Mystagogic Encounters of
Poststructural Christian Spiritual Transformations in LGBTQ Persons:
A Grounded Theory Study in Rural and Urban British Columbia, Canada

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The Issue: How do we give voice to life narratives of human becoming for LGBTQ persons of faith who have been influenced by a Christian religious tradition? Few scholars have explored the existential process of becoming for persons of a sexual minority. This study posits that the field of theopoetics is a promising locus for the examination of Queer spirituality. It aims to respect the unique contributions of subaltern voices of LGBTQ persons and to highlight the compatibility of empirical research and subjective experiences of God within Christian theological inquiry. By doing so, it will develop a theory about transformation, human becoming and freedom known by LGBTQ persons of faith living in urban and rural British Columbia, Canada.

The Research Questions: This qualitative study departs from a question which seeks to examine how the spiritual journeys of individuals who identify as LGBTQ and believers in God have been shaped by their varied life experiences. Its scope of inquiry extends to an exploration of how participants’ life journeys have affected the persons closest to them. Lastly, it examines how participants’ experiences have impacted their awareness of who they are as persons who are on the distinctly human spiritual journey of becoming.

The Methodology: The aim of this grounded theory research is to trace the narrative maps by which persons who identify as Queer and a believer in God chart their stories of spiritual transformation, and to build a valid and reliable theory concerning this path. To this end and as an innovation in theological praxis, I apply the practice of mystagogic accompaniment (spiritual direction) as a conversational facilitative qualitative interview method. This narrative process of spiritual companionship and accountability adopts a method of interaction that is compatible with postmodern conversational approaches in counselling and psychotherapy. That is, it focuses on appreciative inquiry into issues of human becoming rather than taking diagnostic or solution-focused stances that are so common to professional helping practices. The shared journey of mystagogic accompaniment is one of mutual discernment between a mystagogue (spiritual director) and mystês (a novice seeking a professional relationship of spiritual support), and it focuses on the latter’s path of becoming in relation to self, God, and others. In interviews with primary participants and their companions, I utilize my professional skills as a psychotherapist and mystagogic companion to engage in a process of narrative polyphonic authorship of participants’ spiritual stories in the presence of God.

Primary Sources:


The Third Chair

You are a Spiritual Director.

I sit in my chair you in yours.

I have come to see you with a longing that mystifies me.

You draw my attention to the third chair in the room.

You invite me to see with the eye of my heart the Source of my longing: the Eternal, invisible, loving, guiding, challenging, insistent Mystery in the third chair.