

Title: The Familiar Unfamiliar: A Study of Worship and Transformative Learning in a Cross Cultural/Theological Context
For the Theology of Mission Stream?

The aim of this paper is to examine the findings of two qualitative research projects as they relate to transformative learning among teenagers through cross cultural/theological worship at Taizé. The first research project in April 2006 involved Taizé in an ongoing piece of research in how young people understand and express worship. The second research project was a case study on young adults visiting Taizé from England in 2013. The research question applied to the findings is, 'Can a spiritual pilgrimage to a location with a contrasting theological, culture and practice create a theological and experiential dissonance that could result in transformative learning?'

The first research project discovered similarities (and some contrasts) to worship young people described as authentic. The second project explored transformative changes in the young people in this familiar yet strange worship setting. Turner's theory of liminality and Mizirow's theory of transformative learning suggest that experiences of dissonance within the context of pilgrimage and cross cultural/theological experience may form fertile ground for transformational change. The findings indicated that individuals experienced some degree of transformation in theology and/or practice and that a process was initiated that required further action in order for a transformation to be fully realised.

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Bio

Steve is a Methodist Minister who has pastored churches, worked with young people, and lectured in the USA, New Zealand, the UK, Singapore and Nigeria. He currently is the MA programme leader at Cliff College. He has published books and journal articles on young people's understanding and expressions of worship from the context of the UK as well as a global perspective. He has also published on faith formation and teenage sexuality. His current projects include the role of transformative learning and a book on the broad relational understanding of faith formation. BA from Olivet Nazarene University, MDiv from Asbury Theological Seminary, PhD Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes.