs of different schools to decide how they should best be able to provide assistance. This team included a building expert from Canada and also one from Nicaragua, EM's Nicaraguan representative and the ACECEN facilitator for the region that was being assessed. The building expert from Canada who works for EM explained that they approach the process from an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) perspective. Corbett and Fikkert (2012) say the following about this perspective,

> ABCD is consistent with the perspective that God has blessed every individual and community with a host of gifts, including such diverse things as land, social networks, knowledge, animals, savings, intelligence, schools, creativity, production equipment, etc. ABCD puts the emphasis

on what materially poor people already have and asks them to consider from the outset, "What is right with you? What gifts has God given you that you can use to improve your life and that of your neighbours? How can the individuals and organizations in your community work together to improve your community? (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012: 120)

Through this ABCD approach the team decided on which projects should have priority and the school in the northwestern region previously mentioned was selected among others. During these visits EM and ACECEN worked as equal partners who were both valued even though the resources for the projects were being supplied from EM (Field Notes, October 8, 2013). This ABCD approach used by the team to assess schools draws from one of the practices of TD, which was mentioned in the third chapter, Appreciative Inquiry (AI). AI uses "[a]n appreciative perspective [that] encourages transformational development practitioners to find God's redemptive work in the life of the community, and within themselves, and to seek to become more intentionally part of it" (Myers, 2011: 259). By using ABCD the work of EM is using practices that understand the principles of TD.

There was also the opportunity to travel alongside EM workers who focused on teacher training and curriculum development. Several schools were visited and the team involved two educational experts from Canada who work for EM, as well as EM's representative in Nicaragua, and the ACECEN facilitator for the region that they were visiting. In these visits there were discussions about what has been successful, what needs improvement, and how the teachers want to focus their future professional development. The meeting had ten people involved: four from the team previously mentioned, the school director, and five teachers who have been involved in the workshops and seminars that ACECEN facilitates. The discussions were centred on pedagogy, the method and

practice of teaching, and the development of a curriculum based on a Biblical worldview.

The school director and ACECEN facilitator led the discussions, and the educational

experts were providing advice only when asked, which they often were. The teachers and

ACECEN facilitators were passionate about learning from each other (Field Notes

October 30, 2013). The discussions were conducted in a way that everyone's perspective

and questions were valued. This was a good example of how EM and ACECEN work to

empower those in Nicaragua, they intentionally try to remove the "god-complexes of the

non-poor" (Myers, 2011: 124).

The school directors have an understanding of TD but it is one focused on the

practices through developing a curriculum and a pedagogical method that teaches from a

Biblical worldview where the value and dignity of each person is stressed because of

their relationship with God. Through observing a meeting between EM educational

experts and a school director in Estelí an example of how this is done was given,

> During the day when we visited the school in Estelí I got to learn and understand more about the pedagogies that the facilitators of ACECEN use and pass on to the teachers. One such example is the method used for teaching students how to read and write in first grade. This method that ACECEN promotes is different than the public schools (which follow a traditional dictate and copy syllables style). ACECEN promotes a 'Your name is…' method in which students are encouraged to take ownership of their writing and promote their own individuality as a person. This has helped with a student's creativity, confidence and self-esteem. (Field notes – October 30, 2013)

This method demonstrates how through curriculum development and education the

school directors are learning from ACECEN, EM and the Nehemiah Center about how to

put the principles of TD into practice, especially as they relate to the dignity of each

person.

However it would be useful for ACECEN to introduce some more critical pedagogies into their trainings. Using the concept of 'agent of transformation', teachers could be well positioned to promote more critical thinking about society, culture and how to transform them. This idea of the teacher as 'agent of transformation' shows some similarities to what Barry Kanpol states that a 'teacher as prophet' can be. Writing from an approach that combines critical pedagogy and Liberation Theology he places the role of a teacher in Christian education to be a 'prophet'. He writes,

> The teacher as prophet is not only gut-wrenchingly critical of social surroundings, as is a transformative intellectual, but also passes on a message of transformative hope, enlightenment, joy, love, mercy, and forgiveness that is often missing in critical educational discourses. Our analysis must be critical; yet it must *also* be laced with prophetic and compassionate implications. Such were the lessons taught to us by Jesus, who besides being a leader of unbridled faith was also daring and active in challenging the dominant religious traditions of his time, striving to liberate the oppressed. The Biblical lessons of excoriating sin and celebrating joy represent a moving dialect of faith that we can all learn from as teachers. (1996: 112)

There is a lot to be learned from the fields of critical pedagogy and how it has used Liberation Theology to expand upon what it means to be a teacher who is an 'agent of transformation.' TD and the communities that use their approach in education would be well served to pay attention to the work done by Liberation Theology and critical pedagogy in this regard.

Through the TD approach the schools have been successful enough to satisfy the parents. However, there is a lot of room for improvement for these schools to be competitive compared to other private schools within Nicaragua. One such example of this is the Nicaragua Christian Academy Schools, which have an English and a Spanish

language school in Managua, and also another Spanish language school in Matagalpa. The Spanish-speaking schools are now a part of ACECEN and have a much more qualified, experienced and resource rich teaching staff and have better infrastructure to offer. The school fees are much higher here and these schools cater to the growing middle-class of Nicaragua. One of the ways forward for the ACECEN schools is to learn from these 'leader' schools and work with them to strengthen the weaker schools within this organization. The disparity within ACECEN is unsustainable and needs to be addressed if the organization is to remain successful.

Through an interview with a development worker who has been with the Nehemiah Center from its inception, as part of an organization called Missionary Ventures USA, a comprehensive history of ACECEN's growth and role in Nicaragua was told. He explained how one of the biggest achievements of the Nehemiah Center has been the development of ACECEN. This organization officially started in 2006 but it was in the works since the early 2000s. By organizing the Christian schools under the guidance of the Nehemiah Center, experiences and knowledge could be shared. It also allowed for standards to be improved and more accountability to be formed. Before ACECEN each of these 85 schools operated independently and were accountable to no one, except in some cases a foreign donor. Now with ACECEN they have more strength through association, more accountability and resources from a local organization that has the best interest for Nicaragua at heart (Nehemiah Center Representative). The Nehemiah Center has been able to provide a sense of stability to a fragile network of schools, as a support network and as a political ally when negotiating the oppressive structures that attempt to undermine ACECEN's vision for Christ-centered education.

The Nehemiah Center used to maintain a relationship with USAID (United States of America International Development) and this was carried out through *Proyecto Excelencia* which offered resources and material to ACECEN so that they could train teachers. This relationship was terminated after the 2006 election of Daniel Ortega of the FSLN as President. Despite the decreased lack of resources given to ACECEN because of this, the facilitators have seen this as a positive change (ACECEN Facilitator 2). The facilitators are also wary of working with the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education (MINED) because they are worried about the current government's attempts to influence education. One facilitator expressed that this was going to be a key challenge in the coming years,

> We know that in the next few years we have a challenge because MINED
> is being absorbed more into our Christian schools in the sense that they
> are making teaching graduates who haven't received pedagogical training
> but are infused with the governments' current philosophical approaches,
> esoteric philosophies, humanists, evolutionists. We see combatting this
> for ACECEN as being David versus Goliath, but we know that we have a
> victory in Christ Jesus. (ACECEN Facilitator 2)

This fear of government intervention and their ideologically charged education is also one of the reasons that many parents have decided to send their children to these Christian schools. TD recognizes the larger structures that can be oppressive and the Nehemiah Center offers ACECEN a place inside a larger community of organizations in which together they can have a stronger political voice to counter outside interference and oppressive social systems. These organizations are "walking together" to navigate this difficult arena and are endeavoring to provide their assistance in a Christian manner through TD.

5.2 Final Thoughts

These three organizations, EM, the Nehemiah Center, and ACECEN, are distinct but intricately connected in the work they do with Christian education in Nicaragua. For EM its focus on partnering and supporting the local organizations as equals has fostered a sense of purpose and vocation in ACECEN. The facilitators are valued and their perspectives are respected. The Nehemiah Center offers a community of organizations that provide both support and direction to each other, which has been beneficial to ACECEN. The ways in which these three organizations operate together demonstrate that they are working through the principles of TD and determining how to put them into practice. This process has produced positive results in communities across Nicaragua, and both teachers and parents have expressed how their lives have been transformed in this thesis.

The relational way in which EM, the Nehemiah Center and ACECEN work together is integral to the application of TD and is what makes their approach successful. Rosalind Eyben (2010) argues that a relational approach to development is necessary for affecting what Robert Chambers (2005) calls 'good change'. She argues that,

> The complex and contingent nature of societal change and the impossibility of predicting that a particular event will lead to a certain outcome suggests that donor action should focus on developing long-term and consistent *relations* with selected recipient organizations, those pursuing a social change agenda compatible with the donor's own values and mission. (2010: 383)

The FBOs studied relate to each other positively with a mutual respect that is grounded in a similar view of the world that is based on Christian values. This understanding of each other has been fostered through the role of the Nehemiah Center.

Robert Chambers (2010) argues that relationships are of key importance to the successful application of development programs, "Put relationships high on professional agendas. Rethink their importance in development practice in all domains, recognizing the power of relationships that are lateral, democratic and reciprocal" (2010: 49). The FBOs studied within this thesis have repeatedly stressed the importance of building relationships and strengthening partnerships. This is achieved intentionally through the mission of the Nehemiah Center but also is a result of their principles and values being based in their similar faith perspective. Chambers also considers understanding each others values to be of paramount importance to the development professions, "Recognize their fundamental role in determining behaviour, how their affirmation can substitute for controlling and disempowering procedures, and their potential for reversing and democratizing relationships" (2010: 49). EM operates with emphasis on these two organizational principles – relationships and shared belief systems with partners. When asked about the most impactful achievements of EM as an organization the Executive Director focused on relationship building and partnering with local communities. For EM

> This is more than us just sending money to different places as I
> mentioned and I would say also that reciprocal learning piece. To say,
> 'Hey, we have something to offer but just being prepared to learn so
> much back.' Not only as an organization, but as a society here in Canada.
> One thing we are doing is trying to work much more with Christian
> schools in Canada, developing partnerships, reciprocal learning.
> (Executive Director EM Canada)

This reciprocal learning approach can be experienced within the Nehemiah Center, which offers space for this and has the ability to continue sharing with EM and other FBOs the principles and practices of TD.

The Nehemiah Center represents a good example of how a relational approach to development impacts positive change and collaboration between donors and recipients. Its role as a center for FBOs that have the same mission and values, which are rooted in TD, cannot be overlooked. Even the layout of the building is meant to foster relationships between workers and organizations to occur. The Nehemiah Center contains offices that face towards a central courtyard, there is a shared kitchen between all the FBOs and there are large open spaces that are used by all as centers for learning and discussion. An ACECEN facilitator described the role of the Nehemiah Center as one that fosters "*koinonia*". She says,

> [T]he Nehemiah Center has taught us that the basis of everything is rooted in relationships and in this centre we take everyone into account and work to build up relationships. We are all interested in expanding our projects for those who do not have faith and we do devotions together… It is a tranquil atmosphere here, it is one of peace, of *koinonia*, and people here are working and laughing together. Together we are making good progress. (ACECEN Facilitator 2)

Koinonia is a Greek word that is used in the New Testament to describe the fellowship that was achieved by new Christian communities.[12] The goal of fostering relations between people and development has been conducive to the growth and ability of ACECEN to function positively.

Both ACECEN and EM share an office in the Nehemiah Center and they operate collaboratively. ACECEN and EM view each other as partners who both have something to offer. During his interview, the EM worker in Nicaragua claimed that the TD approach has been successful because, "it has been really important in that [partnership-building] process because now that we trust the people here they feel that they have value and are

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[12] 2 Corinthians 9:13 (NIV)

important for other people and for the people to bring money from outside. They feel like, yea, that they provide something and that they contribute something and aren't just receiving" (EM Worker Nicaragua). This focus on building relationships that occurs with EM and ACECEN is different from the results-based approaches of many organizations where quantifiable results are still the norm in the donor-driven aid model.

> Today, quantifiable results still play an important role in talking about the results of aid; log frames, for example, frequently refer to the numbers of kilometres of roads built or hectares irrigated as indicators of poverty reduction achieved. This frustrates the empowerment and capacity-development efforts of non-governmental organisations receiving official funding, who declare, 'although we have achieved so much, the log frame would make us appear to have failed'. (Eyben, 2010: 386)

The TD approach is well-positioned to offer FBOs a framework that remains focused on relationships as its very understanding of poverty is relational (Myers, 2011). Its assessment techniques based on qualitative measures listen to the stories of people rather than numbers generated by log-frame matrices have strengthened the local organizations, notably ACECEN.

However, there are weaknesses and limits to TD because of its use of qualitative assessments instead of quantitative measures. A tension remains between them as qualitative methods have difficulty providing an accurate picture of the economic disparities between schools. Also the focus on individual transformation within this Protestant approach to development, which is different than Liberation Theology and its focus on structural violence causes a reduced focus on inequality. Finland has recently been considered a model education system because of its high international testing scores, its reasonable costs and the equal opportunities that all have to receive a quality education (Sahlberg, 2007). The government of Finland is the principal driver for these outcomes.

TD and the work of ACECEN works largely independent of the government and there may be long-term negative connotations for education in Nicaragua when little work with the government is the case. These weaknesses and limits are hard to reconcile, but constant critical reflection of ACECEN's own role and impact within Nicaraguan education is necessary to minimize these issues.

This thesis has argued that TD is an example of good development practice when followed closely and understood similarly by the FBOs that are employing it. However, more significant than any development model is the shared belief system that is exhibited by these FBOs in Nicaragua. Their theological perspective, which does not separate the material and spiritual worlds, unites EM, ACECEN and the Nehemiah Center. This strong relationship that is based on this Christian worldview has allowed for the schools that they support to thrive. The relationships are built upon the *kind* of communities that are created through their spiritual understanding of the world, and this cannot be ignored. Scott Thomas considers this to be integral to the positive role that religion can have on development, "It is the kind of communities that they are, or are struggling to become, that are of primary importance in their ability to facilitate bonding and social capital" (2004: 138). Seeking to be a community that has *koinonia* through sharing goals and visions is key to transforming societies. To achieve what Myers calls *shalom*[13] it is first necessary to have mastered the *koinonia,* the community based on faith, which brings relationships among organizations closer. This is one of the most important things that FBOs should be recognized for and that secular organizations can learn from.

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[13] Shalom means belonging to an authentic and nurturing community in which one can be one's true self and give one's self away without becoming poor. (Myers, 2011: 97)

Through examining a successful application of the TD approach it is evident that it works well in communities where faith and religion are of utmost importance in people's lives. Religion remains to be a social and political reality for most people around the world (ter Haar and Ellis, 2006). In Nicaragua this social and political reality has been manifested in the education system and the theological approach that these schools take influences the future of thousands of children. TD represents a combination of theology and social science, and theology remains central in its application in Nicaragua. FBOs are here to stay and those interested in development cannot turn a blind eye to this reality.

> Those engaged in development, whether as researchers or practitioners, need to recognize that development itself is based not only on a particular understanding of the world but also on assumptions about the nature of knowledge. Both research on 'religion and development' and development projects and programs that involve 'partnerships' with faith communities need to engage with religious doctrines and interpretations. (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2010: 52)

There remains a need to continue to study faith-based development approaches and organizations with an understanding of how motivations can and are being formed through faith and theology.

DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY
Inspiring Minds

CONFIDENTIALITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

_____ agrees and acknowledges that she/he shall keep confidential all information used by Edudeo Ministries, the Nehemiah Center and ACECEN, or obtained by the Principal Investigator, Adam Faber, during the course of the performance of his research, studies or duties, which is not otherwise publicly known.

The Confidential Information covered by this Agreement shall be defined as including, but   shall not be limited to: any information pertaining to schools, students, teachers or administrators which is not in the public domain, including notes and records; reports, systems and forms; marketing plans and strategies; and intellectual property.

I covenant and undertake to treat strictly confidential all Confidential Information and agree that I will not at any time during, or after, my engagement with this research study disclose to any other person or entity any information with respect to any Confidential Information, except as may be necessary in the proper discharge of my duties. I agree that the unauthorized disclosure or use of any Confidential Information may result in sanctions and possible claims for invasion of privacy.

I covenant and agree to destroy all information obtained through the course of the research study after my work and role in this project are completed.

Research Assistant: _____ Date: _____
                              Signature

Investigator: _____ Date: _____
                              Signature

Appendix 2

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
Inspiring Minds

Examining Transformational Development: a Case Study of Christian Education in Nicaragua

Information Sheet

<u>Introduction</u> – I invite you to take part in my research project. I am a graduate student at Dalhousie University in Canada. My research is not connected to any other governmental, institutional, or educational research studies, past or present. Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time after letting me know. The study is described below. If you decide to participate, you will be one of approximately 20 participants who will be interviewed. You will not be compensated with any money for participating. If you have any questions about the study please speak to the principal investigator, Adam Faber.

<u>Who Will Conduct the Research</u> – I, Adam Faber, will be conducting the research project with guidance from my thesis supervisor, Dr. Owen Willis, PhD from Dalhousie University in Canada. My research assistant, _____ will assist with the project but does not direct it, and he/she has signed a confidentiality agreement to ensure your privacy throughout the project. The Nehemiah Center and their affiliates are graciously facilitating this project while I am in Nicaragua, but they do not have influence over the results collected nor will they have access to confidential information.

<u>What you will be asked to do</u> - You will be asked to participate in an interview that will last approximately 45 minutes. The interview will be held at a place, time and language that is convenient for you, and the principal investigator (Adam), the research assistant and you will be in attendance. The research assistant will help translate the interview for me. I will write notes during the interview to verify content. With your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded to increase my accuracy of understanding your responses.

<u>Purpose of the Study</u> – The purpose of this study is to examine Christian education in Nicaragua and understand how this relates to an approach to development known as *transformational development.* It aims to understand further what *transformational development* is and what it means when applied to education.

<u>How Respondents were selected</u> – You were chosen to participate because of your involvement with Christian education in Nicaragua, be it through an organization or as your role as an educator. I was given your name from a staff member that is involved with the Nehemiah Center. You are in a position to (a) describe Christian education in Nicaragua, (b) share information on your role within an organization or school, (c) describe the motivations you have for working in this environment, (d) describe the ways in which Christian principles are included in the operations of the schools and/or organizations.

Anonymity & Confidentiality – All information you share during this interview will be kept confidential. Your name, address, and other personal information will not be used in the final report. If direct quotes are used in the final report, it will be done so only with your permission and with the use of an alias (false name) so that your identity is protected. Only the principal investigator (Adam Faber) and the research supervisor (Dr. Owen Willis, PhD) will have direct access to the information you provide. The audio-recordings, notes and transcripts from interviews conducted during this project will be stored in a secure location at all times. Following the completion of the project, the information will be kept in a locked research office at Dalhousie University in Canada for five years. After this time, all audio-recordings and documents with identifiable personal information will be destroyed.

Potential Risks and Benefits – The Dalhousie University Research Ethics Board has reviewed and approved this research project. The project presents minimal risk to the participants, as you will be asked to share information that may regard your employer. You will be assigned a pseudonym or fake name to mitigate these risks and your responses will be taken in confidence (see previous section). I hope that by participating you will have a chance to contribute to knowledge on the impact of Christian education in Nicaragua and on the effects of transformational development for communities. I believe that this research may be useful for Christian organizations involved in development work, and especially for those focused on education.

Voluntary Participation – Your participation in the research project is entirely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you may choose _not_ to answer any question and you are free to withdraw at any time without any penalty. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any information you have given will be destroyed. Whether or not you participate will not impact your employment, as this research study is affiliated with Dalhousie University in Canada and not your employer.

Consent – Following this page is a *Consent Form,* which allows you to indicate your agreement to participate in this study. You may either sign this form or give your consent verbally (this will be audio-recorded). Also, you are asked to retain a copy of this *Information Sheet* and the *Consent Form*, signed by me as the principal investigator, for your information.

Research Results – I will share a condensed version of the results of this research with the organizations affiliated with Christian education in Nicaragua. These organizations are Edudeo Ministries, the Nehemiah Center and the Association of Evangelical Christian Education Centers of Nicaragua (ACECEN). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Principal Investigator Adam Faber, or the Research Supervisor Owen Willis at the phone numbers or email addresses listed at the end of this document.

Problems or Concerns – If you have any difficulties with, or wish to voice concern about, any aspect of your participation in this research project, you may contact Catherine Connors, Director of Dalhousie University's Research Ethics at 0-1-902-494-1462 or Catherine.Connors@dal.ca.

I am very grateful for your time and consideration, and thank you in advance for participating in this important project.

Sincerely,

_____

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Appendix 3

Examinando el Desarrollo Transformador: un Estudio de Caso de la Educación Cristiana en Nicaragua

Hoja de Información

Introducción : Le invito a tomar parte en mi proyecto de investigacion. Soy un estudiante de posgrado en la Universidad Dalhousie en Canadá. Mi investigación no se conecta a ninguna otra entidad gubernamental, institucional, o estudios de investigación educativa, del pasado o del presente. Su participación en este proyecto de investigación es completamente voluntaria y usted puede retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento después de hacermelo saber. El estudio se describirá a continuación. Si usted decide participar, será uno mas de aproximadamente 30 participantes que serán entrevistados. Usted no será compensado económicamente por participar. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre el presente estudio por favor hable con el investigador a cargo, Adam Faber.

Quién llevará a cabo la investigación : Yo, Adam Faber, conduciré el proyecto de investigación con la guía de mi supervisor de tesis, el Dr. Owen Willis, PhD de la Dalhousie Universidad en Canadá. Mi asistente de investigación, _____ le asistirá con el proyecto, pero no directamente, y él/ella ha firmado un acuerdo de confidencialidad para garantizar su privacidad a lo largo de todo el proyecto. El Centro Nehemías y sus asociados han sido generosos al facilitar este proyecto mientras este en Nicaragua, pero no tienen influencia sobre los resultados ni acceso a información confidencial.

Lo que se le pedirá que haga : A usted se le pedirá que participe en una entrevista que durará aproximadamente 45 minutos. La entrevista se llevará a cabo en el lugar, la hora y el idioma que sea conveniente para usted, y el investigador principal (Adam), el asistente de investigación y usted serán los presentes. El asistente de investigación me ayudará a traducir la entrevista. Yo voy a escribir notas durante la entrevista para verificar el contenido. Con su consentimiento, la entrevista será grabada en audio para incrementar la precisión en la comprensión de sus respuestas.

Propósito del estudio : El propósito de este estudio es examinar la educación Cristiana en Nicaragua y entender cómo esta se relaciona con el criterio de desarrollo conocido como *desarrollo transformador*. Tiene el propósito de comprender un poco más sobre lo que es el *desarrollo transformador* y lo que significa cuando se aplica a la educación.

Cómo fueron seleccionados los encuestados : Usted fué elegido para participar por su relación en la educación Cristiana en Nicaragua, ya sea a través de una organización o por su papel como educador. Recibí su nombre por medio de un miembro del personal involucrado con el Centro Nehemías. Usted está en la posición de (a) describir la educación Cristiana en Nicaragua, (b) compartir información sobre su papel dentro de la organización o de la escuela, (c) describir las motivaciones que tiene para trabajar en este entorno, (d) describir las formas en las que los principios Cristianos son incluidos en las operaciones de las escuelas y/u organizaciones.

El anonimato y confidencialidad : Toda la información que usted comparta en esta entrevista se mantendrá de forma confidencial. Su nombre, dirección y otros datos personales no serán utilizados en el informe final. Si se llegará a utilizar en el informe final, sera solamente con su permiso y con el uso de un alias (nombre falso), de modo que su identidad estarpa protegida. Sólo el investigador principal (Adam Faber) y el supervisor de investigación (Dr. Owen Willis, PhD) tendrán acceso directo a la información proporcionada. Las grabaciones, notas y transcripciones obtenidas durante la entrevista serán almacenadas en una ubicación segura en todo momento durante el proyecto. Tras la finalización del proyecto, la información se mantendrá bajo llave en la oficina de investigación de la Universidad Dalhousie en Canadá por un período de cinco años. Después de este tiempo, todas las grabaciones y documentos con información personal identificable serán destruidos.

Riesgos y beneficios potenciales :El Consejo de Ética de investigación de la Universidad Dalhousie ha revisado y aprobado este proyecto de investigación. El proyecto supone un riesgo mínimo para los participantes ya que se le pedirá compartir información relacionada a su superior. Se le asignará un seudónimo o nombre falso para minimizar estos riesgos y sus respuestas serán tomadas confidencialmente (ver sección anterior). Yo espero que al participar usted tenga la oportunidad de contribuir al conocimiento del impacto de la educación Cristiana en Nicaragua y del efecto del desarrollo transformador para las comunidades. Yo creo que esta investigación puede ser útil para las organizaciones Cristianas que participan en labores de desarrollo, especialmente a aquellas enfocadas en la educación.

Participación voluntaria : Su participación en el proyecto de investigación es totalmente voluntaria. Si está de acuerdo en participar, usted puede optar por no responder a cualquier pregunta y es libre de retirarse en cualquier momento sin problema alguno. Si usted elige retirarse del estudio, toda la información que usted haya proporcionado será destruida. Ya sea que participe o no, esto no afectará a su empleo, ya que este estudio de investigación esta afiliado a Dalhousie Universidad en Canadá y no a su empleador.

Consentimiento : Seguido a esta página hay un Formulario de Consentimiento *, que le permite* indicar su consentimiento a para participar en este estudio. Usted puede firmar esta forma o puede dar su consentimiento verbalmente (esto será grabado). Además, se le pide que guarde una copia de esta Hoja de Información y del Formulario de Consentimiento firmado por mí como investigador principal, para sus archivos.

Los resultados de la Investigación : Yo compartiré una versión resumida de los resultados de esta investigación con las organizaciones afiliadas con educación Cristiana en Nicaragua. Estas organizaciones son Edudeo ministerios, Centro Nehemías y la Asociación de Centros de Educación Cristiana Evangélica de Nicaragua (ACECEN). Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, por favor siéntase en libertad libre de ponerse en contacto con el Investigador Principal Adam Faber, o el Supervisor de Investigación Owen Willis a los números de teléfono o direcciones de correo electrónico indicados al final de este documento.

Problemas o Reclamos - Si tiene alguna dificultad con, o desea manifestar su preocupación por cualquier aspecto de su participación en este proyecto de investigación, usted puede ponerse en contacto con Catalina Connors, Directora de la Universidad Dalhousie en Ética de la Investigación 0-1 -902-494-1462 o Catherine.Connors@dal.ca .

Aprecio mucho su tiempo y su consideración, gracias de antemano por su participación en este importante proyecto.

Sinceramente,

_____

Adam Faber, Investigador Principal

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Appendix 4

Examining Transformational Development: A Case Study of Christian Education in Nicaragua

Consent Form

My oral or signed consent indicates that I agree to participate in this research project. The project has been explained to me, the Information Sheet *and* Consent Form *have been read out loud to me, I have been given a copy of both of these documents to keep, and the principal investigator has answered all of my questions. I understand that I will be interviewed, that the interviewer will take notes during the interview, and that the interview will be audio-taped only if I have agreed. I also understand that I am free not to answer any questions, and am free to withdraw at any time from this research without any penalty. I understand that should I choose to withdraw from the research project, any information I have given will be destroyed. I understand that my responses will be kept confidential. Only the principal investigator (Adam Faber), the research assistant and the research supervisor (Dr. Owen Willis) will have access to the information I am providing. I understand that unless I request that my actual name be disclosed, any information I provide that is included in research reports will be presented in a non-identifying manner, using the alias (pseudonym) indicated below. I understand that my contributions may form direct quotations in the final report, providing that all potentially identifying information is omitted.*

When quotes from my interview are used to illustrate the grouped or themed data, I would like to use the following alias rather than my actual name (please indicate on the line below):

_____
Alias

I agree to be audio-taped: Yes ☐   No ☐

Participant: _____ Date: _____
                                          Signature

Investigator: _____ Date: _____
                                          Signature

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Examinando el Desarrollo Transformador: Un Estudio de Caso de la Educación Cristiana en Nicaragua

Formulario de consentimiento

Mi consentimiento verbal o escrito indica que estoy de acuerdo en participar en este proyecto de investigación. El proyecto me ha sido explicado, la Hoja de información y el Formulario de Consentimiento me *han sido leídos en voz alta, se me ha dado una copia de ambos documentos a propiedad y el investigador principal ha respondido a todas mis preguntas. Entiendo que seré entrevistado, que el entrevistador tomará notas, y que la entrevista será grabada sólo si he estado de acuerdo. También entiendo que soy libre a no responder a alguna pregunta y a retirarme en cualquier momento durante la investigación sin problema alguno. Yo entiendo que si decido retirame del proyecto de investigación, cualquier información que haya dado será destruida. Tengo entendido que mis respuestas se mantendran en confidencialidad. Sólo el investigador principal (Adam), el asistente de investigación y el supervisor de investigación (Dr. Owen Willis) tendrán acceso a la información que estoy proporcionando. Entiendo que a menos que pida que mi nombre real sea revelado, cualquier información que proporcione y se incluya en los informes de investigación será presentada de manera anonima, utilizando el alias (seudónimo) que se indica a continuación. Entiendo que mi contribución forme parte de citas directas en el reporte final, siempre y cuando, toda información con potencial de identificación sea omitida.*

Cuando citas de mi entrevista se utilicen para ilustrar resultados grupales o del tema, me gustaría utilizar el siguiente alias en lugar de mi nombre real (por favor indiquelo en la línea de abajo):

_____
Alias

Estoy de acuerdo en ser audio grabado: Sí   ☐   No   ☐

Participante: _____   Fecha: _____
Firma

Investigador: _____   Fecha: _____
Firma

Appendix 6

<u>**Entrevista guía al Profesor (Teacher Interview Guide)**</u>

A. Información General (Background Information)
    A1. Cuénteme un poco sobre usted (Tell me a bit about yourself)
    A2. ¿En qué escuela da clases usted? (Which school do you teach at?)
    A3. ¿Cuánto tiempo han estado enseñando? (How long have you been teaching?)
    A4. ¿Qué grados o clases enseña? (Which grades or classes do you teach?)

B. Información sobre la Educación Cristiana (Christian Education Information)
    B1. ¿Qué le hizo decidir a enseñar en esta escuela? (What made you decide to teach at this school?)
    B2. ¿Cuáles son las ventajas de enseñar en esta escuela? (What are the advantages of teaching at this school?)
    B3. Cuál es la diferencia, en su opinión, entre una escuela cristiana y una escuela pública? ¿Puede dar algunos ejemplos? (What is different, in your opinion, between a Christian school and a public school? Can you provide some examples?)
    B4. ¿Incorpora usted una perspectiva bíblica y cristiana en su grado o clases? Si es así, ¿Comó? (Do you incorporate a Christian and biblical perspective into your grade or classes? If so, how?)

C. Afiliación con Edudeo Ministerios, el Centro Nehemías y ACECEN (Affiliation with Edudeo Ministries, the Nehemiah Center and ACECEN)
    C1. ¿Qué sabe usted sobre Edudeo Ministerios? (What do you know about Edudeo Ministries?)
    C2. ¿Qué es lo que sabe sobre el Centro Nehemías? (What do you know about the Nehemiah Center?)
    C3. ¿Qué es lo que sabe usted sobre la ACECEN? (What do you know about the ACECEN?)
    C4. ¿Alguna vez ha recibido apoyo directo de alguna de estas organizaciones? (Have you ever experienced direct support from any of these organizations?)
    C5. ¿Ha recibido entrenamiento específico sobre la incorporación de una perspectiva bíblica en la educación (talleres o seminarios)? (Have you received specific training on incorporating a biblical perspective to education (workshops or seminars)?)
    - Si es así, ¿Ha sido de beneficio para usted? Y ¿Qué ha aprendido? Lo recomendaría a otros maestros de la escuela que no han participado en ella?

D. Conclusión (Conclusion)

D1. ¿Hay algo que le gustaría decir o agregar? (Is there anything you would like to say or add?)

Gracias por su participación. Será de mucha ayuda, que tenga un buen día!

(Thank you for your participation! It is much appreciated, have a wonderful day!)

Appendix 7

<u>**Desarrollo Profesional/Entrevista Guía a Especialistas (Development Practitioner/Expert Interview Guide)**</u>

A. Información General (Background Information)

A1. Cuénteme un poco sobre usted. (Tell me a bit about yourself.)

A2. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha vivido en Nicaragua? (How long have you been in Nicaragua?)

A3. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha trabajado en *esta organización?* How long have you been working with *this* organization? (its in italics, because hopefully organization will be known because of question A1).

A4. ¿Qué lo llevó a trabajar con esta organización? Y ¿Qué es lo que más le ha gustado? (es trabajo o es ministerio)? (What led you to work with this organization? And do you enjoy it?)

B. Información de la Organización y su relación con la educación (Organization information and its connection with education)

B1. ¿Me puede hablar un poco acerca de su organización? (Can you tell me a bit about your organization?)

B2. En su opinion, ¿Qué principios contiene un desarrollo Cristiano? (In your opinion what constitutes Christian development? Elementos, principios, sets it apart)

B3. ¿Cuántas escuelas son apoyadas por esta organización? (How many schools are supported by your organization?)

B4. ¿Cuál es la represenación demográfica de la población estudiantil? (What is the typical demographic of the student population?)

- Situación socioeconómica? Trasfondo religioso? Cualquier otro distintivo característico que los diferencie de los estudiantes que asisten a una escuela pública local? (Socioeconomic status? Religious backgrounds? Any other identifying characteristics that set them apart from the students attending a local public school?)

- En su opinión, ¿Porqué los padres optan por enviar a sus hijos a estas escuelas Cristianas? (In your opinion, why do parents choose to send their children to these Christian schools?)

B5. ¿Es este grupo demográfico de estudiantes el objetivo de su ministerio/organización? (Is this demographic of students the focus of your ministry/organization?)

B6. Si es así, ¿Cómo alcanzan este objetivo? (If so, how is this achieved?)

B7. ¿Cómo interactua su organización con otras organizaciones del Centro Nehemías? (How does your organization interact with the other organizations in the Nehemiah Center?)

C. Información sobre el Desarrollo Transformador (Transformational Development Information)

C1. ¿Está usted familiarizado con el concepto de desarrollo transformador? (Are you familiar with the concept of transformational development?)

C2. Si es así, ¿Sigue su organización los principios y las prácticas de Desarrollo Transformador? (If so, does your organization strive to follow the principles and practices of transformational development?)

C3. Si es así, ¿Pudiera darme algunos ejemplos? (If so, can you provide examples?)

C4. ¿Ha tenido éxito este enfoque? ¿Hay maneras en las que usted sienta que el enfoque se pueda mejorar? (Has this approach been successful? Is there ways that you feel the approach can be improved?)

D. El impacto del Desarrollo Transformacional en la comunidad (The Impact of Transformational Development on the community)

D1. ¿Cómo ha impactado el trabajo de su organización en la comunidad?
- Los estudiantes? Las familias? Las iglesias?

(How has the work of your organization impacted the community?
- The students? The families? The churches?)

D2. ¿Cuáles son los logros que usted o su organización han hecho y piensan que son los mas importantes o impactantes?

 (What achievements have you and/or your organization made that you feel are the most important or impactful?)

D3. ¿Cuál es su visión de una comunidad ideal en Nicaragua? (What is your vision of an ideal community in Nicaragua?)

E. Conclusión (Conclusion)

E1. ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría decir o agregar? (Is there anything more you would like to say or add?)

Muchas gracias por su tiempo y por su participación, es de gran estima. Fue un placer conocerles. Que tengan un buen día!
(Thank you very much for your time and participation it is much appreciated! It was a pleasure to meet you and have a wonderful day!)

Appendix 8

<u>**Padre(s) o tutor(s) de los Estudiantes – Entrevista Guía a Padres o Tutores**</u>
<u>**(Parent(s) or Guardian(s) of Students - Interview Guide)**</u>

A. Información General (Background Information)

A1. Cuénteme un poco sobre usted. (Tell me a bit about yourself.)

A2. ¿Cuántos hijos tiene que asisten a la escuela? (How many children do you have that are attending school?)

A3. ¿A qué escuela/ellos/el/ella asisten? (Which school do/does they/he/she attend?)

A4. ¿En qué grado o grados estan ellos/él/ella? (Which grade/grades are they/he/she in?)

A5. ¿Se considera usted religioso? Si es así ¿Con qué frecuencia asiste a la iglesia? (Do you consider yourself religious? If so how often do you attend church services?)

B. Información sobre la Educación Cristiana (Christian Education Information)

B1. ¿Qué le hizo decidirse enviar a su hijo/hijos a esta escuela? (What made you decide to send your children/child to this school?)

B2. ¿Cuáles son las ventajas o desventajas que esta escuela ofrece a su hijo/hijos? (What are the advantages or disadvantages that this school offers to your children/child?)

B3. ¿Cuál es la diferencia, en su opinión, entre esta escuela y las escuelas que ofrece el gobierno en su área? ¿Puede dar algunos ejemplos? (What is different, in your opinion, between this school and schools offered by the government in your area? Can you provide some examples?)

B4. ¿Disfrutan asistir a la escuela su hijo/hijos? Si es así, ¿Porqué? (Do/does your children/child enjoy attending this school? If so, why?)

B5. ¿Han compartido con usted su hijo/hijos lo que han aprendido en la escuela? Si es así, ¿se refleja la enseñanza de la Biblia? (Do/does your children/child ever share with you what they/he/she have learned at school? If so, does it reflect the teachings of the Bible?)

B6. ¿Qué es lo que usted espera que su hijo/hijos reciban de esta educación? Por ejemplo: un trabajo, una major educación, mejores resultados en los examenes, educación general, una perspectiva Cristiana sobre la vida? (What do you hope that your child/children receive from this education? For example: a job, higher education, better exam results, general education, a Christian perspective on life?)

B7. ¿Qué sabe usted sobre la ACECEN (el sistema escolar que su niño/niños) asististe? (What do you know about the ACECEN (the school system that your child/children) attend?)

C. Información sobre el Desarrollo Transformacional (Transformational Development Information)

C1. ¿Ha notado alguna mejora en la conducta de su hijo/hijos que pueda atribuirse a su educación? (Have you noticed any improvements in your child/children's behaviour that can be attributed to his/her education?)

C2. ¿Cuánto participa esta en la educación de su hijo/hija?
- ¿Existen oportunidades para que usted pueda participar en la administración o el funcionamiento de la escuela?
- Por ejemplo, ¿Atiende uste a reuniones de la escuela y ayuda a tomar decisiones relacionadas a la escuela? ¿Puede dar ejemplos?
- Si no es así, ¿Estaría interesado?

(How involved are you in your child/children's education?
- Are there opportunities for you to be involved in the administration or operation of the school?
- For example, do you attend school meetings and help make decisions that regard the school? Can you provide any examples?
- If not, would you like more?)

C3. ¿Qué tan importante es para usted que esta sea una escuela Cristiana y no una escuela pública? (How important is it for you that this is a Christian school, not a public school?)

C4. ¿Ha oído hablar alguna vez del concepto denominado "Desarrollo Transformacional"? Si es así, ¿Qué es lo que significa para usted? (Have you ever heard of the concept called "transformational development"? If so, what this it mean for you?)

D. Conclusión (Conclusion)

D1. ¿Hay algo que le gustaría decir o agregar? (Is there anything you would like to say or add?)

Gracias por su participación. Es de gran utilidad. Que tenga un buen día!
(Thank you for your participation! It is much appreciated, have a wonderful day!)

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