

HeeKap Lee · Paul Kaak *Editors*

The Pedagogy of Shalom

Theory and Contemporary Issues of a
Faith-based Education

 Springer

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Foreword

In this new and meaningful look at shalom as a foundation and pathway to effective teaching and learning, HeeKap Lee and Paul Kaak have brought together a number of Christian scholars and practitioners who present both the theory and practice of shalom. Many scholars, journalists, and educators have described the challenges of teaching in America's schools in this era. In response, numerous theorists and critics have presented strong statements of what should be fixed in the classroom and in the practice of our teaching force.

The authors of this volume, *The Pedagogy of Shalom*, acknowledge the challenges and issues faced by contemporary American schooling. In contrast to theorists and critics who propose improved efficiencies, or a return to past practice or increased investments, what is presented here centers on the biblical concept of shalom and how an understanding and commitment to that concept brings hope and healing to the classroom, along with meaningful outcomes. While many contemporary scholars study the science of the teaching and learning enterprise, others turn to the wisdom of scripture and tradition, and look within their own lives in relationship to the Living Christ to discover truths that bring satisfaction, community, and learning gains to the classroom.

This book presents a comprehensive view of shalom, from a review of the traditional description of shalom as found in scripture and related ancient texts, through reflections on specific applications in the classroom of the twenty-first century. While shalom has traditionally been translated as peace, we learn in this book that the concept, as understood by the ancient Hebrews and further lived and taught by Jesus, represents a full view of an ideally imagined human life in community. What Lee and Kaak and their colleagues present in this volume is a full exposition of how the teacher herself and the community she imagines and seeks to create in the classroom become the process by which meaningful and productive learning takes place. The varying facets of this community-building process and the ideal end of human flourishing are presented in the various chapters of the book. Examining the uniqueness and variety of human culture and expression and how teachers work toward accepting, encouraging, loving, and teaching their students

is a central theme that blossoms out to examine the critical need for effectively working with the diverse student populations in our classrooms.

Teachers and scholars alike will find hope and encouragement in this book. In my many years of association with teacher educators and scholars at institutions affiliated with the CCCU, I have found a longing for shalom and a commitment to helping emerging teachers grasp the significance of their own role as peace maker and encourager in their classrooms. Community does make a difference. There is much hope and practical guidance in this book in establishing community and in working toward shalom.

June 2016

Scot Headley, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Education at George Fox University
The founding president of the International Christian
Community for Teacher Education and the
editor of the ICCTE Journal

Preface

The collection of essays in this book is oriented around a theme that seems to have had little play in the field of education, particularly in public education where many Christian teachers feel they are called to serve. In their book *Christian Teachers in Public Schools*, Stronks and Stronks (1999) acknowledged the nostalgia and hope of Christian teachers who long “for God’s shalom in a place in which teachers fear it will never happen” (p. 20). This fleeting mention begs for further explanation as well as for recommendations for practice. Can *shalom* happen? The authors of this book are both hopeful and honest about the Christian’s call to embody *shalom* in our nation’s schools.¹

To orient the authors, Palmer’s (2007) “seldom taken trail” (p. 6) has become a guide. While appreciating that (1) what we teach, (2) how we teach, and (3) why we teach are legitimate questions, his focus has been (4) “who is the self that teaches?” (p. 5). In this book, our focus is his: *Who is the teacher who understands and practices the way of shalom in their classroom?* Our “who” is more willing to integrate the what, how, and the why than Palmer is in his book, but our anchor acknowledges what he emphasizes: the who of the teacher along with the guidance offered by the greatest Who as he guides our minds, our motivations, and our professional practice.

In the chapters that follow, the manifestations of this Way are most evident in two broad applications: teachers in the public school classroom and the important, current concern about diversity. While teachers in Christian schools will find much

¹The reader should be aware that this book is not about shalom, per se. It is about teaching. But because it is about teaching from the perspective of the Christian faith, the Biblical image of shalom has been adopted as unique frame for viewing the teacher’s task. Most of the authors are not theologians or Biblical scholars. They are former public school teachers and presently work as educators in a faith-based teacher education program. They are credible as practitioners and scholars in their own fields, but view their areas of interest and expertise differently because of their faith. Shalom is not the only useful faith-based metaphor for interpreting how to work in a public space, like school, but it has been helpful for those who have taken up their pen for this project. Our hope is that our readers will find it helpful too.

(and perhaps *all*) of what is here to be helpful, the authors had in mind teachers in the public school, notably through the framework of day-to-day work in their classrooms. Teachers don't often have a say in the bigger workings of school and district life. But in their classrooms, they are creating a culture and shaping a "home-away-from-home"; they are crafters of wisdom and cheerleaders for the good. To them, we hope to offer guidance.

The particular theme of diversity, it turns out, is the major concern in many chapters. In today's pluralistic context, our classrooms are far from the homogeneous classrooms of *Leave It To Beaver* and *The Andy Griffith Show*. Race, culture, religion, sexuality, age, ability, and more present new realities for students and teachers in today's classrooms. This, we believe, invites perspectives from the Christian tradition. These are issues that Christians often stay away from or provide limited views on that feel more black-and-white than nuanced, wise, and applicable in the real world. Options for engagement such as the three offered by Schwartz (1997) in the useful article "Christian Teaching in Public Schools: What are Some Options?" are valuable. But perhaps it is less about choosing *an option* and more about finding *a Way* that can be adapted in numerous ways through prudence, prayer, and professional sensitivity.

The integration of the Christian faith with classroom practice and particularly in the issues of diversity provides a conceptual challenge that has implications for Christian teachers who are committed to their profession and want to make a difference. This book is for such people whether they are currently teacher candidates preparing for a career in the classroom, new teachers who need a way to get perspective in the midst of the struggles of being "new," or veterans who need some ideas to argue with or some humble reminders to encourage them in their service.

Chapter 1 sets the stage for understanding shalom in the rest of the book, particularly through looking at the Old Testament roots of this concept. In this chapter, Kaak invites the public school teacher to think of their work in a missional way, living and working as intentional exiles. Suggestions for teaching in hopeful ways are also linked to the theme of shalom.

In Chap. 2, Lee suggests a model of a Christian teaching, calling upon the pedagogy of shalom drawn from Palmer's four essential questions to teaching: Why to teach, what to teach, how to teach, and who we teachers are? To answer those questions, he creates a set of propositions that can be applied to school contexts.

Shalom is an authentic, inclusive learning community. In order to reflect teachers' own values, beliefs, and assumptions that impact the inclusiveness of a learning environment, Martinez in Chap. 3 presents a four quadrant analysis of teaching and learning: (1) what our students as active participants bring to the classroom; (2) what we as instructors bring to the classroom; (3) the curriculum, materials, and resources that convey the course to students; and (4) the pedagogical processes through which the course content is delivered.

Chapter 4 deals with the concept of hospitality, which is a critical concept when leading diversity in education. Mayo outlines three propositions from a theological perspective and offers practical guidance for cultivating teachers' hospitality as a moral attribute and professional posture.

In order to create a community of shalom in a school, teachers need to deal with racism. Cox researches how institutional racism impacts student achievement, especially in regard to the black male students she refers to in Chap. 5. She calls out certain Biblical dispositions in Christian teachers and suggests several possible interventions for teachers who wish to avoid racism in a school. These include multicultural awareness, recognizing communication styles, developing positive attitude, and organizing peer tutors.

Social justice is another critical issue in education. Two chapters give insights to implementing social justice in the classrooms. Richardson in Chap. 6 distinguishes equality from equity and explains how equity, linked to justice and shalom, is foundational to help students succeed academically. Lee, Givens, and Mendoza, in the following Chap. 7, suggest a practical example of how to apply social justice concepts into a classroom setting. Based on an example of a real social justice lesson, they suggest a social justice-embedded lesson plan that teachers can easily adopt to their teaching.

Hong addresses the term shalom from a multicultural community perspective in Chap. 8. She explains Hofstede's five cultural dimensions of cultural awareness and then focuses on an intercultural communication process that teachers may adopt in their classrooms.

Cannaday writes to advocate for gifted and talented children and youth in Chap. 9. She is concerned that in the correct attempt to advocate for the marginalized, teachers not forget to offer individualized guidance to those God has gifted intellectually. The chapter suggests strategies that support the "inner shalom" of the students with perspectives and practices that allow them to feel included as learners.

Chapter 10 deals with students' sexual identity/orientation, a hot topic in current mainstream culture. Nworie and Thorsos offer a brief discussion of the plight of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered students' proposed interventions by which leaders and teachers can create a safe and successful school environment that promote safe and secure school experiences.

Bartholio (Chap. 11) introduces a set of special education "metaparadigms" and then focuses his discussion on the issue of collaboration. His concern is for effective IEP meetings which at times result in conflicts among stakeholders and participating parties. The author emphasizes that facilitating an IEP meeting in a posture of shalom, with the Trinity as a model, helps promote a positive relationship between home, school, and district.

In this book, we recognize Jesus as a master teacher. Roso looks close at Jesus the teacher in Chap. 12. Roso analyzes the teaching of Jesus from the lens of differentiated instruction, cognitive challenge, student engagement, effective questioning, and relevance or relatedness and confirms that Jesus practices what the literature of good teaching preaches.

As Palmer points out, knowing ourselves is more important than other factors, such as understanding subjects, in order to be an effective teacher. Chapters 13 and 14 address the issue of who we are as teachers. Although mentoring in teacher education circles is typically linked to the preparation of candidates and novices,

Bradley in Chap. 13 applies the principles of mentoring to pedagogy, suggesting that such an approach is mutually enriching to both the teacher and the student. Her survey of mentoring in the Bible and her outline of key elements in successful mentoring provide clear guidelines for consideration and practice.

In Chap. 14, Barsh researches the relationship between a teacher's spirituality and self-efficacy. Based upon research with more than 300 public school teachers, he confirms that the impact of spirituality on teacher self-efficacy is consistent with much of the literature regarding spiritual development in the life of the teacher.

The last chapter is the summary of all 14 chapters in which the author emphasizes shalom to be undertaken as a priority in schools until Jesus comes back. Lee identifies two sets of interventions that need to be implemented in two ways: individual and communal dimensions.

We do not think that we can cover all of the issues regarding shalom in educational contexts in 15 chapters. However, we hope that readers (mainly teachers and educators) may find insightful ideas on how to apply the concept of shalom to their classrooms so that they may lead a transforming work in their classrooms, schools, and communities as difference makers.

Azusa, USA
August 2016

HeeKap Lee
Paul Kaak

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About the Book

*“A book on the pedagogy of shalom by Christian scholars also experienced as k-12 teachers is a welcome addition to the discourse in societies and schools that more and more are characterized by conflict, violence and hatred. Because *The Pedagogy of Shalom* keeps clearly in mind classrooms where the preeminence of Christ may not be recognized and sometimes cannot be voiced, it will be welcome in the Christian international schools with whom I work since many of the students we serve are not from a Christian background. It should be welcome in any Christian school or educational endeavor where the fragrance of shalom should waft heavenward.”*

Phil Bassett, Ph.D., Director of Teacher Training, International Schools of China (Beijing, China), Leadership Development International (LDi)

“I am grateful for the work of Drs. HeeKap Lee and Paul Kaak as they assembled a group of Christian scholars to explore the work of the pedagogy of Shalom. With unique voices and perspectives of sixteen authors, both the product—represented in this book—and the process—of co-creating new paradigms for conversation and practice—provide important contributions to our understanding of the theory and practice of preparing model educators in the context of a Christian world view.”

Anita Fitzgerald Henck, Ph.D., Dean and Professor, School of Education, Azusa Pacific University (Azusa, CA, USA)

“Education is God’s primary business to enlighten us in a dark age such as this. Christian teachers need to be equipped with sound biblical knowledge and transformative competencies that are shown in this book in order to become the difference makers that God commanded. This book is truly a must-read by all Christian educators, parents and administrators.”

Seung An Im, Ph.D., President, Korea Nazarene University (Cheon-An, South Korea)

“This book is based on current research and educational theories that provide both theological understanding and research-based tools for successful classroom faith integration. Whether they teach in a public, private, or Christian school setting, the book provides Christian teachers with a foundational understanding

of and practical advice for the effective integration of faith with methodologies across a broad range of student populations and classroom settings. This book should be in every Christian teacher's library."

Donnie Peal, Ed.D., Executive Director, Oral Roberts University Educational Fellowship (ORUEF), International Christian Accrediting Association (ICAA)

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Dr. Ben C. Nworie is a professor of Special Education with more than 25 years of research, teaching, and administrative experiences from K-12 to college. His second area of emphasis in his Ph.D. studies is Clinical Psychology. He has served as Editor of Christian magazines and Co-Editor of an academic journal, the *Justice, Spirituality and Education (JSE) Journal*. His latest book publications (2016) are: *Integrating Faith and Special Education: A Christian Faith approach to special education practice*, Eugene, OR: WIPF & STOCK Publishers, and *Critical and Enduring Issues in Special Education*, New York: Pearson. His areas of academic and research interest include issues related to current and critical issues in special education, minority and diversity issues, equipping and mentoring new special education teachers, and classroom management issues. He served as president of the National Association of Christians in Special Education (NACSPED). He currently serves as the Chairman of the Theological Education Commission of the CANA West Diocese of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA).

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Christian Teachers' Creed

I will regard my teaching vocation as a call to full-time Christian service.

I will regard each student as precious in the eyes of the Lord and will strive to help each one with patience, love, and real concern for him/her as an individual.

I will seek to help and encourage every teacher and will ever acknowledge my own dependence on the Greatest Teacher, my Lord and Savior.

I will cooperate cheerfully and fully in every part of the school program as long as it is consistent with my Christian commitment.

I will always be ready to give the reason for the hope that is in me.

I will not use my work as a teacher as an excuse to avoid responsibility in my church, but will offer the knowledge and skills of my profession in the work of the kingdom.

I will enter my classroom with a prayer for the day and meet each class with a prayer in my heart for it. If occasions for discipline arise, I will, whatever the need, first ask God for help to meet the situation with love and a sense of humor. I will review each day with my Lord as with a master critic, seeking ways to improve and thinking Him for His help through the day.

I will endeavor to live each day in such openness and obedience that God can speak through my life as well as through my words to student, parents, colleagues, and the community around me.

Chapter 1

The Way of Shalom: An Orienting Narrative for Public School Teachers

Paul Kaak

All your children will be taught by the LORD, and great will be their peace.

(Isaiah 54: 13)

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble.

But take heart! I have overcome the world.

(John 16: 33)

Abstract *Shalom* is a Hebrew word, often used in the Hebrew Bible, and it is typically translated as “peace.” The new capacity of teacher is the teacher who employs her gifts, her training, and her love for children, as a craftsperson of *shalom*. After analyzing the term *shalom* in an educational setting, this chapter addresses five suggestions of how *shalom* can inform the teacher’s practice.

The Ache of the Teacher

Real-world teachers have a love–hate relationship with Hollywood’s “school movies.” Though often based on real-life situations, these films’ educational dilemma typically gets solved in less time than it takes a middle schooler to get through homeroom and 2nd period. Even so, the sustained ache in the gut of the teacher-hero—their hope for moral, academic, psychological success—reflects the reality of many who work in the domain of learning. While few enter the profession believing it will all be apples and roses, rookies are not long on the job before they discover that school today is not the way it is supposed to be.

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So what's the problem? A broad survey of explanations includes inadequate classroom management strategies, dysfunctional systems in the district, poor leadership in the school, low pay, and difficulties at home or in the neighborhood. Certainly each of these factors, and others, contribute to the teacher's utopian longing for what often seems like a faraway land. They can see it—students thriving in learning and in life—but finding their way to that vision is a troublesome trek.

These feelings resemble a kind of anxiety that is common for those who are discouraged and disillusioned. In ancient Israel, when invaders from the East had destroyed the holy city of Jerusalem, the mournings of the people of God were acknowledged poetically and ultimately included in the Hebrew collection of sacred scripture. Consider these excerpts from Lamentations 1.

How lonely sits the city that once was full of people!....

She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks....

she has no one to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies.

Judah has gone into exile with suffering and hard servitude; she lives now among the nations, and finds no resting place;

her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her distress....

her children have gone away, captives before the foe....

she herself groans, and turns her face away....

All her people groan... Look, O LORD, and see how worthless I have become....

For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears; for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my courage; my children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed....

my young women and young men have gone into captivity....

In the street...in the house....

They heard how I was groaning, with no one to comfort me....

for my groans are many and my heart is faint.

Irrespective of their particular religious or philosophical assumptions, this sounds like the aftermath of the battleground faced weekly by many teachers. Groaning, desperation, loneliness, discouragement, fear, and restlessness—this is the lot of many public school teachers in America today.

This is not to say that many do not have it well or that there is never any satisfaction for those who serve our nation's public schools. Clearly, people do not choose teaching because it is easy—or because of the money—but “because they want to influence lives, because education matters to their community, and because they love what they teach” (Jupp 2011, pp. 156–157). Palmer (2007) agrees, but adds, “...teaching tugs at the heart, opens the heart, even breaks the heart—and the more one loves teaching, the more heartbreaking it can be” (p. 11).

Finding Language for a Hopeful Story

In *The Courage to Teach*, Palmer asks four questions. Although in his opinion “who is the self that teaches?” is the most important issue (and the theme of his great book), addressing the question “Why teach?” is also necessary. To know *why?* is to have an anchor of hope and a compass for directing one’s work as an educator. Postman (1995), never hesitant to offer a concerned critique to public education, identifies this as a crucial concern for schools that have lost their way. “...there is no surer way to bring an end to schooling than for it to have no end” says Postman (4). In other words, a purpose, an orienting story, is needed. This would be the kind of story that “tells of origins and envisions the future, a story that constructs ideals, prescribes rules of conduct, provides a source of authority, and above all gives a sense of continuity and purpose” (pp. 6, 7). Part II of Postman’s book offers five “specific examples of how one might bring these ideas to life....Each is part of our symbolic landscape” (p. 63).

The Christian tradition also has, like other religions perhaps, a theological story that is built into its literary landscape, fleshed out in the narrative and prophetic writings of the Old Testament. This idea addresses the educator’s angst and also offering a sufficient purpose, an answer to “why?”, or an “end,” as described by Postman. This usefulness of this proposal is not, limited, of course, to the institution of school. But it certainly does include school and can apply itself meaningfully within that context.

The idea referred to here is *shalom*. *Shalom* is a Hebrew word, often used in the Hebrew Bible, and it is typically translated as “peace.” It is an image embedded within Hebrew culture and a word used often by both the royal and prophetic communities. It is not unlike themes reflected through different forms in world cultures, great literature, and religious communities; it is an image that recognizes life’s troubles, but imagines a better reality. Buddhists have Shambhala (Jeffrey 2002) while Hilton’s (1933) book *Lost Horizon* referred to it as Shangri-La. *Seussical the Musical* famously adapted the following song from the Dr. Seuss book *I Had Trouble Getting to Solla Sollew*. Listen, through the ears of a second or third grader, to Horton the Elephant sing:

There’s a faraway land, so the stories all tell
 Somewhere beyond the horizon
 If we can find it, then all will be well Troubles
 there are few Someday, we’ll go to
 Solla Sollew...

The Christian tradition has its own Utopia, usually called heaven. Hymn writers, such as Edgar Stites (1836–1921), found other ways to imagine the eternal destination of believers. Based on Isaiah 62: 4, the chorus of Stites’ hymn reads:

O Beulah land, sweet Beulah land!
 As on thy highest mount I stand,