

**A Constructivist-Developmental Approach to Spiritual
Growth and Spiritual Leadership**

by

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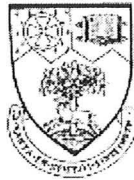
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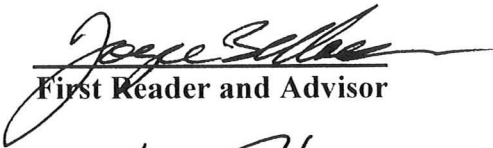
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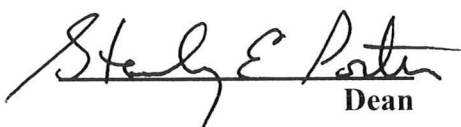
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Prologue

*The Spirit is never at rest but always engaged in an ever-progressive motion, in giving itself new form -
Hegel*

Seeing: we might say that the whole action of spiritual growth is contained in this deceptively simple word. The overarching focus of our entire discussion in these pages will focus on the complexities of seeing better – of being more aware, of developing fuller consciousness, of growing spiritually. As I hope to demonstrate, this increase in vision - in spiritual growth - is a founding inheritance of the Judeo-Christian paradigm, and as such, is essential to humanity's journey toward maturity, integrity, and connectedness – toward greater differentiated autonomy and toward greater integrated unity. In addition, the journey toward greater consciousness is the founding tenet of an overwhelming majority of psychological and anthropological theories that receive popular acclaim. As such, the question of increased consciousness, the evolution of vision, is an elementary and foundational facet of humanity's state that crosses the chasm between the Science orientation (those who choose to believe that what is to be accepted is that which can be proved) and the Faith orientation (those who choose to believe that all answers are held within sacred writings, traditions, and beliefs). Since evolving consciousness is a concept that supercedes any one orientation, it is a transformative and transcendental human element. For this reason, I view the philosophical and spiritual history of humankind as the elaboration of an ever-more expansive awareness, an ever-more evolved consciousness, and an ever-more perfected vision, all within a wondrous and holy Creation where there is always something more to be seen. But, at the base of greater vision is growth. All growth is costly. I believe that humanity is the whole that unfolds, the sacred consciousness that strives ever further, and the motion of evolution that risks the pangs of growth. This work is a respectful challenge to the status quo in Spiritual Leadership, and consequently asks its readers to risk these very pangs.

Growth is an important concept to me. As a Christian educator and counselor, I have expended vast amounts of energy in the pursuit of the elucidation of the progression of human spiritual growth. I call myself an educator because I believe that I am called to disseminate this elucidation throughout the field of Spiritual Leadership in order to challenge Leaders toward greater usefulness, reception, and compassion. I call myself a counselor because I believe that a powerful road to personal healing lies in the participation in, and cherishing of, compassionate and interpersonal relationships. Consequently, I am writing this thesis in the hopes of raising a considered alternative to the traditional concepts of Spiritual Leadership, as it is presented in the Judeo-Christian conception: can we redefine the role of Spiritual Leaders in order to develop and accept a founding epistemology that transcends and unites views and cultures that have traditionally pitted us against one another? Can we redefine the role for Spiritual Leaders in order to set the basis for a Christian culture that is built upon concern for each individual, and not concern for the propagation of a traditional system? Through a consideration of both Science and Faith, the following

pages will propose a constructivist-developmental framework for Spiritual Growth and Spiritual Leadership. This framework bases itself on the personal integration of meaning, on the tenets of experiential learning, and on the wisdom of Biblical teachings. It is my hope that through this elucidation, our very image of God will evolve into an image large enough to hold our collective challenges. It is also my hope that through investigations such as these, the substance and essence of Spiritual Leadership will be redefined and will evolve into a compassionate and holy repository, powerful enough to represent this awesome God.

As we move through the chapters, two concepts will be continuously juxtaposed: the concepts of substance and essence. For the purposes of this work, I will use these terms to denote specific and limited definitions. By ‘substance’, I will refer to those elements of the framework that are based in investigation, elucidation, and human study. By ‘essence’, I will refer to those elements of the framework that are based in soulfulness, wisdom, and spiritual teaching. It is my belief that a combination of these two fields brings us closer to a full act of knowing – biased to neither the Science orientation nor the Faith orientation. In order to proceed to a truthful and innocent redefinition of Spiritual Leadership, I do not believe we can exonerate ourselves from the complexities and difficulties of intellectual and spiritual honesty. As such, substance and essence will be presented as two sides of the ‘awareness’ coin.

But awareness of what? What are the arguments presented in this thesis? There are two:

- 3) Human growth is an evolution of consciousness which gives rise to the personal levels of thought, affect, relationship, and spirituality. This ground is the founding element of meaning-constitutive consciousness. Evolution takes place through a process of emergence of ever-increasing forms of complexity within a person’s internal equilibrium. This evolution is inherent in the Judeo-Christian inheritance and is described by the Pentateuchal narrative.
- 4) Spiritual Leaders humbly accompany clients through the process of Emergence by co-constructing with the client a Culture of Embeddedness. This Culture involves goal orientation, environment-creation, attitudinal alignment, and practical techniques. The Culture is created through an unwavering commitment of the Spiritual Leader to the person of the client and not through a staunch defense of the system within which the Spiritual Leader functions.

I will investigate the above arguments through a theologized psychology where the study of psychology is taken in its literal sense: studying *psyche* and studying *logos*. It is my firm belief that the evolution of *psyche* and the progression of *logos* are the seminal factors in an ‘ever-progressive motion’ of the spirit. In asking about the difficult issues inherent in being human, our approach to psychology is a true scrutiny of the ability to more fully see.

SECTION 1

VISION: THE CONSTRUCTIVIST-DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORK OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Chapter 1: Epistemology

Substance: Science and Faith – A Full Act of Knowledge

To outward appearances, the Modern world was born of an anti-religious movement: humanity becoming self-sufficient and reason supplanting the supremacy of belief.¹ In our generation, we are constantly bombarded by talk of the conflict between Science and Faith. In fact, it began to appear as a foregone conclusion that the former was destined to take the place of the latter. So intense is this struggle for the prestige of influence that cultural attitudes have begun to view Science and Faith as antonyms of one another. But, as the tension is prolonged, a resolution, in which one of these warring factions is discredited as nonsense and the other acclaimed as authoritative, has begun to fade as a viable possibility. I believe, therefore, that this conflict seems to demand a resolution in terms of an entirely different form of balance – not in elimination and duality, but rather in synergistic synthesis. The purpose of this section is to set out the founding epistemological framework through which I have approached my investigation of spiritual growth: the epistemology of synthesis between Science and Faith. It is through this kind of phenomenology that I believe the Internal aspects of God's Creation as well as the External aspects of the empirical Universe will be taken into account in elucidating spiritual formation.

So far as I understand it, the prolongation of the quarrel between Science and Faith depends not on an impossibility of integrating both types of knowledge into a coherent whole, but rather on the difficulty of the two schools in finding common ground. On the one hand, the Scientific orientation insists on talking about objects solely as external actions and transient relationships. On the other hand, the Faith orientation is just as obstinately determined to introspectively stipulate that objects are nothing other than immanent workings of God. Fueled by almost two centuries of struggle, neither side has effectively succeeded in discrediting its adversary. They fight on different planes - never meeting and only seeing half of the situation. It is this fragmented and compartmentalized vision that leads me to invest my conviction in the realm of unity and synthesis.

In my opinion, a synthesis of the Science and Faith orientations results in the only viable act of knowing that is comprehensive enough to encompass the complexities of spiritual growth as seen through the framework of constructivist-developmentalism. The strength of this framework lies in its ability to address aspects of observation, investigation, and reason, while equally paying heed to the elements of inspiration, intuition, and belief. As such, the framework allows the spiritual to inform the scientific and the scientific to inform the spiritual. It is through this dialectical form of awareness, rather than through the traditional, dualistic form, that I believe humanity comes closer to apprehending a complete act of knowing. God has revealed Himself to humanity both through Scripture and through Creation. Just as an artist cannot create a work without infusing it with his unique creative imprint, so Creation could not exist devoid of the transcendental dimensions of Holiness. Thus, neither in its impetus nor its achievements can Science go to its limits without becoming tinged in mysticism and charged with faith. Similarly, just as a

¹ E. Erickson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton Books, 1968), 256

composer's temperament is betrayed by the timbre, intensity, and force of his composition, so Devotion could not exist devoid of insight into the complexity, beauty, and perfection of the observed world. Hence, neither in its drive nor in its inspiration can Faith go to its limits without finding root and revelation in the actuality of the empirical Universe. As such, Science finds fulfillment in Faith just as Faith finds fulfillment in Science. The disciplines, when viewed in this light, are promoted to the status of integrated and confluent phases of knowing, rather than dueling and contradictory sources of information. But not only do these disciplines flow into one another, they also interlink seamlessly as two faces of a knowledge coin.

I believe that, in the realm of Science, humanity will only continue to evolve, to work, to research, to expand, so long as it is prompted by a passionate interest. This interest is entirely dependent on the conviction, strictly non-demonstrable by Science, that the Universe has some form of order and reversible perfection (a quantifiable faultlessness that can be inverted, understood, and predicted with flawless accuracy).² It is in the passionate pursuit of this perfection that humanity engages in the faith-filled and seminal concept of 'progress'. In addition, we can scientifically envisage an almost indefinite improvement in the human organism and in human society. As soon as we conceive of this perfected vision, however, we come face to face with the notion that this putative perfection would speak to all humankind everywhere. Interestingly, the perfected and progressive world that we find described in the works of such Scientific giants as Hawking,³ Greene,⁴ and Swimme⁵ is a world meant to benefit and fulfill all of humanity. Nowhere in the works of these brilliant thinkers do we find an extensive anthropological study of the needs of human beings across several cultures and continents. Instead, the Scientific culture presumes that its findings are seminal and welcomed by all human beings, everywhere. According to de Chardin, the source of this perceived universal harmony could be nothing else than a super-rational intuition within each of us.⁶ Therefore, from the Scientific belief in reversible perfection, we arrive at the Faith-oriented belief in unity.⁷ Furthermore, if we stipulate and reinforce the optimistic notions held within a framework of unity, we are pushed further along by the necessity of discovery - a necessity which fuels the impetus to push forward, to evolve, and to develop. Thus, it is my observation that as soon as Science outgrows its simply analytical investigations, which constitute its lower empirical stages, it passes onto synthesis. This synthesis naturally culminates in the realization of some superior state of Humanity, which in its very nature reintegrates and renews those very spiritual forces against which it claims to be fighting. Therefore, I believe that Science and Faith are two conjugated phases and faces of one and the same complete and interlacing act of knowledge. This is the only act of knowledge, to my mind, which can embrace the past and the future of human evolution so as to contemplate, measure, and transcend both the Observed and the Believed. It is in the mutual reinforcement of the powers of Science and Faith, in the conjunction of reason and mysticism,

² R. Scruton, P. Singer, C. Janaway, M. Tanner, *German Philosophers: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche.* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1983), 46

³ D. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time.* New York: Bantam Books, 1988.

⁴ B. Greene, *The Fabric of the Cosmos.* New York: Random House, 2003.

⁵ B. Swimme, T. Berry, *The Universe Story.* San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992.

⁶ T. de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man.* (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 279

⁷ T. de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man.* (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 284

that I believe the human spirit is destined to find the utmost degree of evolution, with the maximum thrust of its vital and holy force.

It is with eyes firmly fixed on the union of the External with the Internal, of the Scientific with the Faithful, that I proceed in the discussion of the complexities of spiritual growth from a constructivist-developmental viewpoint.

Essence: Story - A Full Act of Comprehension

Throughout the world of Biblical study, many distinct intellectual cultures have contributed their unique brand of information to the challenge of Scriptural interpretation: source analysts, redaction analysts, systematic theologians, linguistic scholars, historians, anthropologists, among many others. With all the various methodologies of approaching Scripture, it is no surprise that many readers of scholarly commentary find themselves confounded and confused by the complexity and intricacy presented in the interrelation of these different paths of study: an unfortunate happenstance. My approach will engage in a different yet emerging interpretational culture: the theology of narrative – an approach that, I believe, provides a much simpler, yet much more comprehensive apprehension of Biblical lessons and wisdom. In this section, I will outline my approach to the Biblical text, and delineate a narrative component that I consider to be paramount: story. But first, I must define what exactly I mean by a narrative approach to Scripture.

By ‘narrative’, I am referring to the body and form of the Biblical text *as we now have it* – in its complete form. It is the shape of this body, and the interrelations within it, to which I will appeal in my description of the Biblical roots of the constructivist-developmental framework. In other words, my approach to Scripture is to view the text as a completed whole, designed and guided by an over-arching intelligence, within which lies a thematic integrity. This integrity is rich enough to not only inform us of God’s revelation to humanity, but also to allow us a glimpse into the transformation and evolution of humanity itself. As such, in concert with Clines, I will deliberately steer away from two pervasive elements in Biblical analysis: atomism and geneticism.⁸

The tendency toward atomism is amply revealed by the content found in the pages of the proverbial scholarly journal. We are no longer surprised by the existence of vast articles written to explain the meaning and origin of a single word found in particular Scriptural passage. Nor are we amazed to encounter great scholarly energy devoted to the elucidation of the complexities of a minor detail within the Biblical narrative. Although these streams of study can provide a unique insight into a fuller appreciation of the nuance and historical accuracy of the text, they leave out what I believe to be a paramount aspect of Biblical interpretation: personal, repeated engagement with the text. It is not only through the challenge introduced by critics, but also through the illumination effected by our personal experience that we come to construct an understanding of the textual source before us. As we shall see later, this construction of

⁸ D. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, (Sheffield, England: University of Sheffield, 1978), 7

understanding is a founding principle in human consciousness and evolution as conceived through the constructivist-developmental framework. Throughout this thesis, I will outline Biblical lessons that I have gleaned, not only from rounds of careful study, but also from a repeated and prayerful personal engagement with the intricacies and morals contained within the entire Pentateuch. Therefore, as a parallel to the wholistic approach described above in the section about Science and Faith, I approach the text of the Bible with the same degree of holism.

The second tendency found in Biblical analysis is that of geneticism. By ‘geneticism’, I am referring to the practice of reducing Biblical scholarship to a study of the origins and development of the extant Biblical text and to the individual sources found compiled within a single narrative. It is no accident that two of the most significant works in Torah studies in the twentieth century (von Rad and Noth) are both representative of this approach. A particular view of the nature of knowledge is promoted by the practice of geneticism: the belief that a text is best understood when its sources are reconstructed and its pre-history determined. In Old Testament studies, however, the sources and pre-history of the given text are mostly hypothetically determined.⁹ Consequently, I believe that we are prudent to rely more heavily on the art that is Scriptural narrative, and concentrate on the wisdom imparted by its various articulations in its present form. In other words, although I do not decry or denigrate the scientific necessity of geneticism in Biblical scholarship, I am wary of awarding it the dominance often found in traditional circles. I believe that increased wisdom and knowledge of God, and not the reconstruction of original texts, is the primary focus of responsible exegesis. There is no doubt in my mind that the Biblical narrative is not to be taken solely as a conglomeration of individual accounts. Rather, I believe that it is best understood as a whole work, a constant train of thought emanating from an overarching Mind. After all, the whole is always so much more than simply the sum of the parts! And this tenet is true as much for biological systems as it is for the Pentateuch.

The Pentateuch is, to my mind, an outstanding example within world literature of the power, salience, and self-renewing function of the religious story. As such, scholars such as Mann suggest that it could serve as the paradigm for the interpretation of the bulk of Biblical material – story, and not history, serving as the primary mode of communication for religious truth.¹⁰ To understand how the Pentateuch functions as a theological work that transcends its own time, I believe that we need to briefly explore the nature of story.

What is offered in a story is a world – imaginary or real, familiar or unfamiliar. To the degree that the reader of a story is imaginatively grasped by the story’s spell, he or she enters the world of the narrative. In other words, the reader of the story, when powerfully affected by it, becomes a willing participant in its world. Through increased familiarity with the story, the reader typically learns his or her way around the narrative world, until, to a significant degree, the reader takes it on as his or her own. The Pentateuch, then, performs a function of creating a world that is unlike that of its reader, and thus invites the reader to allow the limits and his or her own world to merge with those presented in the narrative. And

⁹ T. Mann, *The Book of Torah*, (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1971), 44

¹⁰ T. Mann, *The Book of Torah*, (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1971), 102

it is here that we arrive at the crowning moment of the effect of the religious story: I believe that to respond to the invitation of entering another world is to allow oneself to be worked upon and influenced by the intricacies of that new world. That is, a reader exposes himself or herself to the possibility of the story becoming his or her own story! In this way, Biblical truths and lessons are considered and internalized by the reader. Spiritual perspectives are explored and spiritual intelligence is fostered.

As far as the Torah is concerned, this primary effect of story means that the narrative functions as a reality from beginning to end. No awkward historical question about the specific material of Torah can stand in the way of its narrative efficacy in creating a world, or in drawing its readers into participating in its world. Given half the degree of suspension of belief that we exercise everyday when we settle in front of a television screen, the reader of the Pentateuch soon comes to know the character of life lived in the tension between a promise given and a promise fulfilled, and the nature of action that is, at one and the same time, freely chosen and divinely inspired. In short, the reader comes face-to-face, within the constructed reality of his or her experiences, with the revelation of God and of self-transformation, as presented by the founding texts of the Old Testament.

I approach the Old Testament account through the lens of narrative theology. Due to what I perceive to be the powerful gifts of the medium of story, I believe that this wholistic and comprehensive approach to Biblical interpretation is not only deeply relevant to our personal spiritual formation, but also in harmony with the general philosophy of synthesis through which I will approach the constructivist-developmental stages of spiritual growth.

Chapter 2: Defining Terms

The purpose of this chapter is to define terms that are fundamental to the elucidation of the constructivist-developmental stages of spiritual growth. Although the words we will discuss are commonly used in everyday contexts, my application of their meaning in this thesis is specific.

Substance: Redefining Spirituality

There are few concepts more familiar than that of 'spirituality', and few that are as opaque. The nature of this inner power is so intangible that the whole scientific description of the physical Universe makes no mention of it. Since there is little doubt that a significant proportion of our existence is grounded in the physical Universe, I believe that nowhere is the need more urgent of bridging the Scientific and the Faithful than in the arena of our individual and collective pursuits of spirituality. Thus, the nature of this ephemeral term will finally find root in the empirical world while retaining its ascendancy in the inspirational. Teilhard de Chardin said that there is a single energy operating throughout Creation, an energy through which the External/Objective, along with the Internal/Subjective hold together in a complementary counter-balance. It is an overarching energy that is at once a part of and greater than all the currently measurable and observable energies humanity can perceive. This energy, he christens 'spiritual energy'.¹¹ De Chardin believes that the human spirit is a focal point for this energy, effecting transformation in which the External and the Internal are integrated as beauty and truth.¹² In agreement with de Chardin's inclusive and integrated stance, my definition of spirituality, which is relevant to the context of the constructivist-developmental framework, roots this otherwise celestial term into the reality of everyday growth.

To my mind, spirituality is a dynamic state of consciousness concerned with life's meaning and coherence. Thus, spirituality, the essence of spiritual energy, is a focused and overarching aspect of humanity that reaches into every level and dimension of human life, promoting development and awareness. Spirituality is therefore a characteristic of the whole self and not of an institutionalized practice or entity. Consequently, 'spirituality', as I interpret it, is not necessarily religious in its content or context. To ask probing questions about spirituality is not necessarily to elicit responses about religious commitment, belief, or faith. It is to the question of the differences between religion and spirituality that I now turn my attention.

In the 1950s, Paul Tillich published his classic work *Dynamics of Faith*.¹³ Pushing aside the easy identification of spirituality with religion or belief, he challenged his readers to determine what values hold a centering power in their lives. Through his thorough and refreshingly honest probing, he stipulated that

¹¹ T. de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 63

¹² T. de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 68

¹³ P. Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1957)

spirituality develops and forms as we assimilate experiences of trust and fidelity, mistrust and betrayal, with those closest to us. As such, he concludes that spirituality, at all levels, is the search for an overarching, integrating, and grounding trust, in the hub of our personal value and power centers, sufficiently cogent to give our lives unity and meaning. Fowler calls these values 'God Values' because they concern and affect humanity as it turns its attention to the Ultimate (whatever an individual conceives the Ultimate to be).¹⁴ According to Fowler, our true worship, our real devotion directs itself toward the objects of our ultimate concerns. These concerns formulate the driving force of our impetus to grow, to expand, and to discover, and are therefore much more dynamic and encompassing than claimed beliefs in a creed (Faith) or a set of doctrinal propositions (Science).¹⁵

In conjunction with Tillich, Wilfred Smith makes a seminal distinction between religion and spirituality. Speaking of religions as cumulative traditions, he suggests that we see these traditions as the speckled expressions of the beliefs of our forerunners. These cumulative traditions may constitute texts of Scripture and Law, including narratives, myths, prophecies, and revelations. In addition, they may involve symbols, oral traditions, rituals, music, dance, ethical and cultural teachings, theologies, creeds, liturgies, architecture, and a host of other elements.¹⁶ To my mind, these aspects create a virtual gallery of art, a living cumulative tradition that comes to address a certain group of contemporary people and becomes for them a worldly grounding that might awaken individual faith. This point, however, drives home the difference between religion and my conception of spirituality. As a dynamic state of consciousness concerned with meaning and coherence, spirituality surpasses the impersonal and moralizing cultures of cumulative traditions. Spirituality so defined presupposes life and drive – a consciousness, steeped in dynamism and movement, reaching for and assimilating the complexities and challenges of everyday life. Consequently, whereas religion is often a traditional construct of prescription, spirituality is a personal and active mode of knowing, of composing, and of conceiving of life as a whole.¹⁷

This is not to say, however, that spirituality has no relation to religion. On the contrary, I believe that spirituality and religion are involved in a reciprocal relationship. Each is active. Each grows and is renewed through its interaction with the other. Spirituality is awakened and nurtured by the elements of religious tradition while religious tradition gains fresh vitality by being moulded into an expression of the spirituality of its adherents. One caveat stands, however: this account represents an ideal. It represents the interaction of spirituality and religion as it occurs under the very best circumstances.¹⁸

Spirituality, then, is a deep, rich, and personal quality of human living. It is engendered by religious tradition, but it is a quality of the whole person. It is an orientation of personality, to one's Self, to one's neighbour, to the empirical Universe, to God's Creation; it is a total response. It is a way of seeing what is perceived and of handling what is grasped. It is the capacity to live in more than a simple and

¹⁴ J. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1981), 4

¹⁵ J. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1981), 16

¹⁶ W. Smith, *Belief and History*, (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1977), chs. 6-7

¹⁷ P. Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 178

¹⁸ W. Smith, *Belief and History*, (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1977), 135

mundane world. It is the developed capacity to see: to be aware of and act through the transcendent dimension.

I believe that we commit to this transcendent dimension because we individually judge that it contains an intrinsic excellence, and as such, confers value upon each of us. In a world of powerful forces that have an impact upon us, enlarging and diminishing us, forming and destroying us, we invest loyalty in and seek to align ourselves with those powers in which we perceive the promise of a sustained life and undergirded being. The centers of power that are 'God values' for us, therefore, are those that confirm meaning and worth upon each of us, and promise to sustain us in an otherwise dangerous and tiresome culture. Spirituality, therefore, can be defined as a person's way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces that influence his or her life, along with a way of seeing and relating to others against the background of these forces.¹⁹ Thus, we return to Tillich's stipulation that spirituality is the relationship to that which orients us to the Ultimate.²⁰

Spirituality, then, is a verb! We dynamically construct our consciousness from our experiences, from our forming and transforming of the seminal relationships in our lives, and from the development of the reciprocity we foster with each other and with the Ultimate. As such, spirituality is constantly evolving. It is, to my mind, the most fundamental category of the human struggle for a relationship with the transcendent aspects of life as well as a connection to the beauty and necessity of the mundane. Only through such a comprehensive relationship can human beings hope to nurture and evolve a greater sense of meaning and coherence in their lives. The conception of spirituality as a state of consciousness implies that it involves an alignment of the will, which functions in harmony with a vision of one's ultimate concerns. It is, therefore, a generic and universal feature of human living, recognizably similar everywhere despite the remarkable variety of forms of religious beliefs. It is not a separate dimension of life, a compartmentalized specialty. In the words of de Chardin, "[It] is the element of cosmic synthesis."²¹

Looking at spirituality through a constructivist-developmental lens reveals that the study of spirituality focuses on the way knowledge is constructed and structured as it gives form to the content of knowledge. In other words, spirituality allows us to investigate *how* a person knows rather than *what* a person knows. As such, we can focus on the universal features of spirituality despite the beautiful variety of particular themes, symbols, and images that can be expressed. Furthermore, the constructivist-developmental view of spirituality stipulates a commitment to take seriously the fact that our previous choices of action and decision, our choices of images and stories, and our commitment to social communities together function to shape our consciousness. This is a definition that is neither individualistic, nor one that gives up its commitment to generalizability. Spirituality so understood becomes the prior ground of personality.²²

¹⁹ J. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1981), 4

²⁰ P. Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1957)

²¹ T. de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 87

²² R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 132

To restate: for our purposes, spirituality is defined as the dynamic state of consciousness concerned with life's meaning and coherence. The essence of spirituality is found in a person's involvement in the evolving ways of experiencing his or her constructed conceptions of reality, as they relate to and affect the ultimate conditions of existence. These conditions, in turn, shape the character of human consciousness, the progression of human evolution, as well as a person's individual life meanings.

Essence: Redefining Holiness

The definition of spirituality presented in the last section is particular in that it grounds the processes and drives of the spiritual within the realm of the worldly. Spirituality so defined is no longer the unseen and unexplainable force that drives a mundane and learned humanity to discover its intuitive and soulful side. Rather, as a dynamic state of consciousness, spirituality becomes ever-present in all facets of living, being informed by experience and, in turn, informing evolution. Thus, as we have already seen, spirituality, in its dynamism, drives consciousness to find and maintain meaning and coherence as it turns its attention toward the elements of the universe individually deemed to be Ultimate. It is no secret, however, that not everyone's Ultimate is found in the realm of the Divine. The Pentateuchal narrative clearly and continually emphasizes the notion that true holiness cannot be achieved outside of the presence of Yahweh (Gen 26:3, 24; 28:15; 31:3; 46:4; Exodus 17:17; 19:5; 31; Leviticus 11:45; 20:26). In fact, many scholars have suggested that one of the possible themes of the Pentateuch as a whole is the theme of relationship leading to Holiness.²³ Through the relationship Yahweh provides for His people, He guides them and leads them toward a state of greater formation and maturity. In effect, Yahweh gently guides the consciousness of Israel toward the elements of the Divine. If spirituality is defined as a state of consciousness concerned with life's meaning and coherence, I define Holiness as the action of spirituality when spirituality focuses its efforts on the Divine. This theme of Holiness is a powerful thread that weaves through the Pentateuchal narrative, and is, to my mind, the Biblical correlate of the concept of spirituality. The following paragraphs explore the concept of Holiness from a Scriptural perspective. I believe that taken together, the concepts of spirituality and Holiness form a complementary nexus that is the very ground of the constructivist-developmental mechanism of spiritual growth. Before we can proceed to the discussion of Holiness itself, I believe that a few words on the nature of the relationship between the Divine and Human are worth covering.

In my opinion, a discussion of the relationship between the Divine and Human would do well to begin by explaining the theory of Selfhood. This psychological theory stems from the constructivist-developmental framework and impacts us all, as a universalizable and normalizing theory. In short, the theory states that there are two sides to the Self: the 'I' and the 'Me'. The 'Me' component is the phenomenological factor, living in the present world, struggling to incorporate meaning, and working to maintain equilibrium. The 'Me' is the component in which the evolving constructions of consciousness

²³ Knight, G., *Theology as Narrative*, (Edinburgh, Scotland: The Handsel Press Limited, 1976), 27

reside. It is the identity that is transformed, the awareness that evolves, the conscious motivator of choice, and the seat of the personality. As an element grounded in occurrence and phenomenon, 'Me' is mutable and malleable, and as such, falls under the purview of the 'I'.

The 'I' component is the epiphenomenological factor; that is, it is the element that resides in the prior ground of phenomenon. It does not reside in the dimension of appearance, nor does it reside in the complexities of personal equilibrium. The 'I' focuses on the transcendental and conscious-driven aspects – especially those dealing with meaning and coherence. It struggles not to incorporate meaning, but rather to effect newer and more inclusively differentiated forms of meaning. Rather than working on maintaining the present equilibrium, the 'I' provides the impetus to move – to evolve - to the next level of equilibrium. The 'I' therefore is the driving force behind the growth and transformation of the 'Me'. It is evolution for the sake of evolution, constantly prompting the 'Me' to internalize another stimulus, and answer another question. The 'I' is the 'Me' transformed, the consciousness that drives awareness, the intuition that nudges action, the unconscious motivator of growth, and the seat of spirituality. As such, 'I' carries an irreducible meaning and envisages neither multiplicity nor diversity of content, but rather unity of form, which is prior to content. In its unidirectional dynamism, 'I' focuses its attention on the realm of the Ultimate. Hence, it is the responsibility of all men and women seeking Holiness to ensure that the 'I' is geared toward the Divine Ultimate.

The Self is the combination of the 'I' and the 'Me'. As such, it is a complementary, self-sustaining, and forward-driven system that miraculously exists both in the here-and-now (phenomenological) and in the prior ground of the here-and-now (epiphenomenological). Any abnegation of one aspect for the other will result in a diminished and stunted Self. Consequently, the Self is the conflagration of all that is known ('Me') and all that is unknown ('I'). Hence, if you know, you further your being; if you find something you do not know, you also further your being. The union of 'I' and 'Me', then, creates a structure that is closed but centered on the progression and transformation of consciousness. Because it contains and engenders transformations in consciousness, the confluent and congruent meeting of 'I' and 'Me' results in a powerful relationship that both challenges the moments of comfort and pacifies the moments of strife. As we shall see later, I believe that the fullest form of spiritual living lies in conscious and committed attentiveness to the confluence and congruence of the 'I' and the 'Me'. But where are the concepts of 'I' and 'Me' in the Pentateuchal narrative?

It is my contention that the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, a relationship that essentially begins in the first words of Genesis and continues beyond that denouement of Deuteronomy, is the very representation of this theory of Selfhood. In the Scriptural context, I define Self as a state of completeness, a state of congruent unity, a harmonious interrelation of all the levels of being brought to bear in a particular moment. But, true to the Pentateuchal promise of relationship, Israel cannot achieve this level of congruence – Selfhood – by its own accord or on its own terms. It is only in the company and union with the Divine that Israel can move toward this destiny. This concept of congruence is elegantly encapsulated in de Chardin's concept of Omega Point. Likening Omega to the example of Christ, de Chardin states that

it is a grouping in which the personalization of the 'I' and 'Me' reach their maximum union without fusing or confounding their attributes.²⁴ Thus, the epitome of humankind, the zenith of our originality is not our individuality but our Self, as it forges unity with other Selves and with the Divine. Consequently, humanity's purpose, and in fact the very destiny of its evolution, is founded in the pursuit and protection of this unified Omega Point.

With respect to the Pentateuchal narrative, Omega Point is represented in the ever-more-unified relationship between Israel and Yahweh. To my mind, Yahweh is the epitome of 'I' – irreducible, universal, living, dynamic, and forward-pushing. He is the force that protects and guards (Leviticus 13-20) while it nurtures and encourages (Exodus 16-17). He is at the beginning of action (Exodus 7-12) and the final arbiter of growth (Exodus 32). He is, in essence, the force that helps shape and mould Israel into the Holy nation, which will influence the world (Leviticus 20:26). By corollary, Israel is the representation of 'Me'. The nation is often portrayed as struggling to understand (Numbers 14), unable to feel peace (Genesis 32), needy of reassurance (Numbers 9), deceitful and angry (Numbers 16), and even downright rebellious (Exodus 32). The further Israel distances itself from the relationship with Yahweh, the more stringent its hardships appear. Consequently, the promise of relationship is meant to alleviate this hapless floundering. Israel will become the holy nation of Yahweh, as long as it remains within Yahweh's purview. Together, Yahweh and Israel form a complementary nexus of evolution and fulfillment through which completeness arises. Similarly, together the 'I' and 'Me' form a complementary nexus of growth and understanding through which Selfhood arises. This Selfhood, driven by the power of spirituality to seek out the Divine, is what I refer to as the Pentateuchal concept of Holiness.

To my mind, the story of Holiness begins in Genesis 17. Here God says to Abraham: "...walk before me and be blameless." This is a pivotal moment in the narrative of the Pentateuch. Up to this point, Yahweh had made a series of extravagant promises to Abram, but had asked for nothing in return. At this time, however, with the renewal of the original covenant as well as the renewal of Abram's very name, Yahweh places his first stipulation: the covenant will be ratified by Yahweh only if Abraham walks before Him and is blameless. In addition, this new ratified covenant is meant to be transmitted only through Abraham's family line. This is seen in the fact that Yahweh's promise is later fulfilled with the promised seed of Abraham, Isaac, and not with the surrogate son, Ishmael. Alexander outlines the strong Hebrew belief in the continuity from one generation to another.²⁵ It was believed that a son carried within him many of the most important traits and charges of the father. Consequently, you could recognize a family line, not only through the etymology and history of its name, but also through the consistent series of personal characteristics found among the generations. In retrospect then, the Ancestral Saga is a preparation for the founding of the covenant community, Israel. Israel is to achieve what the whole of humanity before the Flood could not understand – becoming a spiritually-driven community of Holiness. Thus, as descendants of Abraham, the charge to blamelessness is transmitted to the entire Judeo-Christian heritage. We are charged with the notion of walking blamelessly before God.

²⁴ T. de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 262

²⁵ T. Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 62

The concept of 'walking blamelessly' is consistent with the definition of spirituality outlined in the section above. The very concept of blamelessness implies an act of consciousness and a direction to growth. After all, human beings are not born with a facile capacity to live out their lives in blamelessness. As consciousness acts upon its world, a person's capacity to understand and grapple with issues of Holiness increases, just as differentiation, integration, and awareness increase. It is in this very grappling that humanity comes to construct its apprehensions of life's meaning, coherence, and unity. It is through this soulful struggle with Yahweh – the struggle of the grasping 'Me' with the knowing 'I' (e.g.: Genesis 32:22-31) - that the human spirit dares to push evolution forward.

A forward push, however, implies movement – a re-placement of consciousness from one order of complexity to another more intricate and inclusive one. Hence, it is no surprise that the Biblical narrative uses the metaphor of walking. Forward movement is inherent in the image of walking. It implies a deliberate and slow progression toward a particular destination. In our case, I believe that this destination is the attainment of Holiness. And the movement to get there is the action of spirituality itself.

I contend that this forward movement is the directive given to Israel by Yahweh. Through the directives and promises of the Sinai covenant, through the nurturance and care afforded Israel by Yahweh in the desert, through Yahweh, as a Pillar of Fire, physically placing Himself amidst and deliberately leading the Israelites, Yahweh fulfills His promise of guidance and directs Israel to be Holy – just as He Himself is Holy (Leviticus 11:45). Consequently, the spiritual duty of humanity is outlined. Humanity is to dedicate itself to the conscious pursuit of a relationship with the Divine. It is through this pursuit that humanity's 'Me' will find spiritual growth, evolution, and fulfillment. It is through this pursuit that humanity's 'Me' will live with meaning and coherence. As such, it is my belief that spirituality focused on the Divine – Holiness – is a Biblical exigency required of all of Abraham's descendants. And, not surprisingly, this Biblically endorsed spirituality generates the driving force behind the human progression through the constructivist-developmental stages of spiritual growth.

Substance: The Meaning of Meaning

We have defined spirituality as a dynamic state of consciousness concerned with meaning and coherence. We have also invoked the message of Scripture to demonstrate that spirituality, focused on the Divine, is a godly directive and is humanity's destiny. The next logical step in the construction of our developmental framework would be to ask a simple question: what is the force, element, or stimulus that informs this spirituality? What is the impetus that causes spirituality's state of consciousness to exist and to evolve? In my opinion, this impetus is the concept of meaning.

Meaning is constructed information that informs spirituality's consciousness. As such, the process of meaning-making is foundational to the formation and development of the constructivist-developmental stages of spiritual growth.

In trying to grasp the concept of meaning, I direct my attention to the psychic region between the occurrence of an event and a person's reaction to it. This is the arena of Spirit in which an event is privately apprehended, composed, and made sense of – the place where it actually becomes a salient event for that person.²⁶ So important is this concept, that practically every personality psychology and probing theology that influences counselors and Spiritual Leaders directs itself in some way to the zone of mediation where meaning is made. How we understand what we hear – and in fact, what we *actually* hear, in and of itself – will be settled in this zone, where a person makes personal sense of an event.

Kegan uses the word 'meaning' to refer simultaneously to an epistemological and ontological activity.²⁷ According to him, meaning is about knowing *and* being; it is about theory making on the one hand (consciousness), and investment and commitment to the Self, on the other (evolution of consciousness). Thus, information presented to the consciousness is filtered, taken up and assimilated (construction). It is interpreted through the filter of present spirituality (theory-making). Finally, it informs the consciousness and promotes the attenuation of coherence and unity. As we shall see, both constructivism and developmentalism insist on a recognition that behind the form of objects, there exists a personal process which creates it.²⁸ In agreement with Kegan, I believe it is through this creative activity of constructing information that each person proves himself or herself to be a meaning-making organism.

According to William Perry, the words 'meaning-making organism' are redundant.²⁹ He believes that what an organism does is organize, and what a human organism does is organize meaning. Thus, it is not that a person makes meaning; it is rather that the activity of being a person *is* the activity of meaning-making. Consequently, there is no experience that becomes a salient experience for an individual that is independent of the meaning-making context. We literally *make* sense: to be human is to compose and constitute meaning.³⁰ This idea that we are constitutive of our own experience cuts across the domains of philosophy, psychology, and theology. In the words of Viktor Frankl: "[Humanity's] search for meaning is

²⁶ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 2

²⁷ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 8

²⁸ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 13

²⁹ G. Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), 10

³⁰ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 15

the primary drive in [its] life and not a secondary rationalization of instinctual drives. This meaning is specific and unique in that it can be fulfilled by [human beings] alone.”³¹ It is my firm belief that humanity’s essence is contained in the movement and evolution of meaning-making.

The development of meaning-making takes us out of the infant’s world of immediacy and places us squarely in the adult world, which is mediated by meaning. The world of the infant is no bigger than the proverbial nursery. It is a world of what is felt, touched, grasped, sucked, seen, and heard. Lonergan states that it is a world of immediate experience, of the given as given, of image and affect without the distractions of concept, judgment, deliberation, or choice.³² Therefore, it is a world of pleasure and pain, hunger and thirst, food and drink, rage, satisfaction, and sleep. As consciousness develops, however, one’s world expands exponentially. Symbols, such as language, come to represent not only what is present, but also what is absent, what is past, and what is future. Additionally, symbols are manipulated to reflect not only the factual, but also the possible, the theoretical, the ideal, and the normative.³³ In other words, these communications express not only what we have found to be of personal import, but also all we care to learn from the memories of our neighbours, from the common sense of the community, from the pages of literature, from the labours of our teachers, from the investigations of scientists, from the experience of saints, and from the mediations of philosophers and theologians. In light of this, it becomes clear that meaning-making is inexorably intertwined with the selective, interpretive, and executive capacities that many psychologists have associated with the Self.³⁴ Therefore, this conception of meaning-making is an organizing principle which is the prior ground of thought, affect, relation, and spirituality.

In speaking of the prior relationship of meaning to life activities, Lonergan states that the essence of meaning is held in the context of questioning and is determined not only by experience but also by personal understanding and judgment.³⁵ The full act of meaning-making, then, is also an act of judging. This judgment is invoked in the settling of the status of an object of thought – whether an object is merely an object of thought, a mathematical entity, an actual thing lying in the world of human experience, or a transcendent reality beyond the perception of the empirical. As such, active meanings come with judgments of value, decisions, and actions. Lonergan states that it is this addition of the layer of judgment that makes possible a world mediated by meaning. It is this judgment, which gives meaning its structure and unity, which arranges it in an orderly whole partly known and familiar, partly surrounded in shadow.³⁶ This element mediates our construction of the ‘real world’ and is the seat of the ‘Self’.

In a complement to the definition presented in the last section, ‘Self’ can further be defined as a class that has as members the properties of spirit, preference, habit, and ability. Since the Self is a class, something that has properties, these properties are aspects of the Self in some on-going way.³⁷ Thus, the

³¹ V. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, (New York: Pocket, 1963), 32

³² B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 78

³³ B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 80

³⁴ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 29; Piaget, p. 46; Kohlberg additional, p. 72

³⁵ B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 74

³⁶ B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 81

³⁷ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 21

ability to construct a concrete and cohesive worldview, independent opinions, and a mature spirituality expressing a single form of consciousness, requires a common organizing principle. I suggest that this organizing principle is the constructive and developmental action of meaning-making - the personal construct which informs spirituality.

Essence: The Prior Ground of Story

We have discussed what meaning is, but how does meaning work? The Pentateuchal narrative gives us a unique insight into the mechanism by which meaning functions. As we mentioned above, meaning is constructed information that informs spirituality. In the Biblical account, the definition is slightly different: meaning is constructed information that informs Holiness. Regardless of the sphere in which we apply the definition, meaning is the prior ground of thought, affect, relation, and spirituality. It is the stimulus and the impetus through which attitudes and behaviours are mediated. The Pentateuchal narrative models this type of prior-ground relationship, as it progresses through its delivery of story.

From the early chapters of Genesis, Yahweh generously provides a series of powerful promises to the Patriarchs. In fact, the entire Primeval cycle can be summarized as a slow descent of human consciousness into a self-focused, self-aggrandizing, and fragmented state.³⁸ Therefore, the Patriarchal promises, coming on the heels of this descent, are representative of a dramatic turn in Israel's history – a turn founded in the grace of Yahweh, and mediated through a single family line. It is generally agreed by scholars that one of the promises made to Abraham and his descendants was the promise of seed (or descendants). Since the purpose of this section is not to explore the ramifications of the actual promise but to illustrate the mechanics through which meaning functions, I will not further discuss the intricacies of the promise *per se*. But I will state a fundamental aspect of the Pentateuchal narrative that illustrates the point of this section very well: as of the moment the Divine promise appears in the narrative flow, the entire thrust of the plot thereafter is embedded in the matrix of the fulfillment of the promise. That is, although there are many ways to view individual episodes that arise throughout the Pentateuchal storyline, when looked at from the telescopic view of the entire progression of the narrative, the episodes all fall within the purview of the Divine promise. Every action, reaction, directive, challenge, triumph, fear, and ambition is interpreted against the background of promise. Consequently, just as meaning acts as the prior ground of information to the movement of spirituality, so the Divine promise acts as the prior ground to the movement of the story itself – it is the information that informs the pursuit of Holiness. I will set forth an illustration of this point.

The beauty and inspiration of Biblical art can be seen in its ability to teach both in its specific incarnations and in its more far-reaching narrative manifestations. As such, the story of Abraham sacrificing Isaac at Yahweh's command is a powerful lesson of unconditional obedience of the Great 'I'. It is also a story of redemption as both Abraham and Isaac are saved from the terrifying consequences of the

³⁸ R. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 58

potential sacrifice (Genesis 22). In contrast to this episode which presented terrifying possibilities, the story of the Manna and quails provided to the people of Israel while in the desert demonstrates Yahweh's deep concern, compassion, and nurturance for the struggling 'Me'. It is a narrative fostering trust and faith in the Divine, which often lies unseen and subtle (Exodus 16). These beautiful stories taken separately and specifically, teach humanity about the saving power of God's grace – both through redemption and nurturance. Taken more telescopically, however, a different pattern arises – a pattern informed by the promise of seed.

In the Abraham and Isaac episode, Abraham is asked to willingly sacrifice his son, his descendant, his seed. Not only was this son divinely promised and very difficult to come by (Genesis 21:1-8), he was also the only progeny afforded to Abraham by his legitimate wife. As such, the directive to sacrifice the boy was tantamount to a deliberate eradication of the progress of Yahweh's promise, and therefore of the covenant that bound Abraham to Yahweh. Therefore, Abraham's act of obedience is suddenly held up to this stark information – and thereby rendered in a new and qualitatively different light. No longer is this episode solely about his action as those of an obedient man, unquestioningly following the will of his God. Rather, the story's message now transforms into the highlighting of Yahweh Himself as not only the giver of the promise, but also its defender and its protector. The promise is elucidated as the gift of Yahweh to Abraham and not as Abraham's entitlement from Yahweh. Through this episode, the relationship between Yahweh, Abraham, and the promise is clarified. The theme of the Divine promise of seed has qualitatively redefined and selectively highlighted certain aspects of the narrative – aspects that would be understood differently were the meaningful filter of the promise not present. Similarly, in the story of the Manna and quails, we come face-to-face with a generous and giving God. But is that the crux of the story? Yet again, the meaning constitutive function of the Divine promise of seed makes its influence visible. Backlit by the presence of this promise, the sending of the Manna and quails into the desert qualitatively transforms it into an action that transcends simple generosity. It is the act of God, who has promised a long and fruitful line of descendants, actively taking a role in the preservation of that line in times of scarcity. No longer is humanity to look out for itself, no longer does Israel have to bear the responsibility for proliferation alone. Yahweh Himself joins in the action and by so doing, proves Himself to be faithful to the health of Israel – the worldly 'Me' – but also to His promise of seed which transcends the ages.

The transcendent and transformative function provided in the narrative by the Pentateuchal Divine promises is a powerful model for the function of meaning in our lives. Just as the Divine promise was always present (whether subtly or candidly) and affected the outcomes and actions of the various players in the narrative, so meaning is always present, in subtle or dramatic manners, in the matrix of everyday life. Just as the presence of the Divine promise qualitatively transformed the depth, drive, and significance of the Pentateuchal episodes, so meaning, as the prior ground of thought, affect, and relation, qualitatively transforms the content and shape of these elements. Just as loyalty to the Divine promise is translated as Holiness in the Biblical narrative, so meaning, as the prior ground of thought, affect, and relation, informs that state of consciousness that is spirituality. In the end, meaning and spirituality, much in the same

manner as Science and Faith, are two faces and phases of the same process – the process of constructing a state of consciousness that coheres. Hence, meaning-making is the fundamental driving force behind the Divinely endorsed condition of spirituality, and is thus a critical component of spiritual growth.

Substance: Progressing Through Evolution

We have come to an understanding of the process of spirituality, and we have highlighted meaning-making as the activity which informs spirituality and thereby promotes human evolution. In this section of defining terms, we are left with one final concept to clarify: the concept of evolution. I have often mentioned this word and have named it as the end-result of the synergy between meaning and spirituality. I will now turn my attention to a specific defining of this very important concept. It is my belief that, armed with a clear conception of spirituality, meaning, and evolution, our discussion of the constructivist-developmental stages of spiritual growth will proceed with greater ease and completeness.

For the purposes of the growth framework presented in this thesis, I define human evolution as an integrated and progressing sense of responsible connectedness. A hefty sum of words, to be sure... But each word is carefully chosen to complement the meaning of the term and to bring about a full formulation of what evolution signifies in the constructivist-developmental framework. With the reader's indulgence, I will parse the various pieces of this comprehensive definition.

I have begun the definition with the concept of integration. What does this term encompass for our investigation and why is it first? To my mind, the concept of integration is much more than simply a concept on inclusion. Inclusion implies membership, validation, and relevance within a particular event, concept, or scheme. It is a function of being received, of being thought of, and of being taken into account. It implies a certain degree of presence on the part of that which is 'included', even though the importance or relevance of that presence is not alluded to by the term. Hence, it is an element of belonging, of participation, and often, of empowerment to that which is included.

As an illustration, I am reminded of the events that often take place during a democratic election. In an election, leadership hopefuls outline their plans for the next several years, and proceed, over the next several weeks, to drum up support for their proposed solutions on many of the most prominent issues of the day. In the formulations of their platforms, leadership hopefuls will typically attempt to take many high profile issues into account, and propose a socially acceptable, and expediently applicable solution to each issue, in order to win over converts in the electoral pool. The winner is often the candidate who can win over the greatest number of electors, based on the appeal of each of the elements of his or her platform. Candidates propound the advantages of a restrictive corporate policy in an otherwise cynical and overworked population, of prohibiting abortion because it violates a fundamental reverence for life, of funding post-secondary education to help young voters achieve greater levels of career success, and of cutting general taxes to alleviate the strain being placed on the wallets of overtaxed electors. As a leadership hopeful progresses throughout a campaign, he or she makes a concerted effort to take into

account – to include – the needs and wants of the most powerful sectors of the voting society. As such, the electors in these sectors feel empowered, validated, seen, and important. So powerful is this need of inclusion that often the candidate most able to convince the greater number of people of inclusion, will walk away with the victory.

My conception of ‘integration’, however, is much greater and farther reaching than that the concept of inclusion. Although it encompasses the aspects of inclusion stated above, it makes its influence felt much more powerfully in the mechanics of events and persons. To my mind, integration is the very hard work involved in a *congruent* act of inclusion. In this act, the various and extant elements of the *entire* situation, (as understood by the integrator) intertwine and interrelate to produce a harmonious and elegant solution, in which all the various complexities of the parts find inclusion. This solution, often a combination of the physical, emotional, spiritual, or transcendent, is greater than the solutions of simple inclusion because it gears itself specifically to the health and progression of the *whole*, and not merely to a single aspect of the system. Since all systemic, personal, and transcendental elements have a voice in the process of integration, I call it a congruent process. Since all elements at hand are intertwined in a cohesive harmony, I call the object of integration a complete solution. And since, through these two processes, integration impacts on a person’s mode of making meaning, it is a foundational force in the progression of any mechanism that is spiritual. As such, inclusion is about acting, whereas integration is about being. Inclusion often results in quick gratification, whereas integration takes time to study the ramifications of solutions, and therefore delays gratification. Inclusion is about attitude, whereas integration is about spiritual identity. Inclusion is a compartmentalized activity, whereas integration is a personal and congruent presence in the ‘whole’.

Returning therefore to our leadership hopefuls, we find that a single candidate is conducting her campaign through the propagation of integrated solutions, rather than simple inclusive solutions. She is the candidate that considers whether or not the reasonable reactions expected from her corporate policies would drive unemployment rates to a level in which abortion is more likely. She is the candidate that considers whether her anti-abortion stance is truly in harmony with her taxation obligations of policing her anti-abortion law and funding appropriate and healthy alternatives for the vast sector of the populous that cannot afford an alternative. She is the candidate that balances the effect of her desire to give financial bonuses to young families with the effect of her desire to fund post-secondary education, thereby essentially encouraging later stage marriage and family formation. Therefore, the candidate’s mind is on the creation of a complete leadership package that addresses the whole of societal functioning – physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual – in each of her decisions. It is not merely an accumulated collection of intelligent, yet compartmentalized, answers to perfunctory questions. This candidate works to attend to the whole situation, rather than simply paying attention to the various elements of the whole.

As the first element in our definition of evolution, integration stipulates that a personal alignment to the whole is a fundamental prerequisite to the development of consciousness. In other words, I believe that it is not possible to evolve without first weathering an experience of integration. Inclusion may

promote the development of thought, of affect, of relationship, and even of spiritual elements, but it is only integration that opens the door to a foundational and qualitative shift in the ground of perception – the consciousness – that results in permanent change (evolution). It is for this reason that integration is the first term in my definition of human evolution.

The next term I use to define evolution is progress. In this context, I do not refer to ‘progress’ as meaning the forward thrust of invention that is the legacy of scientific investigation. Rather, I am referring to a process of personal development. Webster’s dictionary defines development as the process of ‘making active, to move from an original position to one of greater opportunity for effective use, to grow and differentiate along natural lines, to grow through a process of natural growth as set out by evolution or successive changes.’³⁹ Hence, my use of the term ‘progress’ in the definition of evolution is meant to highlight the paramount role of successive changes within the consciousness of the evolving person. In addition, these successive changes move from an original position to one of greater complexity, greater viability (with respect to the environment), and greater levels of integration. In essence, therefore, this term in the definition of evolution is pointing toward a movement of consciousness from one stage and level to another, rather than a refining of the current construction of epistemology. It is a directional, yet process-oriented movement that reacts to meaning-making and attempts to alter consciousness to resolve apparent conflicts and contradictions. As such, it is the natural follow-through of integration and the precursor of qualitative transformation. But where does this process occur?

This question is answered by the third term in our definition – ‘sense’. A ‘sense’ is usually associated with something felt, something gleaned, something known even if this ‘something’ is not understood, perceived, or purposeful. As such, I use the word ‘sense’ to indicate those elements of personal knowledge that we come to know through super-rational means. That is, a ‘sense’, by my understanding, is an awareness that comes into being through the actions of the more subtle levels of being, the levels that are the prior the ground of thought, feeling, and spirituality. Thus, this term in the definition of evolution appeals to consciousness. It is not thought, affect, or relationship that must progress, but rather, it is the prior ground of these elements, which is consciousness – the super-rational sense that must progress through integration in order for evolution to occur.

As of this point, we have constructed our definition to a significant extent. Evolution is an integrated and progressing sense. Two more terms are left to for our elucidation.

The first of these terms is the concept of responsibility. Entire theses could be written on this vast and universal concept. Our treatment of it in this section, however, will focus on a specific aspect of the term: responsibility to the Self. Having already defined ‘Self’ as the congruent interrelation of ‘I’ and ‘Me’ (chapter 2), I am now moving to an important activity of Selfhood – the maintenance and nurturance of the Self. Maintaining the Self, then, is an active undertaking, involving nothing less than a total engagement of the consciousness in the propagation and sustenance of the hard-won Self. As such, this term is important in our definition of evolution because it implies that one of the pillars of integrated progress is an

³⁹ Merriam-Webster On-Line, Merriam-Webster Incorporated, www.m-w.com, accessed on November 12, 2006

attentiveness to the sustenance and nurturance of the Self. Therefore, this type of responsibility demands that each person attend to the phenomenological aspects of life ('Me') as well as to the epiphenomenological aspects of being ('I'). It is a natural correlate of the balanced preservation of Self in a culture that tends to promote denial and abnegation of Self. It is the attenuation of autonomy (discussed further below) and the attentiveness afforded the preferences of that autonomy. It is the fostering of the Self we discover, the maintaining of the Self we become, and the surrendering of the Self we share. We cannot relate to other Selves except through the action and filter of our own Selves. The term 'responsible' in our definition of evolution, then, is the term meant to address the issue of the importance of the progressing sense – the very consciousness – within an evolving person. As we well know, however, persons do not exist in a vacuum. We involve ourselves in our surroundings, in our neighbours and in our events. As such, the final term in our definition of evolution is 'connectedness'.

The entire process of integration, of progression, and of responsible consciousness is of no use if it does not support further interconnection of the evolving person with his or her world. Hence, the term connectedness is not meant to indicate a connection with a particular person, place or thing. Rather, I believe that connectedness in this context is meant to indicate a consciousness that perceives the unity, the coherence, and the interrelation of all elements contained within an individual life. It is the foundation of relatedness, reciprocity, and personal surrender – three elements that are paramount to the constructive practice of a life dedicated to Holiness. As I shall highlight below, it is the other side of the responsibility coin as it progresses through integration and transformation. It is the element responsible for empathy, love, insight, awareness, inner peace, and humility. It is the progressing and ever-more comprehensive sense (consciousness) of interrelation that is the final hallmark of an evolving Self. As such, it is not enough to look for the maintenance and sustenance of one's Self (responsibility). It is rather a question of sustaining and maintaining one's Self in a progressing and ever-more complex system of interrelations in which reciprocity and surrender reign.

Evolution is the integrated and progressing sense of responsible connectedness. As such, it takes all levels of being into account. It works its acts of development on the consciousness of humanity, rather than on its behaviour, knowledge, or activities alone. It is the movement of the prior ground of Self – consciousness. Therefore, evolution is a fundamentally spiritual concept, under girding the state of consciousness that is spirituality. Evolution, then, is the progressing *movement* of spirituality from one state of consciousness to another greater state. In other words, evolution is the movement of spirituality itself as it comes to re-cognize, re-know, and re-organize its construction of consciousness, in order to be more integrated, more responsible, and more connected with all the elements of the world in which it must function. As we progress through our constructivist-developmental conception of spiritual growth, the notion of evolution will hold as central a place as the concepts of spirituality and meaning.

Essence: Progressing Through Genesis

Having defined ‘evolution’ for our context, I now turn my attention to finding evolution in the Pentateuchal narrative. Although many individual examples abound throughout the story, I have decided to take a longer-range view of the narrative. My goal is not so much to redefine evolution as it can be found in the Pentateuch. Rather, my goal is to explore how a significant and foundational portion of the Pentateuchal narrative indicates not only human evolution, but also the direction that evolution is meant to take. The main text relevant to our discussion here will be the Primeval Cycle found in Genesis 1-11.

Starting from the first few words of the Creation account, the Biblical narrative makes several things very clear: the universe is created by God, it is created deliberately, and everything was placed as it was according to a Divine design. Thus, the notion of order is very prominent in the Creation account. There is a strong emphasis on the harmony of Creation, as well as on the harmony that lives on after the Creative act. I agree with the assessment of Mann, who believes that the themes set out in the first chapters of Genesis, are the very ones that infuse the rest of the Pentateuchal narrative.⁴⁰ Through the Primeval examples of Creation and the placement of Humanity upon Creation, the Pentateuch is preoccupied with a world in which order derives from a dedication of consciousness to all things Divine.

The crowning moment of Creation, according to the Pentateuchal narrative, is the Creation of Humanity. Not only does God create the perfect environment within which humanity can thrive, He also creates and blesses humanity, directs it to multiply, and charges it with the caretaking of Creation (Genesis 1-2). In effect, humanity is crowned as God’s vice-regent on Earth, uniquely reflecting something of God’s nature and sovereignty within the scheme of Creation (humanity was after all created in God’s image). This nature and sovereignty is furthered by the conversational and ubiquitous relationship humanity enjoys with its Creator. Thus, humanity is charged with two serious and Divine directives: the responsibility to maintain completeness and unity with God, and the responsibility to watch over His Creation. In the charge of responsibility, however, God stipulates a single provision that is forbidden: Adam and Eve shall not eat of the fruit of a particular Tree. To my mind, this is a fundamental twist in the story of creative responsibility. The notion of human responsibility carries with it a delicate counter-balance: humanity must strive to live up to the great task of safeguarding Creation, but, it must also ensure that it not overstep its boundaries with respect to its essence as a creation of God. In the narrative, this harmony is stressed as the first link in God’s relational chain. The proper relationship between God and humanity is properly understood as the relation between the one who commands and guides (‘I’), and the one who is moulded and led (‘Me’). As such, humanity’s responsibility, in spite of the presence of free will, demands that it sees itself as not too

⁴⁰ T. Mann, *The Book of Torah*, (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1971), 14

great, nor too little in the scheme of Creation. This human responsibility, in my opinion, is one of the founding principles of humanity's destiny as the Holy people of God.

I begin with this story because I believe it carries within it some powerful lessons for our concept of evolution. First among these lessons is the notion that God created the universe so as to perfectly meet our needs. Many skeptics have decried this doctrine, questioning how humanity's needs could possibly be met in the culture of this challenging and often contravening world. I believe that the resolution to this question lies not in a menial justification of the beauty of God's work (a traditional response to a complex question). Rather, I believe the resolution to this question lies in the transformation of the consciousness of the questioner. To what is the Creation narrative referring when it indicates that God's Creation is perfect for humanity? My answer is at once simple and disturbing.

I believe that in relating the events of Creation, the Pentateuchal narrative is telling us deep truths about our *spiritual* well-being and our quest for Holiness. Therefore, the Creation of the world is exactly as it should be in order to promote our spiritual evolution toward a unity with Yahweh. Therefore, it is not that Creation is flawed because life is challenging. Rather, it is that Creation is *perfect* because life is challenging - it is challenging in the exact ways relevant to and encouraging of the evolution of humanity. For this reason, I state that my view is disturbing. I do not believe that there are Biblical promises that indicate Yahweh's intention to spoil humanity into complacency. I do not believe a perfect Creation is that in which all wants are met, leaving us devoid of any and all impetus to evolve and integrate the new. Rather, I believe that the challenges and responsibilities presented by Creation as it is, are the very challenges and responsibilities required for the progression of spirituality and Holiness. Thus, since God's Creation is perfect, the challenges faced by Adam and Eve are also perfect. It is, in fact, the veiled story of this thesis to outline how humanity weathers God's perfect challenges.

In summary then, the opening of the Primeval cycle, by outlining the circumstances and conditions of a perfect and orderly Creation, stipulates for humanity the state and relationship to which it must aspire throughout its exercise of free will. But, fundamental to the task of humanity is a unified relationship with God and a delicately balanced sense of responsibility. It is my belief that the remainder of the Primeval cycle outlines the story of the breakdown of this perfect and orderly state of affairs. Through its narration of the breakdown (from the expulsion from the Garden of Eden to its climax in the fragmentation of the Tower of Babel), the Pentateuchal narrative indicates what it believes is necessary for the progression of human evolution.

Our story of evolutionary descent begins in the Garden of Eden, with the purposeful disobedience of God by Adam and Eve. The consequences of this act involved an alienation of humanity from the ground, an expulsion from the Garden, a promise of further hardships, and a prohibition to ever return through the now-guarded Gate (Genesis 3:24). This episode denotes the first instance of breach within the Divine-Human relationship – the consequence of humanity's deliberate act of overstepping the bounds of the Divinely ordained relationship, and acting irresponsibly. Throughout the narrative of the Primeval cycle, the theme of humanity trying to take godly initiative will repeatedly be highlighted, along with its

dire and pain-producing effects. From Adam and Even eating the apple (Genesis 3:6), to Abel's murder (Genesis 4:8), to Lamech's boastful arrogance (Genesis 4:23), through the Flood (Genesis 6), and into the decision to build the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), the irresponsible drive of humanity, increasingly disconnected from Yahweh, acting on its own accord and giving in to the illusion of self-sufficiency, continuously creates adversity, as the human consciousness sinks ever-more into a state of lonely ignorance. This is reminiscent of what was stated earlier regarding the relationship between the 'I' and the 'Me': as long as the 'Me' acts alone, it is doomed to circle in its present state of knowing, floundering to create sense of the new impetus, in a world no longer integrated enough to accept the complexities of this impetus. It is only in union with the 'I' that the 'Me' can achieve transformational growth and adapt to new and more integrated ways of being. It is only through a deference to Yahweh that humanity can be transformed into the Holy nation of God. Thus, the progression throughout the Primeval cycle, the progression of the ever-more glorified 'Me', illustrates a rapid degradation of the integration of awareness in the human consciousness. The people who walk away from the Tower are very different from the ones who are expelled from the Garden. The descent has reached a new and more comprehensive level of chaos, irresponsibility, immediate gratification, and pursuit of personal wants.

In addition to the importance of the relationship between God and humanity ('I' and 'Me'), these episodes relate the importance of integrated knowledge. Yahweh's directives always address the needs of the current situation as well as the potential complexities of future ramifications. Although Cain is expelled, he is marked in order to prevent retaliation against him (4:15); although Yahweh destroys life on Earth with the Flood, he retains a remnant through which to rebuild the majesty of Creation (Genesis 9); although Adam and Eve effectively lose both their sons to a single tragic event, Yahweh ensures that they receive a third son, thereby protecting their family line (Genesis 4:25). As such, the integrated wisdom of Yahweh was generously available to humanity as it pursued its conversant and daily relationship with Him (in the Garden). A return to a state of union with Yahweh, a reunification of the 'I' with the 'Me', would therefore require a re-integration of the knowledge that was lost during the centuries of descent. If the story of the redemption of Israel is the story of the struggle to return to a state of union with Yahweh (the Tabernacle often being interpreted as a paradigm of the Garden of Eden)⁴¹, then the first lesson to be learned is that of the importance of integration. Acting on its own terms, humanity lost sight of many elements intrinsic to harmony and relationship. Acting in accordance with Yahweh, Israel starts on the road to regain that level of considered integration in its dealings and its adventures. Hence, a powerful lesson of the descent into chaos is that of the importance and primacy of Divine union, which results in the achievement of greater knowledge integration among the people of Israel.

But of course, the story does not end at integration. The extent of humanity's descent into the chaos of self-sufficiency implies that the road back to spiritual health is not an instantaneous process. Rather, a return to the state of unity prescribed by the conditions of perfect Creation requires that several steps of reconciliation take place. As such, the movement from the Tower of Babel to the unity of the

⁴¹ T. Mann, *The Book of Torah*, (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1971), 19

Tabernacle involved many episodes and many tribulations. It was in fact a slow and laborious process, taken on by both Yahweh ('I') and the people of Israel ('Me'). It is clear from the one-sided response of the Primeval cycle that humanity's participation in the relational unity with Yahweh is paramount to the success of the relationship. As such, the process back to spiritual health is not simply a process of Divine decree: it is also a process of human participative progression. Therefore, it took a lengthy and convoluted process to breakdown the conditions of Creation, and it would take an equal pursuit of progress to reverse the effects of those dismal years.

In summary then, I have stated that the descent into chaos must be reversed if the perfect and orderly conditions set out at Creation are going to be re-created. In order for this process to come to fruition, however, several aspects of the descent of consciousness must be reversed – namely, a reclaiming of proper responsibility by humanity, a unified relationship with Yahweh, an ability to act in an integrative manner, and an understanding of the progressive stages necessary to reverse the effects of the Fall. I believe that there is one more element that requires closer attention: the element of connectedness.

I have often wondered why the story of the Tower of Babel came after the story of the Great Flood in the account of the descent of human consciousness. Surely, a cataclysmic event like the Flood is the very bottom of the *de*-volution barrel; surely the death of humanity is the greatest price that can be paid for the abdication of the Divinely decreed responsibility. According to the Pentateuchal narrative, however, the final episode in the descent of humanity before the new beginning ushered in by Abraham is the fragmentation of humanity at the Tower of Babel. As a result of its position in the narrative flow, this story highlights the climax of the *de*-volution of human consciousness. The Tower story is the account of how humanity took it upon itself to build a massive structure in order to make a great name for itself. In other words, it was an act of self-aggrandizement, of the glorification of the human consciousness - the 'Me' - for its own sake. It was the clearest and most flagrant form of self-worship described by the narrative of the Primeval cycle. Therefore, to my mind, it is not so much the act of building a Tower to reach the heavens that was intrinsically destructive. Rather, it was the virtual deification of the human consciousness which finally brought about the last fall in a series of falls.

The consequence of these actions was the complete fragmentation of humanity. Whereas the Flood destroyed life on Earth, the remnant in the Ark was a family line. Hence, the Flood had taken humanity and life off the face of the Earth, but it had not been meant to take away human collaboration and connection. When normal life patterns had been re-established after the Flood, however, the progress of the descent of human consciousness literally picked up where it left off. Stories of debauchery, drunkenness, and lust were all ultimately crowned by the story of arrogance and self-deification: the story of the Tower. As a result of Yahweh's response, humanity walks away from the Tower alone, segregated, unheard, unable to communicate, unable to see, and unable to stand together. As such, the progression of *de*-volution takes us from a simple act of disobedience in a perfect Garden to a grand act of self-glorification and denial at the base of the Tower. The final result – a result worse than death as far as the Pentateuchal narrative is concerned: aloneness, disconnection, disengagement, isolation, irresponsibility, and narrowness, all within

a context where there no longer is the possibility of forging a relationship with Yahweh. Hence, the lesson is clear: connection is a Divine and powerful gift to humanity. It is a fundamental element of human spiritual health and, as illustrated by the story of the Tower, is a primary goal to be pursued. Healthy human progress ends in a retrieval of this primal sense of connection.

A summation of the themes highlighted in this section correlate directly to my definition of evolution stated above. The Pentateuchal narrative states that Creation was an act of perfection. Therefore, the destiny of humanity is to re-create the consciousness and conditions involved in that perfect sphere of relation with the Divine. The descent of human consciousness into chaos, however, outlines the loss of the most important elements of consciousness: relationship, responsibility, integration, and connection. The return to this utopian state is not a miraculous one-step solution. Rather, it is a slow and deliberate progression through the perfect challenges presented to us by God's perfect Creation. As such, I contend that the Pentateuchal narrative, taken in its integrated and completed form, supports my proposed definition of evolution. I believe that even according to the Biblical narrative, evolution is an integrated and progressing sense of responsible connection. The constructivist-developmental framework of spiritual growth is deeply reliant upon and informed by this comprehensive definition of spiritual evolution.

Chapter 3: The Theory of Growth

We have now laid the groundwork necessary for a more complete understanding of the constructivist-developmental stages of spiritual growth. As mentioned in the prologue, one of the main arguments of this thesis is that human growth is an evolution of consciousness which gives rise to the personal levels of thought, affect, relationship, and spirituality. We also stated that this ground is the founding element of meaning-constitutive consciousness. So far, we have discussed the elements of spirituality, meaning, and evolution. As such, we are left with the crux of the argument: the actual process of human growth. The purpose of section is to outline the art and science of human consciousness development and thereby demonstrate that human growth evolves through constructed and developing processes, which come about through a process known as Emergence.

Substance: Philosophy: The Art of Consciousness

Before we can delve into the mechanical analysis provided by science, I believe that we must have a firm grounding in the generalized framework in which the processes of spiritual growth take place. In other words, before we delve into the ‘how’ of the progression of spiritual growth, we must gain an understanding of the ‘what’ and the ‘why’. As such, we will develop a ‘big picture’ framework within which to place the scientific mechanical intricacies. It is the purpose of this section to outline some of the main lines of thought regarding the philosophy of the growth of consciousness. Our discussion will culminate in the elucidation of the Hegelian concept of ‘Absolute Spirit’ – the formulation of a consciousness that is aware of its environmental surround as a product of its own constructions.

According to the framework of the thesis, the Hegelian formulation of ‘Self’, or ‘Selfhood’, is the ground from which the concept of a personal mode of meaning-making springs.⁴² Interestingly, even though this philosophy was propounded centuries before the advent of the constructivist-developmental framework, its analysis is consistent with our phenomenological-epiphenomenological description of ‘Self’. In line with this psychological theory of Self, this school of philosophy (discussed below) has stated that a mature person is more than simply a differentiated individual. This person has crossed the threshold of increased consciousness and self-consciousness, and as a result of this process, has achieved a higher and qualitatively different perspective on the world. This new perspective on the world facilitates the development of greater integration – of the Self with the external world, and of the Self with the various elements internal to it – of the Self with whole of its existence. It is in light of this mode of thought that de Chardin stated that a Self is an organism that has transcended individuality and has thereby attained

⁴² R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 35; T. de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 19; R. Scruton, P. Singer, C. Janaway, M. Tanner, *German Philosophers: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche*, (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1983), 62; A. Brown, *On Hegel*, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, 2001), 3; P. Malone, T. Malone, *The Windows of Experience: Moving Beyond Recovery to Wholeness*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 32

Selfhood.⁴³ In other words, the Self is that entity which has transcended the exclusive grasp on the 'Me' and has relinquished its growth to the guidance of the 'I'. The congruent combination of the 'I' and the 'Me' is called Selfhood. Since the attainment of Selfhood has proven essential to the success of humanity's past and present evolution, I believe that its fuller attainment must be an essential aim for the personal evolutionary efforts of Spiritual Leaders. This matter of the pre-eminent Self, since it involves and penetrates the entire person, is for me not simply a matter of spirituality, but more specifically, a matter of spirituality supported by the honest inquiry of psychological knowledge. Consequently, a partnering force to the pivotal role of spirituality is the fluid process of meaning-making, which informs and under girds spirituality. This counter-balance of science and spirituality prevents the focus of spiritual growth from being diluted and rooted in the empirical world alone, while simultaneously ensuring that the doctrine does not fall into a rhapsodized account of spiritual illumination. In addition, the integration of spirituality into the framework of growth brings with it the essential dimension of the pursuit of connectedness. As such, we begin to appreciate a fuller concept of reality as a series of interrelations in which humanity actively participates. It is to this idea that Lonergan speaks when he points out that the appearance of a human Self is the culmination of two distinct trends: the trend toward a more stringent individualization (responsibility and autonomy), and the complementary trend toward greater interrelation and cooperation (connectedness).⁴⁴ In other words, a Self is an individual who transcends mere individuality in the act of conscious participation in the world. But, by what road is this Self achieved? What evolutionary process takes place that fosters the broadening of our meaning-making?

The answer to this question lies in the elucidation of how human consciousness grasps its conceptions of reality. According to Malone, when humanity begins to interact with its environment, it inevitably places itself at the center of its perceptions as it makes meaning.⁴⁵ That is, we have an innate tendency to infuse our perceptions with nuances of what we believe is pure objectivity. Consequently, we separate ourselves from whatever it is we are observing. For example, in its early and seminal stages, science falls prey to the belief that a person can observe a phenomenon in the same form that it would take place in his or her absence. Instinctively, many scientists went to work as if they could stare down from a great height upon a world, penetrated by their consciousness, without being in turn affected and influenced by what they observed. It is my contention that we are inclined to isolate ourselves from things, events, experiences, and beings which surround us, as though we were looking at them from the outside, from the shelter of an observatory into which the elements which are being observed are unable to enter. That is, I believe that we too easily act as if we are mere spectators to life, rather than elements of the life that pushes us all forward. As spectators, we render ourselves incapable of observing and experiencing our own participation and agency in the events and complexities of our lives. It is my belief that this form of experiential separation amounts to a virtual alienation of the developing consciousness from its very actions

⁴³ T. de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 21

⁴⁴ B. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1958), 162

⁴⁵ P. Malone, T. Malone, *The Windows of Experience: Moving Beyond Recovery to Wholeness*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 181

within the environmental surround and, thus, forms an effective block to Lonergan's conception of Self. As such, non-participation in the things, events, experiences and beings we encounter, as exemplified by our innate tendency to try to apprehend the nature of reality by using our consciousness as nothing other than a grasping tool, constitutes a tacit and effective distancing of the evolving consciousness from the very source of its meaning – personal engagement in the quest for and experience of reality.

In assuming this distant stance, we are immediately beset by insurmountable worries. If trying to know reality involves the process of using our consciousness to grasp reality, is there truly no danger that the simple application of our consciousness to the task does not, in and of itself, alter what it is we finally end up grasping? Hegel answers this paramount query by explaining that even if we regard our consciousness as the passive medium through which we observe and attempt to grasp reality, we are still in fact observing reality through the sieve of a medium. We can never know reality itself, devoid of our consciousness.⁴⁶ Therefore, in an ironically circular construction, Hegel believes that the application of our consciousness leaves a deep and indelible mark on the perceptions we assimilate into consciousness. It is to these modified perceptions that we react as we evolve our budding spirituality. Psychotherapists such as Antony are echoing Hegel's salient words by illuminating the realization that even in the most objective of scientific pursuits, practitioners are inadvertently steeped in the conventions they adopted in the course of their personal and professional development.⁴⁷ In light of this, when they reach the conclusion of their analyses, practitioners may be humbled and frustrated by the difficulty they find in extruding with any certainty whether the structure they have reached is the actual essence of the matter they are studying, or whether they are experiencing reflections of their own preferences. Through this inextricable process of discerning meaning, subject (the observer's activity of perceiving) and object (the observer's conscious observations) marry and mutually transform each other in the very personal act of knowing. As a consequence, every act of knowing carries within it the elements of the tacit subject and the externalized object. The intertwining of these elements is that which is often left out of the observer's conscious apprehension of his or her knowing. But what happens, in the idealized situation, when a Self develops to a plane where its vision is not limited to its own vantage point but is able to coincide its subjectivity to match the way the Universe is objectively distributed? I believe that at this point, vision reaches its apogee, meaning reaches its zenith. Humanity sees, evolves, and integrates. In my opinion, herein lies the fundamental definition of the movement of consciousness.

Analogous to the development of the Self, the elements of consciousness complicate and differentiate their nature with the passage of time. In light of this, scholars such as Roth believe that consciousness displays itself as a spectrum of shifting shades of awareness, whose former stages are engulfed and transformed (integrated).⁴⁸ As such, each level of consciousness conceives of reality according to its particular level of awareness. It is this concept that Hegelian philosophy addresses when it

⁴⁶ R. Scruton, P. Singer, C. Janaway, M. Tanner, *German Philosophers: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche*. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1983), 166

⁴⁷ D. Antony, *Skills in Counseling*. (Tamilnadu, India: Anugraha Publications, 1995), 37

⁴⁸ R. Roth, *Prayer and The Five Stages of Healing*. (Carlsbad, California: Hay House Inc., 1999), 82

denies the existence of a single truth. According to Hegel, each individual truth is part of a whole process of transformation.⁴⁹ Hence, what is important is not the single truth itself, but rather the continuous movement of consciousness through its conceptions of truth. Similarly, what is important is not the specific incarnations of meaning perceived by an individual, but rather the sequence of transformational evolutions undergone by the individual's meaning-making over time. In Hegel's own words: "Judged by that movement, the particular shapes which consciousness assumes do not indeed subsist any more than do the determinant thoughts and ideas, but they are all the same - as much positive and necessary movement as they are negative and transitory."⁵⁰ The essence of this form of movement is what Hegel attributes to the Absolute Spirit.

Hegel, then, has set himself an extraordinary task. Starting with a powerful critique of the dualism of Kantian thought, he sets out to develop a new method. This method is to trace the progressive development of all possible forms of consciousness to the final goal of genuine knowledge. This is not the knowledge of the appearance of reality but rather of reality as it truly is.⁵¹ As such, his expansive conception of consciousness is not limited to the cognitive. Rather, it is the prior ground from which the cognitive springs – the same ground that gives birth to the affective, the relational, and the spiritual. The act through which the fine edge of our evolving consciousness and progressing meaning undergoes a process of complexification and penetrates further into the objective and the transcendent aspects of life, I will call the 'Process of Emergence'.

Emergence is further defined as the process by which humanity progresses by slowly elaborating the essence and the totality of the Creation deposited within and around it.⁵² This grand process of evolution, I believe, is the basis for the materialization of the Self, the foundation of the progressive spiritualization of all of humanity. Within the crises arising from life and reflection, the terms of the next stage of evolution of Self emerge. The former disposition effaces itself and is absorbed into the higher consciousness.⁵³ With that very ability, humanity bursts forth upon the stages of the empirical universe and of God's Holy Creation. It transcends the mundane niches into which objects are classified and introduces a new epoch. It is through the Holy process of humanity's self-conscious Emergence that meaning is given a new skin and, as such, finds its soul.

But what of this self-conscious aspect? Hegel clearly states that self-consciousness is held firmly within the progression of Emergence, and is a vital step in the development of the Absolute Spirit.⁵⁴ The instrument of self-consciousness he calls 'reflection', where reflection is the power acquired by a consciousness to turn upon itself, to take possession of itself as an object to itself, with its own consistency and value. In the words of de Chardin: "No longer merely to know, but to know oneself; no longer merely

⁴⁹ A. Brown, *On Hegel*, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, 2001), 52

⁵⁰ A. Brown, *On Hegel*, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, 2001), 52

⁵¹ R. Scruton, P. Singer, C. Janaway, M. Tanner, *German Philosophers: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche*. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1983), 170

⁵² T. de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 181

⁵³ A. Brown, *On Hegel*, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, 2001), 56

⁵⁴ R. Scruton, P. Singer, C. Janaway, M. Tanner, *German Philosophers: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche*. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1983), 173

to know, but to know that one knows.”⁵⁵ Therefore, by this individualization of oneself within the depths of oneself, the human who was once divided over a diffuse circle of perceptions and activities emerges as the new focal point, through which the experiences of the perceptions and activities are pulled together and fused into a unity that is conscious of its own organization of meaning. Thus, we come to a central theme in Hegelian philosophy: the consciousness of an infinitely rich unity of thought and reality, of form and content, is effected through the challenge of the crises of life, as perceived through self-consciousness. Since every conflict is a relational process between what is Self and what is Other, Emergence makes progress by naming and transcending the one-sided terms that have come into conflict.⁵⁶ It is through the process of Emergence, that we attain Absolute Spirit.

Our final task, then, is to examine what Hegel meant by his concept of Absolute Spirit. The Hegelian view holds that objects are not things existing independent of consciousness, but rather are interpretations of consciousness, as it perceives its world. In other words, objects are constructed harbingers of meaning for each individual. At the level of self-consciousness, humanity becomes aware of the laws of the universe as laws of its own creation and, therefore, for the first time, consciousness now has itself as the object of its scrutiny. It is at this stage that consciousness begins to shape the world practically as well as intellectually, by working on material objects and fashioning them in accordance with its image of how they should be.⁵⁷ Self-consciousness, thus, begins to shape its social world. That is, although humanity may set out to track the path of consciousness as it comes to know reality, at the end of the road it finds that it has been watching its consciousness as it *constructs* reality. To Hegel, then, Absolute Spirit is reached when consciousness becomes aware that there is nothing to be grasped beyond itself, that it is united with what it is grasping. Absolute Spirit is consciousness achieving awareness of itself in the shape of consciousness.⁵⁸ Hegel said: “The truth is the whole, but the whole is only the essence of perfecting itself through self-conscious development.”⁵⁹ In light of Hegel’s view of Absolute Spirit, it becomes clear that the notion of the whole is not to be grasped as a dimension of Being – a static state implying existence and presence. Rather, it is fundamentally to be understood as the basis of the transformational concept of Becoming.

Life, being an ascent of consciousness and meaning, could not continue to advance indefinitely without transforming itself in its very depths. Through Emergence, consciousness has to constantly become different from its current constructed incarnation so as to unwaveringly remain an integrous Self. In the accession of the power of Becoming, the particular and critical forms of consciousness emerge, constructing and re-constituting the Self. Because this phenomenon takes place within our Selves, it is a process that is in full view. It is through this clarity that our vision expands and allows us to see the further advances of consciousness. Also, the further an emergent self-consciousness arises from the anonymous

⁵⁵ T. de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 165

⁵⁶ H. Lefebvre, *Dialectical Materialism*, (London, England: Jonathan Cape Publishers, 1968), 25

⁵⁷ R. Scruton, P. Singer, C. Janaway, M. Tanner, *German Philosophers: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche*. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1983), 185

⁵⁸ R. Scruton, P. Singer, C. Janaway, M. Tanner, *German Philosophers: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche*. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1983), 189

⁵⁹ A. Brown, *On Hegel*, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, 2001), 54

masses of the external, the greater becomes the force within it that can be stored up and transmitted by means of example and education. Humanity then is the center of its own perception and at the same time, the center of construction of the empirical Universe and of God's Holy Creation. If to seek is really to become more, if vision is really fuller Selfhood, then we become aware of the paradoxical and ironic situation of our existence: in the metaphorical 'game' that is humanity's life, we become aware that we are the players, we are the cards being played, and we are the stakes. Nothing can go on if we choose to leave the table. And yet, no power forces us to remain.

Substance: Psychology: The Science of Consciousness

The philosophical discussion above outlines a way in which humanity can be seen and studied as a phenomenon: a process to be described and analyzed. Since the progression of human consciousness is a form of evolution, I do not believe that it can be described or evaluated solely on the basis of its origins. As such, I contend that human consciousness must be defined by its direction, its inherent possibilities, by its limitations, and by its future trends. Ever since the colonization of the New World, Western culture has propounded the importance and ultimacy of the development of personal autonomy. In light of this trend, suggesting that there is qualitative development beyond the attainment of psychological autonomy is somewhat controversial, since it flies in the face of cherished notions of maturity in Western psychological and philosophical realms. And yet, this is precisely what I intend to do. I suggest that objectivity defined in terms of abstract principles may not be the fullest height of knowing. I suggest that the attainment of a state of independence may not be the greatest notion of maturity. In other words, I believe that a highly differentiated psychological autonomy is not automatically equated with the pinnacle of human evolution. As a matter of fact, doubts about psychological autonomy as the hallmark of personal maturity have begun to surface in many quarters, both scientific and spiritual.⁶⁰ Armed with a philosophical background, the next few pages will embark on a discussion of an inclusive and eclectic theory of psychology that dares to suggest a vision of human maturity that transcends mere autonomy. This theory is called the constructivist-developmental theory of spiritual growth.

Let me begin by expressing my belief that, even though this theory is based on the processes of highlighting growth (a humanistic bias) rather than on the processes of pinpointing aberrations in psychological health (a medical/diagnostic model), it can still sound a worthwhile and relevant psychological alarm. An orientation to the processes of growth is equally an orientation to the processes that thwart or retard growth. In addition, an evolutionary approach to meaning-making establishes a balanced platform from which we can attempt to see – a platform not co-opted by partialities of customs or convention. Consequently, unlike the medical/diagnostic model, the distinctions we will examine through

⁶⁰ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 228; P. Malone, T. Malone, *The Windows of Experience: Moving Beyond Recovery to Wholeness*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 187; D. Antony, *Skills in Counseling*, (Tamilnadu, India: Anugraha Publications, 1995), 201; H. Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, (Basic Books, New York, 2004), 341

an evolutionary perspective do not require a person to exhibit signs of distress, or social maladjustment. I remind my reader that, contrary to other theories and frameworks, in the constructivist-developmental view, individuals develop at different rates, and slower development is not in itself a cause for alarm. As a foundation to our understanding of the complexities of the constructivist-developmental framework, I believe a few words about the psychological milieu would be useful.

While a great number of theories and frameworks in the psychological milieu have claimed to take interest in the human being as meaning-maker, the two traditions that have had the greatest impact on the psychological world are the psychoanalytic tradition, and the existential-phenomenological tradition.⁶¹ In piecing together a more holistic psychological approach, I find that constructive-developmentalism does a great deal of honour to the deepest convictions of both the psychoanalytic tradition and the existential-phenomenological tradition, while simultaneously building on their shortcomings.

One of the greatest proponents of the existential-phenomenological tradition is Carl Rogers. In contrast to earlier mechanistic and homeostatic conceptions of the human person, Rogers attended to what he regarded as an intrinsic process of adaptation and growth.⁶² His first principle is the Actual Rising Tendency: the inherent tendency of the organism to develop all its capacities in ways which serve or enhance its existence.⁶³ The Tendency did not only meet deficiency needs, but also promoted a development toward differentiation, toward the expansion of growth, and toward the expansion of personal effectiveness. It is the differentiated growth toward autonomy and away from heteronomy (the placement of the center of personal power outside oneself).⁶⁴ In addition, according to Rogers, life is an event that takes place between the organism and its environment; it is a process of transcending the momentary status quo, expanding continually and imposing autonomous determinations upon an ever-increasing realm of experience.⁶⁵ Rogers labels the Actual Rising Tendency as the sole motive of personality.⁶⁶ Consequently, there are no separate systems with motives of their own. In the final analysis, there is presumed to be a basic unity to personality, a unity best understood as a process rather than as an entity. This process, according to Rogers, gives rise to the Self: the meaning-making system with which the process gets identified.⁶⁷ Anxiety, defense, and psychological maladjustment are all understood in the context of the efforts to maintain and transform the Self-system.

It is clear that this system of therapy has many positive aspects to uphold it. In spite of its clear warmth and respect for the agency of each person, several important reservations regarding its application require some attention. First, since the emphasis of Rogerian thinking is solely on development, there is no exigency to uncover elements of irregularity from the history of development. In other words, there is no direct need to categorize the differences and commonalities between early moments in personal

⁶¹ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 2

⁶² C. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 46

⁶³ C. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 61

⁶⁴ C. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 63

⁶⁵ C. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 66

⁶⁶ C. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 81

⁶⁷ C. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 156

development and late moments, between early experiences of transition and later ones.⁶⁸ Second, and most important, Rogers' concept of maturation is focused strictly on separation and differentiation. For decades, biologists, philosophers, and theologians have all propounded the virtues of growth as both differentiation *and* integration – two complementary processes necessary to the Emergence of Self.⁶⁹ I believe that a psychological platform that can combine the elements of differentiation and integration in its conception of the natural process of evolution is required if we are to have a clearer and more grounded view of consciousness development.

On the other side of the psychological coin, the psychoanalytical standpoint focuses most of its energy on the 'biological system' within us and on the 'energy system' in which we participate.⁷⁰ It views the individual 'ego' as primarily motivated by the desires to reduce or eliminate unpleasurable aspects in life. The 'ego', the concept associated with personality, is therefore at the mercy of the conflicting and confounding opposing forces which exert influence from below and from above. Below the 'ego' resides the infamous 'id' – a hotbed of instinctual and seminal desires associated with biological drives. Above the 'ego' is the ephemeral 'superego' – a monitoring force within the psyche that functions in a quasi-conscience fashion.⁷¹ As a result of this schema, the individual is thought to turn away from the 'ego' because the internal system of warding off displeasure has somehow broken down. In light of this, Freud depicted 'ego formation' and 'reality orientation' as unavoidable detours on the road to psychic health and psychological security.⁷²

In my opinion, psychoanalytic theory suffers from a view of biology that today stands as outdated and narrow. Biological drives have been shown to be linked to the experience of daily living, to the mitigating of affect, to the determination of the complexity of thought, and to metaphors of spiritual processes.⁷³ Recent scientific endeavours, however, have concluded against the proposition of biology as the determinative and ultimate aspect of human consciousness.⁷⁴ In addition, although psychoanalytic theory accedes to the existence of subject-object relations, it places these relations firmly in the external realm. In other words, this school of thought suffers from the one-sided tendency to overlook the dimensions of the Self that are consciously participative in the activities of life.

To my mind, of the collection of psychotherapeutic theories that have achieved popularity, none has ever successfully integrated *both* the concepts of the Internal and External, the concepts of the cognitive, affective, relational and spiritual, the concepts of differentiation and integration – in other words, the combined foundations of the process of meaning-making. Were one to do so, the resultant psychology would be able to attend to the sequence and shape of our various consolidations of meaning *and* to the universal processes of constructing, defending, subordinating, surrendering, and reconstituting meaning. This theory must also invest energy in the issues of what it means to a Self that its world designs cohere or

⁶⁸ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 16

⁶⁹ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 18

⁷⁰ E. Erickson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton Books, 1968), .53

⁷¹ E. Erickson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton Books, 1968), .8

⁷² M. Boden, *Piaget*, (London, England: Fontana Press, 1979), 82

⁷³ B. Swimme, T. Berry, *The Universe Story*: San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992, 158

⁷⁴ C. David, F. Lenoir, deTonnac, F. (eds.), *Conversations About the End of Time*, (London, England: Penguin Books, 1999), 95

collapse (spirituality); that a Self may fundamentally understand the personal processes of crisis, anxiety, and defense (evolution); that it might constructively navigate the labyrinth of meaningfulness and meaninglessness, breakthrough and breakdown (meaning). Daniel Stern, in describing the growth and transformation of young children, highlighted the existence of ever-more complex organizations and reorganizations of an emerging 'Self'.⁷⁵ He believes that the 'Self' is an agent of action, an experiencer of feelings, a maker of intentions, an architect of plans, a communicator, and a sharer of personal knowledge.⁷⁶ As such, a 'Self' is here understood to refer as much to the activity of meaning-making and ever-progressive evolution as it does to the physical entity. This Self would be the very subject of our new psychological theory. The constructivist-developmental concept of the spiritual growth of the 'Self' is the subject of this thesis.

Subject-Object Theory

Having set the psychological stage for the introduction of a comprehensive theory that addresses the complexities of spirituality, meaning, and evolution, I will now discuss the mechanical precursor of the constructivist-developmental scheme for spiritual growth: Subject-Object theory. This is the last stage of investigation required before discussing the actual theory itself.

'Object' refers to those elements of our knowing or organizing that we can reflect on, handle, look at, perceive, be responsible for, relate to each other, take control of, internalize, assimilate, or otherwise operate on.⁷⁷ All these characteristics highlight the fact that the element of knowing is not the whole of who we are. They are elements that are distinct enough from us that we can recognize them and do something about them.

'Subject' refers to those elements of our knowing or organizing with which we identify ourselves, to which we tie ourselves, with which we are fused, in which we are embedded.⁷⁸ We cannot be responsible for, in control of, or effectual upon that which is subject. Subject is immediate; object is mediate. Subject is ultimate or absolute; object is relative. In Kegan's words: "'Object' speaks to that which some motion has made separate or distinct from the Self. In addition, 'object' is separate and distinct from its own motion."⁷⁹ Subject-Object theory, by this line of reasoning, has to do with our relationship to those elements that some motion has made separate from us. Our experience of growth is held within the dynamics of the separation itself. Therefore, objects are known only through the lens of the subject, and the subject can come to know itself only by acting on objects, whether the action is material, cognitive, affective, social, or spiritual.⁸⁰

According to Subject-Object theory, the process of human evolution involves the very creation of the Object. In this creation, we distance ourselves from the Object and stand apart from it. Consequently, this creative process is a process of differentiation. In addition, by creating the Object and standing apart,

⁷⁵ D. Stern, *Diary of a Baby*, (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 138

⁷⁶ A. Barnet, R. Barnet, *The Youngest Minds*, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1998), 150

⁷⁷ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 32

⁷⁸ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 32

⁷⁹ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 12

⁸⁰ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 81

we now achieve, for the first time, the ability to choose to internalize the Object and therefore be in relationship with it. As such, this creative process is a process of integration. By such a conception then, Subject-Object theory is not some cognitive construct that takes place between a worldless person and a personless world. Rather, it is the convergence of these poles, resulting in the evolution of meaning and the progression of Emergence.⁸¹

As an example, let us examine a single act of Objectification in the life of a typical infant. Child psychologists generally agree that the state of infancy is a state of complete unity with the world. The infant does not perceive a distinction between itself and its caretakers or surroundings. As such, everything that comes into the infant's frame of experience is interpreted as an extension of itself. In constructivist-developmental language, the infant is embedded in a state of pure Subject. There is no Object in the infant's world because there is only the infant itself. As such, everything perceived in the experiential field of the child is filed away as the action and influence of the all-pervasive Subject - that with which the child is fused. One day, however, this changes. As the baby is happily swiping at the air in front of its face, it begins to perceive for the first time, that it might be able to control that which is doing the swiping. As a consequence, she has learned an important lesson. She is not her arm. She *has* an arm. And, in addition to this wondrous discovery, she learns that she can cause the arm to work on the world around her. These are the very actions that we are discussing in the Subject-Object balance. As the infant comes to realize that her arm is something she has and not something she is, her Subject comes to the realization that her arm is an Object to her. As such, her former Subjectivity is challenged and reshaped by the discovery. Her new Subject is now everything that was in the old Subject, minus her arm. Consequently, since the arm is now something that is separate from her, she can for the first time relate to it, and integrate it into her conception of the world. In relation to her newly found Object, she discovers that she is the boss, the owner, and the controller of this new Object. Although this example of Object creation may appear basic, it is the very action through which the process occurs for the remainder of a spiritual evolution – even though the elements of the individual's experience that are set apart as Objects increase in subtlety and finesses throughout life.

Consequently, Subject-Object theory dares to imagine a Hegelian lifelong process of development: a succession of qualitative differentiations of the Self from embeddedness in the world, in which there arises a qualitatively different object with which to be in relation.⁸² The term Subject-Object theory engenders the capability of the person to re-cognize, to re-know, that another individual may be different, not only in terms of the distinctness of the Self, but also in the very construction of how that person conceives of his or her distinctness from the world. Each new principle of emergent organization differs in terms of what is subject and what is object. Every principle of meaning is constituted by a subject-object relationship. In the case of psychoanalytic theory, the events of earlier life are taken as fundamentally

⁸¹ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 34

⁸² R. Scruton, P. Singer, C. Janaway, M. Tanner, *German Philosophers: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche*. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1983), 60

determinative of the problems in later life. In Subject-Object theory, what is taken as fundamental is the very *activity* of meaning constitutive evolution, which persists throughout all of life.

As seen through this description, then, Subject-Object theory fulfills the countervailing requirements we listed above: it engages the scientific and the faithful, it undergirds the cognitive, affective, social, and spiritual aspects of life as the prior ground of motivation; it attends to the shape of our various consolidations of meaning and the universal processes of constructing and reconstituting meaning; it is a process of Emergence under girded by human evolution; it accounts for the movement of spirituality. Consequently, Subject-Object theory forms the foundational framework on which my constructive-developmental approach to spiritual growth will be built.

The Contribution of Piaget

We have discussed the concept that growth is brought about through the creation of Objects from evolving Subjects. This section, drawing on the seminal work of Jean Piaget, will describe the method through which Objects are created by Subjects.

Jean Piaget offers a developmental theory specifically intended to demonstrate how the intellectual construction of the mature formal stages of being begins in the sensorimotor structures of infancy, continues through several stages, and reaches its zenith in the abstract logical structures of formal cognitive operations. It is an evolution not of the absence of knowledge to its presence, but rather of the transformation of knowledge from inferior states to superior sophistication.⁸³ Although the details of the stages presented by Piaget have come under critical scrutiny in the recent years, the method by which his debated stages progress is very salient, and widely accepted as a mechanism of development. His characteristic method of argument is dialectical and he often refers to his method as ‘dialectical constructionism’.⁸⁴ Intrinsic to his dialectical thought is the Aristotelian counterbalance of ‘Thesis’ and ‘Antithesis’.

Following the general model set forth by Aristotle⁸⁵, Piaget argued that there is always a stimulus, the ‘Thesis’, which has somehow come into contradiction with some element of reality, the ‘Antithesis’. The resolution of the ‘Thesis’ and the ‘Antithesis’ results in a qualitative re-cognizing of the relationship between them, and thus a more evolved consciousness of reality. This new consciousness, which resolves the ‘Thesis-Antithesis’ conflict, Piaget calls the ‘Synthesis’.⁸⁶ Although each synthesis transcends its prior predecessors, it retains their insights and avoids their conceptual limitations. The construction of the Synthesis, then, is not a linear progression in which a proposition implies a second proposition, that in turn implies a third. Rather, it is better likened to a spiraling progression in which the stimulus, and the background against which it is apprehended, find themselves successively reconstructed and raised to a qualitatively different plane.⁸⁷ The Thesis is reflective of the current structure of meaning-making mastered

⁸³ P. Richmond, *An Introduction to Piaget*, (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 47

⁸⁴ M. Boden, *Piaget*, (London, England: Fontana Press, 1979), 5

⁸⁵ Aristotle, D. Ross (trans), *Nicomachean Ethics*, (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1980)

⁸⁶ P. Richmond, *An Introduction to Piaget*, (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 6

⁸⁷ A. Barnet, R. Barnet, *The Youngest Minds*, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1998), 38

by the individual, whereas the Antithesis presents a creative force which challenges the current structure and demands accommodation. In each case, the 'Thesis' posits structure without genesis, and the 'Antithesis' posits genesis without structure. Synthesis, in turn, provides genesis with structure, a germinal structuralization, which focuses on the development of increasingly equilibrated structures. Scholars such as Perry believe that this continual equilibration is central to all developmental processes.⁸⁸

Piaget believes that Synthesis is considered and accepted through the process of Assimilation. Assimilation is defined as a modification of an incoming stimulus by the activity of a preexistent structure.⁸⁹ In the ideal situation, after Assimilation is Accommodation. Accommodation is defined as the active modification of the Self-structure, so as to adapt to the new stimulus.⁹⁰ The result of this process is a new equilibrium. In line with Piaget's dialectical approach, equilibrium is both a relatively stable, and relatively dynamic state of the structure, such that it can adapt to new input (dynamic) with minimal change (static). Since equilibrium is neither perfect nor permanent, however, an eventual stimulus will defeat the assimilative and accommodatory powers developed in the existing structure. If the Self is to deal with the tension constructively, a structural re-development of the equilibrium must take place. As such, the process of evolutionary development to Piaget is the progression from one equilibrium to a more considered one, one in which the subject is increasingly differentiated from the object.⁹¹ Consequently, the newly created object can now be internalized into the newly created subject. It may appear counter-intuitive to describe internalization as the process by which something becomes *less* subjective. Yet, it is just this Hegelian formulation which makes Piagetian perspectives so promising for articulating the processes by which subject-object relations result in consciousness development.

This development promoting movement of subject and object is referred to by Piaget as 'decentration'. Decentration is the process by which an old center of consciousness is lost, in favour of a new, more evolved center.⁹² Since decentration is an evolutionary process, it is an integral conception that is reflective of an entire history of transformation, each stage of which better guarantees the world its distinct integrity as a newly created object. It is yet another way of telling the story of the successive levels of emergence from embeddedness (differentiation), and the resultant relationship to the new emergent objects (integration).⁹³

This beautiful and staggering process has been named in various ways: 'it is the process in which the whole becomes part of the new whole',⁹⁴ 'the process in which the ultimate becomes preliminary on behalf of the new ultimacy',⁹⁵ 'the process by which what was immediate' is now mediated by the new

⁸⁸ W. Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970)

⁸⁹ M. Boden, *Piaget*, (London, England: Fontana Press, 1979), 23

⁹⁰ M. Boden, *Piaget*, (London, England: Fontana Press, 1979), 23

⁹¹ A. Barnet, R. Barnet, *The Youngest Minds*, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1998), 45

⁹² R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), .29

⁹³ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), .55

⁹⁴ W. Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970)

⁹⁵ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 230

immediacy'⁹⁶. All of these descriptions emphasize the fact that the meaning-constitutive evolution of Self is the prior ground to both interpersonal and intrapsychic reconstructions.

I believe that as the prior ground of the reconstructions of the Self, this evolutionary process is the unifying context for, and the very source behind thought, feeling, and personality. In arguing for evolutionary activity as the very ground of personality, constructivist-developmental theory is not choosing between aspects of cognition, affect, or socialization. In contrast to psychoanalytic and existential-phenomenological theories, constructivist-developmental theory focuses its attention on the movement of consciousness, which gives rise to all levels of Self. Harkening back to our earlier definition of spirituality, constructivist-developmental theory truly walks in the realm of spiritual evolution by delineating the progress of consciousness as it increases in meaning, coherence, responsibility and connectedness.

I can now turn my attention to the topic of constructivist-developmental theory itself.

Constructivist-Developmental Theory

So far, I have covered a wide range of interrelated topics: I have defined spirituality, evolution, and meaning as foundational aspects of the developing Self; having informed my fundamental definitions with the Biblical tradition, I located these terms within a philosophical structure of Selfhood that led to the apprehension of Hegel's Absolute Spirit; finally, I correlated the Hegelian concept of Absolute Spirit with the scientific theories of Subject-Object relations and the Piagetian concept of Assimilation-Accommodation-Decentration-Equilibrium. Going back to the original argument posited in the Prologue of this work, we are now left with a final task in our elucidation of the 'emergence of ever-increasing forms of complexity within a person's equilibrium': the pulling together of all the pieces through a further exploration of human growth, as interpreted through the Constructivist-Developmental lens. This pursuit is the purpose of the following few pages. Let me begin with an important clarifications.

The combination of Subject-Object theory and the Piagetian conception of stage-like growth bring together two powerful lines of psychological discourse: constructivism and developmentalism. Constructivism, in a nutshell, is the concept that a person actually selects, regulates, acts upon, makes decisions about, constitutes or *constructs* his or her apprehensions of reality (the natural result of the action of Subject-Object theory). Developmentalism is the notion that humanity evolves through qualitatively different eras or stages of increasing complexity, according to regular principles of stability and change (the natural result of the action of the Piagetian concept of Assimilation-Accommodation-Decentration-Equilibrium).⁹⁷ As a result of this combination, Constructivist-Developmental theory is the basis of our approach to the stages of spiritual growth. I will now turn my attention to the concept of constructivism.

Constructivism implies that we are active in our apprehension of reality. As such, in our meanings derived from our daily experiences, we do not simply and passively copy or absorb a pre-organized reality. Rather, harkening to Antony's words about the inextricability of the observer and the observed (in the

⁹⁶ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 310

⁹⁷ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 198

above section on philosophy),⁹⁸ constructivism states that it is the work of our consciousness that shapes and imparts coherence to our worldview.⁹⁹ We are therefore active and mediating of our apprehensions of reality, whether or not we are consciously aware of our agency in this endeavour. Constructivism further implies that there is consistency, or holism, to our meaning-making. In other words, each equilibrium we construct (which results from the cycle of the Piagetian concept of development) is not merely a response to a momentary stimulus. Instead, from moment to moment and across the different eras of our lives, our epistemology shares the design of the level of evolution of our consciousness. The level of evolution of our consciousness is what I refer to as our 'order of consciousness'. As such, our order of consciousness forms the constructed ground from which we view our experiences, from which we derive meaning from our experiences, and into which new experiences are assimilated and accommodated. Therefore, constructivism emphasizes the image of each person as the creator of his or her own reality.¹⁰⁰ The power held within the process of construction and creation, however, has a double edge: shaping, designing, and patterning reality in some fashion requires, by its very definition, that we are not shaping, designing, and patterning our reality in some other fashion. In other words, being active in our seeing demands that we be blind to aspects we choose not to see.¹⁰¹ We select in, but we also select out. We incorporate, but we also cut off. In light of this, a troubling question arises: having put our world together, are we awake to the fact that it is an invented reality, a made world? Do we regularly look for some significantly different experience inside which a particular stimulus can still cohere? It is my belief that we, more often than not, take our personal construction of reality as reality itself, and thereby close ourselves off to the impactful reciprocity we could foster with other Selves. We *make* sense, but we do not always take responsibility for the creation we effected. We too easily leave out of our equations the agent of synthesis: our own order of consciousness.

Two characteristics of constructivism are worth mentioning. First, the focus of the constructivist mindset is not merely on the principles of how one thinks. Rather, the focus is on the way one constructs one's way of thinking, feeling, and relating.¹⁰² Second, constructivism offers principles for the organization of one's thinking, feeling, and relating, and not the contents of these aspects.¹⁰³ In other words, knowing that someone is in the grip of a particular order of consciousness indicates how he or she constructs reality, and not what he or she is actually thinking or feeling. This order of consciousness, however, would be nothing more than a glorified prison were it not equipped with the talent of evolutionary development.

The developmental perspective naturally equips one to see the present in the context of both its antecedents and its potential future. Every phenomenon, then, gets looked at not only in terms of its limits, but also in terms of its strengths.¹⁰⁴ A person is not born with the meaning-making capacity of a considered adult. Rather, this is accomplished only through many years of continued meaning-making, mediated by the consecutive constructions of our order of consciousness. These constructions form the basis of a personal

⁹⁸ D. Antony, *Skills in Counseling*, (Tamilnadu, India: Anugraha Publications, 1995), 95

⁹⁹ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 205

¹⁰⁰ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 165

¹⁰¹ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 200

¹⁰² M. Boden, *Piaget*, (London, England: Fontana Press, 1979), 45

¹⁰³ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 32

¹⁰⁴ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 56

sense of coherence (spirituality), and are thus interlinked as a pattern of succeeding evolutionary stages within consciousness. Thus, Emergence can only be achieved when a potential order of consciousness depends philosophically and mechanically, on the stage that preceded it.¹⁰⁵ Development, then, is not simply the addition of new capabilities, but a continual process of the reorganization of consciousness in order to reach a more complex, more differentiated, and more integrated consciousness. The Self is not simply an agglomeration of traits and dispositions. Rather, it is the possessor of awareness, intentionality, recognition, continuity, and change, all of which have been shaped and reshaped by the foibles of experience. This shaping and reshaping takes place through a helical pattern of stability and change. Like the idea of constructivism, then, developmentalism frees us from a static view of human spirituality and consciousness. As constructivism directs us to the activity which underlies and generates the form of an order of consciousness, developmentalism directs us to the origins and processes by which the form came to be, and by which it will pass into a newer and more evolved form.¹⁰⁶ In my opinion, this relationship is transformative, qualitative, and incorporative of the seemingly contradictory and elusive aspects of our consciousness. I believe that we are the activity of evolution itself. We compose our stages of consciousness, and we experience this composing. This shift, from entity to process, from dichotomous to dialectical is a natural movement, which speaks to the paradoxes inherent in the pursuit of an ever-progressive Spirituality.

If a person remained forever in one or another state of equilibrium, understanding him or her would be nothing more than a matter of grasping his or her psychological mechanics. Orders of consciousness, however, are tenuous, fragile, and precarious, at best. They are states of balance, and can therefore tip over when the pangs of personal siege and chaos make themselves known. Too often, in my opinion, humanity binds itself to unquestioned doctrines, narratives, and myths that it accepted through personal experience. We often fail to recognize that the truth we profess is often only *a* truth, one contiguous with our internal order of consciousness and with the general beliefs of the society in which we choose to live. I suggest that the path to successive stages of growth resides in the ability to see through the partial and assumptive nature of these relative truths, lest we subject those around us to a dogma of which, unaware, we are orthodox adherents. Psychological problems, then, according to constructivist-developmentalism, are not so much caused by rising up of the unconscious as by the deprivation of a full consciousness.¹⁰⁷ If we had paths to fuller orders of consciousness throughout our lives, if we could find more accurate terms through which to conceptualize experience, if we had a way of knowing our true and objective options, we could devise better and more growthful programs for action. Lacking fuller orders of consciousness, we create out of what is available.

Nowhere are the powers of personal siege and chaos more painful than in those times in our lives when the specter of loss of balance is looming over the system. This is the terrifying and all-too-familiar

¹⁰⁵ T. de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), .270

¹⁰⁶ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 28

¹⁰⁷ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 198

moment Erikson refers to as 'ego chill'.¹⁰⁸ Kegan suggests that these moments are clearly identifiable as those in which a man feels 'beside himself', or a woman feels that there is a disjunction between what she witnesses herself doing, and who she knows herself to be.¹⁰⁹ According to constructivist-developmentalism, these words are not merely figures of speech, but a fine description of what is actually taking place within the person. At these difficult times, one is unable to re-cognize, re-know, oneself and one's world, because whatever stimulus has arisen has tipped the equilibrated state off-balance. Psychological pain, then, is the result of the inability to 'rise to the occasion' and adapt, or of a more intentional resistance to the motion of growth. When our construction of reality becomes obsolete in the face of life's challenges, we experience great pain.

Psychologists, philosophers, and theologians often tell us that these personal crises can be interpreted as life-threatening dangers.¹¹⁰ But life-threatening to whom? I believe that what is deeply threatened in these situations is the life and identity of the currently constructed Self-World equilibrium. In other words, a salient crisis can often sound the death toll to the old order of consciousness, to the old self one knew oneself to be. Thus, healthy crisis navigation is literally the transformation of meaning, the very cost of evolution, and the objectification of old orders of consciousness. In fact, anxiety and depression may be interpreted as the affective aspect of the experience of the wrenching activity of differentiation in its first phases.¹¹¹ Sooner or later, however, the balance which the present order of consciousness equates with its identity begins to shift, and the old equilibrium can begin to be reflected on from a new and emergent position. This event, which, as seen above, begins the process of integration, is often an unpleasant experience of anger and repudiation.¹¹²

In these cases, I believe, the anger is not so much a projection of insecurity onto the world at large, as it is an experience of anger directed at the ineptitude and powerlessness felt in the situation. The repudiation is not so much a factor of resentment against something external, as it is a reaction of rebellion and distance from the internal equilibrium that is now perceived as inadequate. In simpler terms, these strong reactions serve to add emotional energy to the system, thereby attempting to ensure that any degree of backsliding into the old order of consciousness is strictly out of the question. Thus, personal defenses, so pejorative a concept in our culture, are first of all signs of the staunch integrity of an overarching system of meaning. They are in fact the sentinels, the agents which ensure that a system remains intact. It is in a person's self-protective marshalling of these defenses against the reorganization of meaning-making that counselors and educators often experience the familiar reactions of increased social isolation, and even in some extreme cases, by the appearance of delusions. In the section on Subject-Object theory, we talked about the phenomenon whereby the finding of a new 'object' would immediately result in the losing of an old 'subject'. At this juncture, I am illustrating the same process but by the reverse angle: the crisis which

¹⁰⁸ E. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton Books, 1968), 341

¹⁰⁹ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 168

¹¹⁰ R. Roth, *Prayer and The Five Stages of Healing*, (Carlsbad, California: Hay House Inc., 1999), 23; R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 266; S. Peck, *The Different Drum*, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1987), 199

¹¹¹ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 112

¹¹² R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 145

brings me to losing my current subjectivity is the very one that introduces me to a new objectivity. This is a rhythm which I believe is essential to the underlying process of Emergence.

Throughout this process of re-equilibration, people often take themselves to strangers, to get counsel, in the hopes of returning to a spiritual plane of the sense of normalcy, to a reconstruction of the world in which both integration and differentiation have increased. As a consequence, the question this thesis will further explore in the next section is self-evident: can teachers, ministers, and spiritual leaders walk with their clients, congregants, and students as they suffer through the stages of Emergence?

Essence: Narrative: The Soul of Consciousness

Having taken a comprehensive view of the art and science of the evolution of consciousness as presented through the constructivist-developmental framework, there is only one task left to complete: a grounding of the various elements of the theory by an honest and probing appeal to the Pentateuchal narrative. It is the purpose of section to do this very thing.

I have already covered the tragic descent of human consciousness from the perfection of Eden to the fragmentation of Babel in chapter 2 - the progressive regression of humanity's state into chaos, godlessness, and deep isolation. During this period of decline, the language of arrogance and self-sufficiency crept into the human vocabulary (Genesis 4:23-24), genealogies were provided to illustrate the diminishing life spans of Yahweh's people (Genesis 5), debauchery and distasteful behaviours ran rampant (Genesis 9:21), murder made its unwelcome appearance (Genesis 4:8), and the language of Creation was invoked and reversed to depict the successive steps Yahweh took in counteracting humanity's chosen downfall (Genesis 7:17-23). In short, the narrative outlines the state of un-integrated, unconnected, and irresponsible humanity – a state of whirlwinding decline. Most importantly, it also illustrates the paramount role played by human choice and responsibility in the progression of consciousness. As such, the role of human choice and responsibility will play as prominent a role in the reversal of this tragic decline – that is, the evolution of humanity's consciousness.

The story of this evolution begins with the appearance of Abram (Genesis 11:27). Abram, a lone and single man with no special powers to commend him, for reasons not mentioned in the narrative, decides to follow Yahweh (Genesis 12:4). Moberly states that it was the infusion of this deliberate act of chosen innocence into the Pentateuchal narrative that changed the direction of history and the direction of the relationship between humanity and Yahweh.¹¹³ It was this one man's decision to be committed to the counsel of the 'I' that began the process of redemption which was eventually to touch the whole of Creation. Therefore, it was neither a grand act of Holiness nor an inspired act of prophecy that caused Abram's actions to turn the course of history. It was nothing other than his committed choice – his choice to pursue Selfhood. For the rest of the Biblical text, Abram's faithful choice would be commended to him as one of the greatest dispositions of holy living.

¹¹³ R. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 39

Herein lies what I believe to be the first great lesson of humanity's evolution toward Holiness. The only requisite needed to halt the decline of consciousness, to change the course of personal development, and to invite the insights and guidance of the 'I' is nothing other than the simple and sincere decision to choose to align one's will toward the progression of Holiness. Just as Yahweh's promises of prosperity and relationship followed Abram from the point of their first meeting onward (Genesis 12), just as God's promise of direct guidance followed Moses from the Burning Bush onward (Exodus 4), just as the promise of God's protection followed Noah from the pledge onward (Genesis 6), so the promise of God's guidance and presence will endow the person who chooses growth and evolution from the first instant of choice onward. There is, however, a very personal responsibility attached to this choice. As an act of responsibility, evolution requires a decision to take ownership of the process of personal growth. As the movement of spirituality, evolution requires a decision to actually move. As such, according to the Pentateuchal theme, a person has only to decide that the progressing aspects of spirituality (meaning and coherence) are his or her desired destiny, for the process of evolution to begin. Furthermore, so powerful is the act of choosing, that something as large as the redemption of an entire nation can rest on the decision of a single committed person to align his or her will to the guidance of the Divine 'I'.

For all of its complexity and pervasive ramifications, the constructivist-developmental theory can give scholars a powerful model for the elucidation of stages of spiritual growth, but it can never present to the observant scholar any indication as to the impetus for the initial choice of the Subject to transform and Emerge. This personal act of choice is as much a scientific and artistic ambiguity as it is a spiritual mystery. What force causes one person to choose evolution and the other to choose stagnation? What motivation prompts one person to align his or her will to the guidance and encouragement of the Divine 'I' and another person to wallow in idle entitlement? The question of a person's election of Yahweh is as mysterious to me as the question of Yahweh's election of Israel. It is a mystery that has baffled scholars and philosophers for millennia, and as such, is as much a mystery to the current state of the constructivist-developmental theory as it ever was to theologians of old. One of the areas of further development of this line of study is to conduct detailed research from a constructivist-developmental viewpoint in order to shed whatever light can be gleaned on this ephemeral and ultimately Graceful topic. What we can continue discussing with some confidence, however, is the further progression of the Pentateuchal narrative as it lends support to the constructivist-developmental conception of spiritual growth. So, on with the story of Abram.

Immediately on the heels of the first communication, Yahweh promises Abram a new land (Genesis 12:1). Unlike other characters in the Primeval cycle, however, Abram will not stumble upon this land as a wandering stranger (like Cain), nor will he settle in this new land as a result of a forced exile (like the builders of the Tower of Babel). Rather, Abram will enter the new land by way of Yahweh's explicit guidance and direction. This promise will extend its influence right up to the very end of the Pentateuchal narrative. Yahweh, as a the physical incarnation of the Pillar of Fire or Pillar of Cloud, actively leads the people of Israel through the desert, toward the destination he has promised. Consequently, the arrival at this land of promise becomes not only a goal for the descendants of Abram, but also its very destiny, its mission

as ordained by Yahweh Himself. Furthermore, the quest toward this new land is held within a matrix of powerful promises made to Israel by Yahweh: the promises of relationship with Yahweh, uncountable descendants, and commanding Divine blessing (Genesis 12:2-3). So powerful are these promises that they reappear continuously throughout the Pentateuchal cycle and affirm the expected destiny of a relationship with Yahweh to Abram's descendants, even when those descendants choose to behave in unseemly and deceitful manners (Genesis 28:13, 33:30, 35:11, 46:3, Exodus 3:5, 3:15, 6:2). As such, from the moment the promise of land is first uttered, a simple geographical location becomes fraught with divine purpose and promise. Moberly states that this promise of a new land symbolizes not just a home, but also a new type of community.¹¹⁴ Unlike the human creation of the city of Babel, this new land will be created and guided by Yahweh Himself, and the inhabitants that will reside there will be the people of God. In addition, the appearance of a commanding blessing is of particular importance at this point in the narrative. Just as the world began with a divine blessing, so does the progressive creation of this new world begin with a divine blessing. By the end of the Primeval Cycle, curse had dominated the tale. Now, with the simple act of renewal provided by the choice of Abram to follow Yahweh, God's grace reintroduces the beauty and comfort of blessing into the world.

We have arrived at a second lesson of the Pentateuchal narrative. This Promised Land, this anticipated community of God promised to Israel, is now the destination to which the 'Me' must strive. As stated in chapter 2, the Hebrew belief was that descendants bore not only the namesake and reputation of their ancestors, but also their mission, their allegiances, and their dispositions. Consequently, the destination of the entire Judeo-Christian culture, as descendants of Abraham, is the very Promised Land mentioned in Genesis chapter 12. Thus, the Holiness of the people of God, which is embodied in and represented by their arrival at the Promised Land, will be achieved through the promised relationship of Yahweh with Israel. From His position at the center of the people (the 'Me'), Yahweh leads a less-than-appreciative Israel to the land first promised to Abram. Hence, it is my belief that the Promised Land is reached through a devoted pursuit of Selfhood.

Selfhood is a state of congruence and presence. As we have already seen, it is a state of deep relationship between the 'I' and the 'Me', where neither party confounds its identity with that of the other. As such, it creates a spiritual space of clarity, insight, and direction. Because of its insight and direction, it undergirds and promotes the development of meaning and coherence constructed by the Self. Consequently, Selfhood forges connections between the past and the future of spirituality, projecting its willful and informed preferences into the further development of the Self – which matures through cycles of autonomy and integration. Thus, Selfhood is not only a state of congruence and presence – it is also a state of responsible connection between the 'I' and 'Me', a connection which telescopes its rewards into the further development and evolution of the Self and its actions. Consequently, true Selfhood is a state of surrender and reciprocity between the various elements of Self. It is therefore the destiny of spiritual growth, and results in further promoting the connection between the 'I' and 'Me', in furthering the

¹¹⁴ R. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 28

capability of the Self to produce congruent works, and in furthering the Self's commitment to spiritual prosperity and evolution. This conception of evolution is attested to in the Pentateuchal narrative. The Promised Land, the convergence of the wills of the 'I' and the 'Me' of the narrative, is a place of divine purpose and promise. It is the seat of abundance and nurturance (Exodus 3:17). And, most importantly, it is home. As part of the Judeo-Christian heritage, this aspiration to find our spiritual home – our Selves - falls to every person who has made the choice to pursue Selfhood and Holiness. In addition, the quest to this home comes held within a matrix of powerful promises: the promise of relationship (further connection between 'I' and 'Me'), the promise of descendants (further ability to create congruent works), and the promise of blessing (further impetus to pursue spiritual evolution). As such, the evolution of Self is not a haphazard and random series of events. Rather, the Pentateuchal narrative teaches that it is a directional and purposeful drive toward a land of peace – a home – promised by the guidance of the 'I'. In this way, the definition of Holiness as the drive to spirituality focused on the Divine is supported and further informed by the image of the Divinely guided quest for the Promised Land.

This guidance of the 'I' toward the Promised Land, however, was not presented to Abram only once. The Pentateuchal narrative describes a second meeting between Abram and Yahweh in which the promises are restated and renewed (Genesis 15). In this episode however, Yahweh actively adds a very important element to the promises. For the first time since their first encounter, Yahweh requires something on the part of Abram – the commitment to pursue Holiness. Whereas the first set of promises was given freely by grace, the restatement of the promises requires Abram to cooperate and to actually change his behaviour to reflect the directives of Yahweh. As such, what was once the choice of Abram (to follow the Divine 'I') has now become the fundamental mission of Abraham (to purposely seek out and obey the Divine 'I'). The same charge is not reserved for Abram alone, of course. It is repeated throughout the Biblical narrative to all the descendants of the Patriarchal line: Isaac hears the charge before meeting Abimelech (Genesis 26:5), Jacob dreams of Yahweh's presence (Genesis 28:10-15), Moses hears Yahweh's intentions for Israel (Exodus 3:15), Yahweh charges Israel with this responsibility with a direct command (Leviticus 11:45). The placement of the charge to Holiness in the narrative is also indicative of its primacy within Yahweh's scheme. In each of the cases mentioned above, the directive to Holiness served as the first point of dialogue between Yahweh and the members of the 'Me'. It was therefore, the very ground upon which and the fundamental meaning within which the further relationship between the parties was to progress.

Herein lies the third lesson of the Pentateuchal narrative. Whereas we may find ourselves qualitatively transformed by the simple choice of turning our consciousness to the evolution of spirituality, and whereas the promise held within this choice is nothing less than the attainment of a spiritual home abounding in nurturance, this transformation only goes so far. Thereafter, the Biblical narrative teaches that purposeful action must accompany the pure hearted choice. Therefore, in order to promote human evolution, the alignment of the will to the progression of consciousness must be accompanied by the execution of that will in the integration of growth. The 'Me' listens to the 'I' and the 'Me' *acts* in

accordance with the guidance of the 'I'. And, as a result, the Self emerges and evolves. As the charge to Holiness challenges every member of the people of God to assimilate challenges, surrender to the Divine 'I', and accommodate solutions in order to produce a new and more congruent relationships with all of Creation, so the story of constructivist-developmentalism outlines the progression of the Self as taking place through the Piagetian framework of Assimilation – Accommodation – Decentration - Re-equilibration. According to this psychological scheme, it is not enough to simply decide that personal growth is a worthy goal. Through the juxtaposition of Thesis and Antithesis, Piaget described the Emergence of a new Subjectivity, a renewed equilibrium of the Self that was the result of Synthesis. This act of growth and evolution is not an automatic by-product of the choice to cherish personal development. Rather, it is the result of a willful act of effort, focusing energy on the complexities of the challenge at hand, and labouring tirelessly to come to a new plateau of Centeredness (Decentration). Selfhood, then, is not achieved through an anonymous and effortless system of personal change. It is achieved through an effortful alignment of one's personal will to pursue spirituality and Holiness through deliberate and cogent acts, which are consistent with Selfhood development. Consequently, when the 'Me' is charged with the activity of Holiness, it is being directed to be zealous in the development of its Self. The choice to want Selfhood (spirituality), must be coupled with the action of pursuing Selfhood (Piagetian scheme of development), in order for the great destiny of the Promised Land to come to fruition (autonomy, integration, responsibility, connectedness, Holiness).

The story of Abraham and the Promised Land does not end here, however. In fact, it is just beginning. The first obstacle to the fulfillment of this evolution of community is expressed shortly after the ratification of the agreement between Yahweh and Abraham. The Promised Land, the land of Canaan, is already inhabited by another people. Consequently, the claiming of this Promised Land would involve a process that is significantly more complicated than a simple appearance on the scene and a staking of a claim. Rather, the claiming of this Promised Land would clearly involve struggle, difficulty, and even war. Throughout the entire Pentateuchal narrative, the motif of struggle and opposition pervades every episode: Abraham traveling as an alien through the Land (Genesis 20-22), Jacob and Esau clash from the moment of conception (Genesis 25), Isaac being deceived by Jacob (Genesis 27), Jacob wrestling with the Angel (Genesis 32), Joseph imprisoned (Genesis 40), Israel enslaved by Egypt (Exodus 1), Moses' birth (Exodus 2), Pharaoh's disposition toward Israel (Exodus 5), grumbling and rebellion among the people of Israel (Numbers 11), and the many wars waged by Israel to conquer Canaan. To me, these ominous episodes provide the fourth lesson supplied by the Pentateuchal narrative for spiritual growth.

This lesson can be simply stated: the attainment of Holiness is not a resistance-free activity. It is not simply a choice that is followed by an automatic transformation of will. It is not an entitlement of the 'Me' nor is it the wide and easy road. It is in fact the road less traveled, the road of effort, the road of work. It is as much the road to fulfillment and evolution as it is the road to loss and pain. Please recall that constructivist-developmental theory draws one of its main tenets from Subject-Object theory. This element of Constructivist-developmentalism is greatly analogous to the concept of this painful 'road less traveled'.

It states that in order to achieve greater levels of autonomy and integration, that which was once part of the Subject must be re-recognized as an Object and integrated into the new subjectivity. In essence, this process applies to all aspects of human life, even to identity itself. In fact, one of the most painful, and yet one of the most growthful events in the evolution proposed by constructivist-developmental theory is this very activity of reshaping and redefining identity to better cope with the arising complexities (oppositions) of life. The Pentateuchal narrative reflects this fact by stating that the Promised Land of union with God lies after a lengthy and uncertain campaign of conquest. Similarly, a Subject must be confronted by opposing forces, be thwarted in its well-traveled tracks, and be forced to wage a virtual war against its own neurotic proclivities in order to extract from itself an element that will, from that moment forward, be seen as a new Object. This is the very process described above as Emergence. It is through this process of Emergence that the 'Me' evolves and approaches the Promised Land of Holiness.

The creation of this new Object, however, carries with it a steep price. The emergence of a new Subject comes only after the sacrifice of the old Subjectivity. It is no surprise, then, that the theme of sacrifice figures prominently in the Pentateuchal narrative. From the moment of the expulsion from the Garden, the practice of sacrifice was a mediating and prominent force in the relationship of Yahweh with His people. It was presented as a regular activity of daily life (Cain and Abel), a ritual of thanks (Noah), a medium of obedience and faith (Abraham), a requisition for guidance (Isaac), a strengthening of relationship (Moses), and, most importantly, as an act of atonement (Moses and Israel). As such, it evolved as the primary means of signaling the desire to devote oneself to the guidance and purview of the great 'I'. Consequently, sacrifice exemplified an act of completeness (in relationship, intent, and action), and was the sole means of reconciliation between the people of Israel and Yahweh. Yahweh's pledge to never repeat the devastation of the Flood was accompanied by an act of sacrifice, Abraham's evolution of consciousness which resulted from the sparing of Isaac was accompanied by an act of sacrifice, the termination of Jacob's lengthy pilgrimage back to Bethel was accompanied by an act sacrifice, the liberation of the Israelite people on the banks of the Red Sea was accompanied by an act of sacrifice, and acts of impurity and uncleanness were washed away by sacrifice. Hence, the theme of sacrifice couples itself with some very important concepts – life, transformation, pilgrimage, liberation, and atonement. Mann goes so far as to state that within the Pentateuchal narrative, the sacrificial ritual is the only means provided to Israel through which to reconcile to Yahweh.¹¹⁵ It is both a formal and a repeatable resource of reconciliation. Consequently, I believe that it is a practice that is provided for by Yahweh Himself.

Similarly, in the constructivist-developmental framework of spiritual growth, transformation of consciousness carries with it the promise of renewed vitality. This transformation, however, only arises from the 'death', the sacrifice, of an old way of being. It is only through sacrificing the old that the new Subjectivity has occasion to Emerge. Therefore, in accordance with the images of the Pentateuchal narrative, sacrifice of the old Subjectivity brings about the new life of transformation by allowing the emerging consciousness to take shape and thrive; sacrifice of the old Subjectivity is the result of a long

¹¹⁵ T. Mann, *The Book of Torah*, (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1971), 121

pilgrimage to a new a greater state of personal awareness; sacrifice of the old Subjectivity is a liberation from outdated, impractical, and destructive habits and beliefs; and, most importantly, sacrifice of the old Subjectivity is the primary and prerequisite event through which the new Subjectivity can reunite and relate to Yahweh. This reunification of the more aware, more mature, and more connected Self with the 'I' of Yahweh is, to my mind, the very epitome of the concept of atonement.

The consequence of atonement is clearly delineated in the Pentateuchal narrative. After the sacrificial ritual, life does not continue as usual – there is always a change. Subtle though it might be, from the appearance of Abraham onward, the practice of sacrifice resulted in a transformation of the consciousness of the character worshipping Yahweh. Abraham exhibits greater freedom in his relationship to Yahweh after the sparing of Isaac¹¹⁶; the Jacob who pours oil on the altar at Bethel is wiser and more surrendered to Yahweh's will, than the Jacob who was the deceiver of the earlier chapters of Genesis¹¹⁷; after their sacrifice, the people of Israel walk away from the banks of the Red Sea no longer a slave nation – for the first time in centuries. The consciousness that develops after the act of sacrifice is at once a more autonomous, differentiated, and confident as well as a more integrated, wise, and connected consciousness than that which preceded the sacred act. As such, it is the very movement of spirituality – evolution – that is made manifest by these episodes.

Consequently, I believe that it is God's will that we evolve and grow to greater levels of autonomy and connectedness. I believe that the guidance of the Divine 'I' consistently leads the committed 'Me' to higher levels of Holiness. Transformation, then, is a Holy pursuit and is the very inheritance of the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is, in my opinion, the very mission of the 'Me' that seeks to relate to and know a world full of meaning, and coherence. Stagnation (as exemplified by Lamech, Lot, and Laban) does not lead to triumph, wisdom, or success. Rather, as in the examples of these unfortunate characters, stagnation leads to obsolescence, loss, and despair. Therefore, the attainment of Selfhood, the committed discipleship to the Divine 'I', the willingness to be faithfully led, and the openness to the daunting act of sacrifice all contribute to the Emergence of a new Israel, a complete Self, and transformed consciousness – in short, an evolved Subjectivity. Thus, I have outlined how the constructivist-developmental constructs of Spirituality, Evolution, Assimilation, Accommodation, Re-equilibration, Decentration, Emergence, and Selfhood are all attested to, furthered, and deepened by the Pentateuchal narrative. It is not Yahweh's will that we follow Him blindly through the desert of life. Rather, it is His revealed intention that we choose a relationship with Him, and through it, transform our spirits into Selves, which are capable of more clearly seeing.

A Final Thought

In my estimation, a spiritually intelligent life offers us, at best, a series of mini-redemptions; a healing for now with the extended promise of further challenges to arise later. The triumph of discovering a new part of the Self brings with it the promise of finding further fragments of the Self tomorrow. Within this insight lies the kernel of peace. After all, if development and evolution are equated with the event of

¹¹⁶ Knight, G., *Theology as Narrative*, (Edinburgh, Scotland: The Handsel Press Limited, 1976), 56

¹¹⁷ T. Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 145

being human, then the comfort of healing is our Divine destiny, and the challenges we face are the very movements of the *Logos* in our *Psyche*. In an age when psychology is becoming the new secular religion, and the practice of psychotherapy is seen ever-more as the new priestly rite, Spiritual Leaders must humbly and diligently, equip themselves with powerful tools that will foster and promote spiritual growth and awareness in the Selves of each of their clients, as well as in their own Selves. It is the purpose of the next section to provide spiritual leaders with a framework, steeped in Natural Theology, grounded in Science, and enveloped in empathy and compassion. Should they choose to accept it, I believe that the attitudes stipulated in the constructivist-developmental approach to spiritual growth will allow the Holy teachings of the Bible to address the very meaning-making and makeup of consciousness within which clients are embedded. To my mind, this is the epitome of bringing God into the deepest ground of the Self.

SECTION 2

SEEING: THOUGHT AND ACTION IN SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Prologue Revisited

We have discussed the constructivist-developmental framework by which spiritual growth occurs. It is a framework of gradual and qualitative evolution that progresses through the mechanism of the transformation of the Subject-Object balance of the individual. A change in our personal order of consciousness is not simply a change in the figures and forms of our attention. Rather, it is a fundamental change in the very ground from which we attend. Although the knowledge of this framework provides a powerful tool in self-awareness, it is the purpose of applying this scheme to the Spiritual Leadership relationship that is the focus of this thesis. As such, the constructivist-developmental Spiritual Leader's effort to provide good and nurturing company for his or her client's journey through evolving orders of meaning-making, is based on the keen understanding of the inner experience of a process that, for the client, is often interpreted as a threat to one's very identity.

In the Prologue to Section 1, I stated the two main arguments set out by this work. The first is that the process of human evolution takes place through a process of emergence of ever-increasing forms of complexity within a developing person's equilibrium; the second is my belief that Spiritual Leaders are called to humbly and prayerfully accompany clients through this process of Emergence by co-constructing with the client a therapeutic Culture of Embeddedness. This therapeutic Culture of Embeddedness involves goal orientation, environment-creation, attitudinal alignment, and practical techniques. Spiritual Leaders achieve this delicate end by committing unwaveringly to the personal evolution of the client. An unwavering commitment to the person of the client implies a practiced ability to walk with the client through difficult transitions, and an ability to be a balanced witness to the sacred process of the client's spiritual evolution. It is now time to turn my attention to the second of these arguments. In its distilled essence, it is an argument meant to address the conduct and purpose of Spiritual Leaders.

To be witness to the client's evolution is to witness a superlatively intimate experience – the activity of a person struggling with the process of meaning-making. This process of meaning-making is an activity of humanity that transcends culture, environment, and life phase. As such, meaning-making is the fundamental and universal inheritance of the entire human race. According to Kegan, this personal activity has as much to do with the adult's struggle to recognize himself or herself, as it has to do with a young child's struggling to recognize his or her first printed word; it has as much to do with the teenager's delicate balance of loyalty to personal satisfaction and loyalty to the preservation of reciprocal relationships, as it has to do with a baby's effort to finally balance on two legs.¹¹⁸ Seen in this light, the activity of meaning-making is confirmed as the fundamental activity of humanity at all levels of its development.

The ability of Spiritual Leaders to better perceive this sacred process increases their recruitability to the welfare of the person confronting them. It is this recruitability in conjunction with a confident and knowing manner when drawn in, that renders the caring for the development of others more intense and

¹¹⁸ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 15

more useful, whether this caring is that of a teacher, therapist, minister, personal friend, or family member. The process of being drawn into the experience of another and attending to them as they struggle to re-equilibrate their structure of meaning-making is, in its very essence, the process of better seeing the careworn person before us. Thus, we become a witness to their identities. Therefore, the need to be seen and recognized may change in its complexity but will never change in its primacy and intensity.

Throughout the process of this complexity, spiritual development occurs within the client's individual and personal spiritual understanding; it is therefore this understanding which needs to be transformed. It is the client who is the agent of this transformation. Consequently, I believe that it is not indoctrination that we need, although our present supply of it is tragically plentiful. Rather, what we need to provide our clients is stimulation: discussion, debate, nurturance, contradiction, all of which take place in a structure that gives each client the opportunity to grow, evolve, and uncover ways in which to more adequately and constructively make meaning. As such, I reject the varied and pervasive attempts at rationalization, which exonerate Spiritual Leaders from the great challenge of this empathic and fundamentally loving method of help. I believe that the introduction of a diligent and meticulous Spiritual Leader into the life of a person can be one of the single greatest factors of influence on that person's meaning-making and development.¹¹⁹ This life-developing connection is exceptionally based on the Spiritual Leader's ability and availability to be recruited to the help of the person. For Spiritual Leaders, this process is so personally vested, arduous, and intimate that it threatens to bring them face-to-face with the challenging vagaries of life. It is in this confrontation that the risks and challenges of Spiritual Leadership become highlighted against the backdrop of a caring relationship. However much we learn about the process of being of help, it is my belief that we should never protect and shield ourselves from these risks and challenges. It is these risks that separate true help from advice-giving, consolation, and, worse yet, reassurance. It is in running and preserving these risks to truly care that we preserve and protect the connection between us. It is in respecting and allowing the evolution in spirit of all those around us that we enhance the life we share, and bring into greater existence the Kingdom of God.

The base argument for this section states that the Spiritual Leader is responsible for co-creating a culture of Embeddedness that involves goal orientation, environment-creation, attitudinal alignment, and practical techniques. The next several chapters will take each of these topics and apply them to the Spiritual Leadership relationship.

¹¹⁹ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 21; W. Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970); P. Malone, T. Malone, *The Windows of Experience: Moving Beyond Recovery to Wholeness*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 55

Chapter 4: The Goals of Spiritual Leadership

The Goals and Framework of Spiritual Leadership

The heart of the constructivist-developmental framework, and the source of its potential growth, does not lie in its account of stages of development and the organizations of meaning. Rather, the heart of this theory lies in its capacity to highlight a universal and perpetual process: the process of adaptation, meaning-making, equilibration, and transformation. I believe that these elements constitute the fundamental context of Self-development. Accordingly, it is to this process and its experiences, and not to the sequence of developmental stages, that I believe Spiritual Leaders should focus their energies so that they will not fall into the ever-present trap of focusing on the things a client *cannot* do. Instead, I believe that they may come to a greater understanding and a vocal validation of the sacred path that has led the client to the present state of autonomy and achievement. As such, I believe that Spiritual Leadership helps clients in a particular way. Although a comparison of the various approaches to Spiritual Leadership is beyond the scope of this thesis, the focus of this section is to elucidate the details and mechanisms of this ‘particular way’ of approaching Spiritual Leadership.

One of the greatest consequences of this understanding and validation is a replacement of the concept of simple truth (the supposedly correct representation of states or events in an external world), by the notion of viability.¹²⁰ To the biologist, a living organism is viable so long as it manages to survive in its environment. To the constructivist-developmental, a state of consciousness is viable so long as it proves adequate in the context of current meaning-making. In other words, in the constructivist-developmental framework, a construction of meaning-making is viable so long as its equilibrium of Subject and Object is sufficiently evolved to effectively weather the complexities presented to the consciousness. No sooner do irreconcilable complexities arise than the current equilibrium is rendered unviable and in great need of transformation. It is to this process of meaning-making and to the challenged viability of troubled clients that Spiritual Leaders turn their attention. The goal of Spiritual Leadership, then, is two-fold: First, Spiritual Leaders are to protect and nurture the *opportunities* that arise for the evolution of the client’s personal consciousness, which the client no longer deems to be viable; second, Spiritual Leaders are to nurture their clients into a mindset of self-direction. The purpose of this chapter is to explore these two goals of Spiritual Leadership.

1) Protecting the Opportunities

Traditionally, the goals of the ‘helping professions’ have revolved around cultural and scientific norms of health. Psychotherapeutic norms of health can be found in frameworks as diverse as traditional hospital psychiatry and certain anti-psychiatric humanistic philosophies.¹²¹ In the psychiatry model, the emphasis is on illness and its removal. The way the psychiatrist is confronted by a mentally ill person is

¹²⁰ L. Steffe, J. Gale, *Constructivism in Education*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 7

¹²¹ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 288

analogous to the way a physician is confronted by a patient with a sore throat. In the humanistic model, although the orientation is to the health of the whole person rather than to illness, the concept of health and self-actualization is based on the values of a particular group of people or an ideology.¹²² Kohlberg, referring to such relativism states that the observable meaning of such concepts of health is relative to an arbitrary standard, which is psychologically vague and ethically relative, regardless of the number of psychological experts pronouncing their support.¹²³ He believes that, in their treatment of the norms of health, helping professionals should be compelled to make pronouncements that are both specific and *non-arbitrary*.¹²⁴ In agreement with Kohlberg, I believe that the status of being an expert, in and of itself, confers no special validity on the values espoused and proclaimed, if these values are not supported by firm philosophical, scientific, and transcendent justifications. I also believe that Spiritual Leaders often make pronouncements regarding the forms of spiritual health and that these pronouncements are nothing but arbitrary opinions unless they are intimately supported by psychological, philosophical, *and* theological considerations. Too often, I have been witness to a myriad of occasions in which a Spiritual Leader violated the sacred trust with his or her client by founding the process of the therapeutic relationship on pronouncements of health. These pronouncements were invariably based on the Spiritual Leader's personal biases of security and safety.

Elaborating on Kohlberg's thoughts, Kegan states that humanistic goals oriented to health, lead people to act upon others on arbitrary bases and as such, leave the door wide open to the introduction of the partialities of a given class, gender, religion, age, or culture. Consequently, despite the claims to sophistication, what is considered illness is in grave danger of becoming nothing more than behaviour that is frowned upon, or considered inconvenient, by the given population's partialities. Consequently, health can be reduced to behaviour deemed acceptable and non-threatening by that same population.¹²⁵ In my opinion, this eventuality amounts to a demeaning of the human spirit and a violation of the tenets of Christianity. Arbitrary norms of health impose the limited meaning-making framework of the few on the developmental process of the many, make pronouncements of judgmental proportions on fellow human beings, create a hierarchy of the acceptability of each person's worth, broaden an unfair and self-serving power differential, foster a sense of exclusion within the client, and as such, threaten to violate the first Commandment. Scholars such as Szasz react adversely and passionately to these arbitrary pronouncements by focusing intensely on the 'problems of living', which are defined as the meaning of the life events encompassing real pain, destruction, and even despair.¹²⁶ Consequently, Szasz attempts to take into account what he perceives as the intrinsic morality of clients while simultaneously, protecting them from the biases and limited perspectives of the professional helper.

In response to the belief laid out by Szasz, many in Spiritual Leadership have chosen to pursue goal-lessness (the discussion of whether this is even possible is a topic for another work) and have regarded

¹²² R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 290

¹²³ L. Kohlberg, *Moral Stages: A Current Formulation and a Response to Critics*, (Basel Switzerland: Karger Press, 1983), 73

¹²⁴ L. Kohlberg, *The Adolescent as a Philosopher*, (New York: Norton, 1972.), 121

¹²⁵ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 291

¹²⁶ R. Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness*, (New York: Harper, 1961), 155

the exercises of respect for the client as including the temporary living of the client's goals.¹²⁷ As a result, they stipulate their unwillingness to make a judgment on the client's situation in any way, regardless of the stated goals, beliefs or values of either the client or the Spiritual Leader. The natural conclusion of such a stance is the conviction that any one person's way of making meaning is no better than another's, and that there can be no justification for bringing to a client one's own conception of a direction toward growth and maturity. I believe that, although this scheme has something to commend it, namely the respect and dignity extended to the client, it remains a confused position.

I believe that this approach to Spiritual Leadership confuses the judgment a Spiritual Leader would make on the client himself, with the judgment the Leader would make on the process *between* herself and her client. Whereas I consider judging the client to be hateful, haughty, and humiliating, I regard the judgment of the interaction between the Spiritual Leader and the client to be simply an act of responsibility. As Kegan puts it: "The conviction that there are no arbitrary bases upon which to consider one state of meaning-making as better than another is at once a philosophical confusion and a psychological confusion."¹²⁸ Psychologically, the conviction confuses the need for what Rogers calls an 'unconditional positive regard' for the meaning-making of the client, with the false sense that all made-meanings are to be considered equivalent.¹²⁹ Philosophically, the conviction confuses the notions that each individual constructs his or her own truth, with the notion that these individual truths cannot be non-arbitrarily compared. If we can resolve these confusions, a powerful stance arises: Spiritual Leaders cannot view individuals as more or less good than each other, as this would be a direct violation of the Christian message. Spiritual Leaders, however, are in a position to perceive some evolutionary equilibria as more or less constructive or adaptive than others. It is actually the differential between these evolutionary equilibrations that provides the basis for which to sense that spiritual counseling is progressing. Whether or not the Spiritual Leader voices the judgment of one stage over another is not necessarily a matter of mere personal justification to the client, but rather a matter of whether such an utterance would be received in a useful and growthful fashion by the client. Consequently, the Spiritual Leader can judge the process of the relationship according to whether the client is being presented with *opportunities* that, if capitalized upon, would lead the client to move from one order of consciousness to a more evolved one. The focus, then, is on whether opportunities are presented and not on whether actual movement through stages has taken place. I believe that the protection of this movement is the responsibility, concern, and goal of the Spiritual Leader. Therefore, in its very essence, Spiritual Leadership in the constructivist-developmental scheme addresses the client in the experience of the *on-going* process of meaning-making rather than in the static meaning the client has *already* made. It is a focus on the process of evolution and not on the current spirituality in which clients find themselves.

¹²⁷ D. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992), 20

¹²⁸ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 291

¹²⁹ C. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 134

Protecting opportunities is the first main goal of the culture of Embeddedness that must be created within the therapeutic relationship of clients with Spiritual Leaders. But, what does the protection of opportunities imply about the direction of spiritual therapy and education? What are constructivist-developmental Spiritual Leaders hoping a client will do with his or her newly protected opportunities for growth? The answer is simple yet daunting: the constructivist-developmental Spiritual Leader is praying that the client will capitalize on these presented opportunities and, thus, set forward the motion of spiritual evolution. This activity of self-initialized growth I will refer to a self-direction. Helping clients transform their consciousness in order to acquire the capability of self-directedness is the second major goal of the culture of Embeddedness.

2) Self-Directedness

According to Erikson and Piaget, the vast majority of clients seeking the services of a Spiritual Leader are adults.¹³⁰ My experience agrees with this statement. The Spiritual Leadership of adults is a complicated affair, however. It is complicated because adults come with vast complexes of interrelations and loyalties. Adults often have considerable education, are surrounded by personal networks, and have created an autonomous lifestyle. They are often aware of the subtext of why they have sought Spiritual Leadership, where they would like to go with the process, and what outcomes they would like to see as a result. I do not believe that it is uncommon for a Spiritual Leader to have ambivalent and cautious feelings when confronted with such a complex client. In my experience, for every Spiritual Leader who is enchanted by the facility of an adult client to reason and to risk, there is another Leader who is deeply frustrated by the hard and fast lessons the adult has learned and is unwilling to relinquish. For every Spiritual Leader who gleams at the eagerness and self-possession of an adult client, there will be another who will be lead through the maze of the various forms of practicality, which unwaveringly supercede questions of philosophy or theology and out of which the client refuses to venture. As such, I believe that we must ensure that our stipulations of the goals of Spiritual Leadership attend to and respond constructively to the needs and situations of our adult clients, who don't necessarily afford themselves the luxury of learning and growing for the sake of learning and growing. Adult learners are notorious for expending energy on educational endeavours (including therapy and Spiritual Leadership) only when they are convinced of the education's relevance to their daily lives.¹³¹ In light of this, I believe that the second major goal of Spiritual Leadership is to create an environment in which the client can come to be self-directed. In other words, as Spiritual Leaders, we need to do our jobs so well, that we render our services obsolete!

In my opinion, self-directed people are those who are able to examine themselves, their culture, and their environment in order to better understand how to separate what they feel from what they decide they ought to feel, what they value from what they feel they ought to value, and what they want from what their values dictate they ought to want. As such, they develop critical thinking, individual awareness, a

¹³⁰ E. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton Books, 1968), 354, Piaget, p. 178

¹³¹ L. Steffe, J. Gale, *Constructivism in Education*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 126

communal identity, an open heart and an open mind. In addition, they develop an identifiable sense of connection with the Ultimate, as they expand a sense of themselves as co-creators of the culture that shapes them, and of the forces that guide them. Although they will often use experts and institutions in times of necessity, self-directed people will nonetheless set their own standards and goals. They are characterized by the ability to take responsibility for actions, learnings, direction, productivity, and relationships. According to Kegan and Lahey, they engage in time management, project management, goal setting, self-evaluation, peer critique, information gathering, and the extensive use of appropriate educational resources, which are enmeshed within all the elements of life.¹³² Consequently, self-direction reflects a culture-wide convergence and a culture-wide curriculum that cuts across all areas of adult life. Therefore, if the aim of Spiritual Leadership is the aim of fostering the evolved spirituality, which enables self-direction, Spiritual Leaders are then called to a strict and stringent protection of the opportunities for growth toward that type of spirituality. In addition, these Leaders could find a greater source of gentility and patience in their work as they come face to face with the basic and universal process to which they are both a witness and a participant. Consequently, Spiritual Leaders are protected by this force toward self-direction which exonerates them from choosing between the practical and the theological preferences of a client's epistemology. If the constructivist-developmental Spiritual Leader would seek not so much to train the client for self-direction but to walk with the client and protect his or her opportunities for growth so that the client might willingly achieve the order of consciousness necessary for self-direction, this might very well constitute a most powerful way of attending to and adequately responding to the complex interrelations that make up the life of an adult client. The goal of Spiritual Leadership, then, is not so much a matter of getting the client to identify and value distinctions between the conflicting parts within, but rather a matter of fostering a qualitative evolution of consciousness, which supports and creates that distinction.

Spiritual Leaders seeking to help their clients toward self-direction are not merely asking them to take on new skills, modify their behaviour and increase self-confidence. They are in essence nurturing them to transform the entire way they understand themselves, their world and their relationships. They are asking many clients to put at risk the worn out loyalties and devotions that have made up the foundations of their current meaning-making.¹³³ This is truly a long and painful process for the client, a process that will repeat itself throughout the whole course of life. It may be perceived by the client as more of a mutiny than an exhilaration of spirit, regardless of the Spiritual Leader's encouragement and presence. It is in light of this that I restate my belief in the goals of Spiritual Leadership: to walk with, nurture and hold our clients as they struggle painfully to make new meaning of their lives, while at the same time protecting their opportunities for growth and evolution into the order of consciousness that allows for self-direction. Ironically, we are victorious when we are no longer required.

¹³² R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 274

¹³³ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 275

The Complexities of the Religion of History

In our discussion of the Spiritual Leader's quest to protect the client's growth opportunities and to promote the development of a self-directed spirituality, we have focused on the segment of the therapeutic relationship that takes place within the counseling room. It is no secret, however, that the Spiritual Leadership relationship is not limited to the scope of the present moment. Clients come to Leaders as a both works in progress and completed packages of history and experience. As a result, one of the main challenges of evolution within the therapeutic relationship is the conquering of the patterns of the past that hold many drives and preferences captive, often outside of the client's conscious awareness. As such, Spiritual Leaders are confronted by a vast and interlocked network of meaning-making matrices that affect the nature of progression of the therapeutic relationship. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss this historical aspect of the client's presentation.

Constructivist-developmentalism is a psychodynamically influenced theory. As such, it carries within it a strong interest and attention to the experiences that led a client to make himself or herself present for a consultation. It is the effect of the combined forces that had sway in one's past that I refer to when I speak of the Religion of History. By 'religion', I do not mean to imply the polite, strained, and limited weekly affair that becomes an undetectable feature in the lives of so many in this pluralistic world. Nor do I mean the traditional religious institutional practices that carry the same name. I take the term much more stringently and comprehensively: as the orthodox and traditional faith that is as public as it is private, and that stems from the synergy of *every* facet of development. As such, 'religion' is a continuous and perpetual founding guide to all of life's purposes and their realization. The experiences built up in the past, from our family mottos and myths, to the cultural surround that bent these mottos and myths, are in my opinion the greatest founding forces within the life of individuals as they learn to construct their meaning of the way the world is and their place within it. The Religion of History is that which is borne out in the workings of every family, in the attendance of children to the familial and cultural trappings of life. These trappings are nourished by the private rituals and customs, enacted and enforced by idiosyncratic beliefs and self-conserving doctrines within the matrix of each person's path.¹³⁴

According to scholars such as Peck and Malone, within the trappings of the Religion of History, we are unwittingly indoctrinated by familial attitudes, cultural conceptions of danger, environmental factors of possibility and aspiration, and religious stipulations of conduct and internal posture.¹³⁵ The beliefs, passions, rules, laws, values, ideals, prejudices, terrors, discriminations, exclusions, promises, trials, demons and angels passed onto the growing person stipulate, in terms of family, culture and identity, who this person should be in relation to the mysteries and complexities of the Universe before which he or she stands. I believe that the scripts of our early experiences, then, do far more than influence our self-esteem or object relations; they do more than lay down a matrix within which the person creates patterns of interaction; they do far more than influence the creation of the expression of desires that are considered

¹³⁴ P. Malone, T. Malone, *The Windows of Experience: Moving Beyond Recovery to Wholeness*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), ch. 12, S. Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1987), 247

¹³⁵ S. Peck, *The Different Drum*, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1987), 232

seminal. These scripts are in fact underlying creeds that induct us and bind us into a community of faith, a group of people who share and believe in a common Religion of History.¹³⁶ As such, the learning of new ways of meaning-making, the re-ordering of our perceptions of objectivity, our conception of the course of spiritual evolution, and even the perceived expanse of human ability in general are all created and biased by the conscious and unconscious teachings of this Religion.

But, not everything about the Religion of History is negative and destructive. It should not be forgotten that the inescapable induction into a Religion of History does carry with it the life-giving, spiritually nurturing, and necessary sense of personal significance which are crucial to identity development. After all, it is in the bosom of our histories where we found support for self-esteem, self-confidence and personal meaning. It is this very environment that we credit with our formation, maturation, and well-being, and to which, as a result, we feel deeply attached and indebted. Consequently, a change in the order of consciousness that affects one's relation to the Religion of History can be fraught with fear, guilt, and terror. The transformation of spirit that objectifies and relativizes the Religion may place extremely heavy burdens on the maintenance of unquestioned loyalties and precious connections with which a client has been internally identified.

Religions, then, can deepen and fortify our conceptions and constructions of life, but they can also induce guilt, fear, dependency, and destructive patterns. Often, these patterns prove insufficient to support the individual through the labyrinth of problems encountered throughout a normal life. As such, new and more balanced equilibrations of meaning are called for, as these old patterns are transcended and relativized. The process from the client's point of view, however, is not perceived with such glib easiness. The concept of a Religion of History highlights the hierarchical nature of psychological history and the perceived ultimate nature in which this hierarchy is played out. Stated more simply, we are all inducted into our Religions of History when we are little. Thus we inherit much from our elders, who are not only bigger than us physically, but mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.¹³⁷ Psychologically, young people feel that their well-being, their identity, their very lives are held in the hands of these Big People. Consequently, every child learns to love his or her Religion of History regardless of the negative or abusive implications it might carry. Elaborating on this, Kegan states that, unlike most classic psychoanalytical approaches that stress the tensions of romantic rivalry, satisfaction, and relational potential, the concept of a Religion of History provides a more spiritually ultimate context, a context of loving intent and protection, a context encompassing the life or death of the child, a context that becomes the prior ground of personality development.¹³⁸ Thus, the Religion of History provides a framework through which an individual takes on the role of 'Me' with respect to the 'I' of that inheritance. Selfhood, then, is tempered and formed through the complexities and preferences of the Religion of History.

¹³⁶ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 288

¹³⁷ H. Kohut, *The Analysis of Self*, (New York: International Universities Press, 1971), 175

¹³⁸ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 269

In summary, the Religion of History is the environment's attempt to help the child become whole, feel safe, entrust himself or herself without reservation to the powers of the Universe, to be connected with the greater dimension of life.

How does the concept of a Religion of History affect the Spiritual Leader's stance toward his or her client? The concept of such a Religion reinforces a notion that the deep and often stubborn lifelong tendencies to diminish the Self and to construct the world in such a way that meaning boundaries are never in danger of being threatened, might be nothing other than the competent and diligent faithfulness the client holds to a Religion that nurtured growth and maturity, and to which, the client might feel, much is owed. The work of Spiritual Leadership, then, entails the reconstruction of various possibilities and a redirection of the competent application of faith to more adapted systems.¹³⁹ Consequently, in the ideal situation, the client divests himself or herself of outmoded beliefs and loyalties, and makes the Religion of History object to his or her new and more autonomous Subject. The Spiritual Leader stands with the client as a co-traveler and witness, as the client painfully struggles with the difficulties of personal worth, spiritual integrity, loyalty, and personal acceptability. It is my belief that during this process, the Spiritual Leader does not encourage the client to leave the Religion of History. Rather, he or she encourages the client to transform the Religion of History, by protecting the opportunities through which the client can construct a new relationship to it. The distinction that is created, then, is that which is within the client: the distinction between having a Religion of History and being captive to it; the distinction between believing as my elders believed and believing what I choose to believe even if it ends up being similar to the beliefs of my elders; the distinction between leaving behind my precious sense of connection to my past and leaving behind certain aspects that my past represents. It is these types of distinctions that help to build the shaky and frightening bridge which leads the client to self-direction.¹⁴⁰ And the Spiritual Leader is nothing more or less than the nurturer and protector of this sacred process as he or she protects the opportunities for the evolution of the client.

Insight

The elucidation of the effects of the Religion of History and the eventual decision for what to do about its lingering effects do not arise spontaneously from the Spiritual Leadership relationship alone. In fact, such difficult and personal decisions arise out of the client's ability to mine the impetus presented by the appearance of insight. Insight development is a fundamental event in the progression of healing within the client. As such, this section outlines the important and seminal contribution of insight to the progression of spiritual evolution.

If the Spiritual Leader takes a long-sighted view of the sacred process of spiritual evolution, not only will he or she attend to the present evolutionary situation but also to every subsequent one, as each learning situation is the base for the next. The growth situation itself will carry within it several aspects:

¹³⁹ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 270

¹⁴⁰ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 160

that which is known, that which is not known, and that which is problematic.¹⁴¹ The confluence of these three aspects, under a proper and prayerful process, can lead the client to a place of new understanding. This understanding is the ground from which adaptation begins and is the result of insight.

According to Lonergan, insight has three main characteristics: it comes as a release due to the attention of inquiry; it comes suddenly and somewhat unexpectedly; and occurs between the concrete and the abstract levels of awareness.¹⁴² I will discuss each of these characteristics separately.

In the first characteristic, the release Lonergan speaks of is the release from biological drives, emotional subjectivities, habitual processes, and daily routines. The release brings with it the re-emergence of a sense of wonder and often an increased desire to learn more. It is the momentum of this release that I believe can be transformed into the impetus for further growth in the therapeutic spiritual relationship. I have said that I believe one of the goals of Spiritual Leadership to be the protection of opportunities for the transformation of the consciousness of the client. As such, the emergence of impetus introduced by insight is a powerful tool in the forward motion of the evolution of the client's order of consciousness. Therefore, as a corollary to the protection of opportunities, I believe that Spiritual Leaders must be attuned to the heightened energy that arises after the discovery of an insight. This is an energy that can be hedged against the human tendency to wallow after a victory has been won. In their quest to protect the opportunities for transformation, I believe that Spiritual Leaders must also encourage their clients to capitalize on the energy that makes itself available throughout the course of therapy. In so doing, not only are the clients aided in their perceptions of the power of insight, but also in their capacities to exploit its impetus. Thus, Spiritual Leaders further the second goal of Spiritual Leadership: the encouragement of the client to become self-directed.

Lonergan's second characteristic of insight speaks of the sudden and often unexpected appearance of insight. In fleshing out his thoughts, he claims that insights are often begun by an intuition, a suggestion, a subtle clue buried somewhere in the awareness of the seeker. In following the string of this intuition, clients lead themselves to a space in which an old awareness breaks down and a new awareness breaks through. These are the moments Gendlin refers to as experiences of 'internal shift'.¹⁴³ On the road to this shift, he discusses the weaving in and through the subtle shades and colours that make up our consciousness. In his paradigm, the act of sitting and internally searching leads to a naming of the clue presented by intuition. The act of naming brings about insight and relief and thereby results in the release outlined above. As a witness to this exploration, Spiritual Leaders are asked to patiently hold the client as he or she progresses through the sacred activity of self-scrutiny and self-definition. This is often an unsure and embarrassing time for the client as he or she comes face-to-face with a less mature and less integrous form of the Self – a form which until now has been obvious to everyone but the client. The exposition of this form is a moment of utmost importance as it hangs the question of personal acceptability in the very balance of the therapeutic relationship. Consequently, I believe it is the Spiritual Leader's responsibility to

¹⁴¹ P. Richmond, *An Introduction to Piaget*, (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 91

¹⁴² B. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1958), 3

¹⁴³ E. Gendlin, *Focusing*, (New York: Bantam, 1979), 50

be attentive to emotions and to gently and patiently hold the client through this often discomfiting and naked transition.

As a corollary to the first two characteristics, Lonergan's third characteristic speaks of insight as taking place between the concrete and the abstract. He goes on to explain that the convergence of concrete and abstract, much like the convergence of Science and Faith, creates the victory of a balanced achievement. By the cooperation of these forces, then, successive adjustments, questions and answers, the known and the understood, the image and concept all converge to present a solid front of knowing which propels evolution forward. Yet, as we know from Section 1, the breaking through of an intuition is not enough to effect transformation. A qualitative transformation of consciousness cannot come simply through the realm of the cognitive, but must speak to spirituality, which is prior to cognition. As such, all the elements of consciousness, concrete and abstract, must be brought to bear by the client in the final assimilation of insight that will lead to transformation. Malone points out that thought, behaviour, emotion, relation, and spirit in their *full congruency* must necessarily attend to an insight in order for it to become a transformative experience.¹⁴⁴ Consequently, Spiritual Leaders are confronted with a difficult and focused task: they are called upon to hold and recognize the various levels of the client's Self that make their appearances. Through this validation, the various levels of being are encouraged to remain visible and to weigh in, in their respective fashions, on the insight being considered. Therefore, Spiritual Leaders further protect the opportunities for the client's growth by encouraging the various internal voices of the client to remain at the table as the negotiation of evolution takes place. In relying on the Spiritual Leader to effectively manage this task, the client is now freer to devote his or her energies to the process of equilibrating meaning-making as well as to the process of observing himself or herself as the new structures are built through Objectification. The final result is the increased awareness of the client and the greater likelihood that he or she will be able to engage in such activities in the future: in short, they are a step closer to self-direction.

In summary, constructivist-developmentalism interprets insight as dynamic rather than static, a process rather than an entity, a pattern of action rather than an object.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, Spiritual Leaders would do well to engage in a movement toward construction and away from instruction. Through the co-mingling of the dual creation that is the therapeutic relationship, clients can weather disequilibrium and begin to lead new, more articulated, better-organized constructions of reality, which differentiate and reintegrate the understanding of the prior equilibrium. In addition, this formulation reinforces the notion that crises cannot simply be arbitrarily categorized as illness. Breakdowns in meaning-making are not automatically pathological; in the vast majority of cases, breakdowns in meaning-making are the hallmarks of transition – and transitions are the driving forces of consciousness evolution. The Spiritual Leader stands as a witnessing partner to the whole and holy process.

¹⁴⁴ P. Malone, and T. Malone, *The Windows of Experience: Moving Beyond Recovery to Wholeness*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 37

¹⁴⁵ G. Gagnon and M. Collay, *Designing for Learning: Six Elements in Constructivist Classroom*, (Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, California, 2001), 6

Chapter 5: Creating Environment

The Environment of the Culture of Embeddedness

I have covered the first element of the culture of Embeddedness: the goals of Spiritual Leadership. The pursuit of these goals, however, must take place within a context, which is conducive to growth. As such, in order to elucidate this context, I will now turn my attention to the environment necessary for constructive Spiritual Leadership, as seen through the lens of constructivist-developmentalism. In the process of exploring issues of the Culture of Embeddedness, I will use examples that reference children. I ask my reader to recall, however, that the fundamental movement of growth and evolution, as conceived through the lens of Constructivist-Developmentalism, is a movement that is universally and uniformly undertaken by persons at every age. Therefore, I use examples referencing childhood as metaphors for the interaction between adults. I have judged this as the best course of action since the illustrations of the development of childhood are less abstract than those involving adults and are therefore more useful in our exploration as we elucidate the construction of a Culture of Embeddedness.

Winnicott was fond of stating that there is never 'just an infant'.¹⁴⁶ My interpretation of these words is that the care seeker is never transforming in a vacuum. Just as the infant's caretaker is more than simply the bringer of sustenance, but rather the very environment out of which the infant differentiates, so the therapeutic relationship with the Spiritual Leader is more than simply a safe place: it creates the context through which transformation will flourish. In other words, the Spiritual Leader, much like the infant's caretaker, will provide the fundamental psychosocial context necessary for the client's evolving equilibria.

The psychosocial environment is the particular form of the world in which a person is embedded, at a particular point in time. Therefore, it is the very context in which and out of which a person grows. As such, it is more than a formless environment in which one exists. It is in fact analogous to a culture. Consequently, the constructivist-developmental school names it 'the culture of embeddedness', where 'culture' is meant to evoke a dynamic history and mythology which creates and supports the culture.¹⁴⁷ In Winnicott's view, a culture of embeddedness is an idea intrinsic to infancy. In the constructivist-developmental view, it is an idea intrinsic to the whole of evolution. In other words, there is not only a single culture of embeddedness, but many - each growing out of the transformation of the former. There is, then, a life history of cultures of embeddedness.¹⁴⁸ These cultures are the psychosocial environments that hold us and allow us to fuse with them, that contradict us and allow us to differentiate, and that remain with us throughout the process and allow to feel relatively secure. Thus, according to Mackie, what Winnicott says of the infant is true of all of us at all points in our lives.¹⁴⁹ There is never just an individual devoid of

¹⁴⁶ D. Winnicott, *The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment*, (New York: International University Press, 1982)

¹⁴⁷ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 116

¹⁴⁸ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 119

¹⁴⁹ M. Mackie, *Constructing Men and Women*, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston of Canada, 1987), 62

the cultural surround. A healthy Self, then, is the congruent presence of both the differentiated side of the individual and the socialized, acculturated side.

According to Piaget, growth activities, which increase differentiation and acculturation, cannot occur without interchange between an individual and his or her surroundings: both processes are paramount to the construction of a coherent Self.¹⁵⁰ He believes that in order for development to occur, there must be action upon the culture by a Self and a resultant counteraction upon the Self by the culture. In fact, this process is the very foundation of the concepts of Accommodation and Assimilation described in Section 1. The implication is that a client's passive presence with the Spiritual Leader will not assist transformation in the order of consciousness, any more than watching a group of objects will lead to knowledge of their interrelations. Social interaction, then, whether with a single person or a group of people, implies a situation in which each member actively co-creates the resultant relationship and culture. Through the continued interaction with this culture, a person must invoke the capacities to assimilate and accommodate stimuli so as to find more constructive and healthy equilibria for meaning-making. As such, a person further develops the Self.¹⁵¹ Therefore, the importance of the type of culture of embeddedness that is created is paramount to the success of the attempts the client makes toward spiritual growth.

What are the responsibilities of the Spiritual Leader in the co-creation of this culture of embeddedness? I believe the answer is three-fold: the Spiritual Leader must hold the client inclusively, empathically, and compassionately in order to foster a sense of unthreatened belonging and safety, within which the current equilibrium can exist peacefully; at the same time, the Spiritual Leader must gently and productively contradict and challenge the client, at the client's particular stage of meaning-making, in order to encourage differentiation and confront neurotic incarnations of comfort; finally, throughout the entire process, the Spiritual Leader must co-create the culture of embeddedness such that the client is certain that the Leader will not abandon him or her before the achievement of re-equilibration. Thus, the client will feel more free to risk and to divest himself or herself of old patterns without the fear of rejection, loneliness, solitude, or destructive self-doubt.¹⁵² Environments that are weighted too heavily in the Direction of Inclusion risk encouraging a sense of complacency and dependency within the client and, as such, are a violation of the stated goals of Spiritual Leadership. Environments that are weighted too heavily in the Direction of Contradiction encourage self-recrimination and self-judgment within the client, who may feel attacked and challenged at the most fundamental levels of his or her being. Thus, such environments amount to nothing more than a veiled abandonment of the client by an over-zealous Spiritual Leader. Environments that promote the fear of abandonment within the client encourage and foster the deepest forms of self-protection and defensiveness, thereby reducing the relationship to a distrustful tug-of-war between client and Leader. Consequently, the resultant culture is in direct contradiction to Christ's teachings with respect to loving our neighbours. The constellation of subtle activities required of the

¹⁵⁰ M. Boden, *Piaget*, (London, England: Fontana Press, 1979), 95

¹⁵¹ P. Richmond, *An Introduction to Piaget*, (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 145

¹⁵² R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 42

Spiritual Leader, then, amount to a careful confluence of Art and Technique, Faith and Science, 'Me' and 'I', all of which are steeped in the unmistakable gentility of Christian love.

The Direction of Inclusion

The first function of a healthy culture of embeddedness is the function of inclusion, empathy, and compassion. These elements, crucial to the development of humanity from infancy onward, are the ground of a paramount aspect of any growthful relationship: attachment.¹⁵³ The experience of attachment is directly related to how a person comes to know the Self and comes to view the Self's worth. Some of the strongest and most urgent emotions brought forward in a therapeutic relationship are the negative emotions that stem from feelings of unworthiness, loneliness, and impotence. According to attachment theory, these are the emotions that are counteracted by a solid and unwavering attachment to primary caregivers.¹⁵⁴ In other words, a child's experience of attachment to his or her primary caregivers is the very ground of emotional security and comfort, the basis of self-regard and self-confidence, as well as the foundation of the orientation toward the spiritual aspects of life. The attitudes that we adopt toward our feelings, therefore, are socially constructed between the child and the caregiver. Children learn to comfort themselves as they have been comforted, to motivate themselves as they have been motivated, and to love themselves as they have been loved. Since the relationship with the caregiver creates the culture of embeddedness, much like the Religion of History, this culture becomes an active agent in the formation of the child: an evolutionary host, so to speak. Thus, we are formed by our relationship to that within which we are included, to that within which we are formed, to that with which we allow ourselves to be fused. The constructivist-developmental view carries this pattern of infancy into the furthest reaches of adult life. Constructivist-developmentalism believes that the culture of inclusion is paramount to the formation of equilibria at all stages in one's life span. Consequently, Spiritual Leaders are called upon to, first and foremost, foster this sense of true and sincere attachment, as it is the very ground of the client's future strength and impetus. Much like the infant with his or her caregiver, I believe that the client relies on the Spiritual Leader to act as a mirror of the client's worth, beauty, power, and fundamental acceptability. This attachment must pervade the relationship and not waver during moments of tension or negativity.

Emotions of tension and negativity will occur frequently throughout the course of the therapeutic relationship, as they are often the primary reason for which the client is seeking help. Nichol states that these emotions are difficult to weather, even as a witness, and as such, are often dispelled by the Spiritual Leader, therapist, or helper by practices of denial, rationalization, or dismissal.¹⁵⁵ Often, these dismissals are well-intentioned and humane attempts at alleviating the distress of the client, for whom we feel love and compassion. They are, in my opinion, very problematic responses.

In discussing this problematic response, Steffe and Gale point out that such actions unwittingly and destructively bring the current culture of embeddedness to the defense of the current evolutionary

¹⁵³ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 124

¹⁵⁴ A. Barnet, R. Barnet, *The Youngest Minds*, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1998), 67

¹⁵⁵ M. Nichols, *The Lost Art of Listening*. (New York: The Guilford Press, 1995), 95

equilibrium, thereby thwarting the client's stimulus and tragically eradicating the client's opportunities for growth.¹⁵⁶ Throughout this doomed defense, the Spiritual Leader is relating to the client as the 'individual in the current state of meaning' rather than to the 'Self as the constant motion of meaning-making'.¹⁵⁷ In other words, this practice amounts to a protection of made-meaning rather than to the evolutionary experience of meaning-making. It allows the client to confirm the 'me-I-have-been' rather than the 'me-I-am-becoming'. The danger of such a practice, in my opinion, is that it encourages the client to conclude that any experience of discomfort, of 'not-me', is an experience to be eradicated and dismissed rather than integrated and transformed. Consequently, the temptation to judge disequilibrium as an event from which one must back away is exponentially increased. The client will not achieve insight, will not recognize the presented opportunities for growth, and will not learn to become self-directed.

In contrast, when Spiritual Leaders respond, not to the problem or to the relief of the problem, but to the person in his or her experience of the problem, the client is acknowledged as acceptable, visible, worthy, and understandable. Furthermore, and most importantly, the client is acknowledged as the 'ever-progressive motion of spirit',¹⁵⁸ a motion that cannot be denied without cost, a motion that includes experiences of balance and imbalance, each as an intrinsic and inescapable part of an integrous and evolutionary life. In addition, this attitude testifies to the client's dignity, power, and self-respect, while simultaneously reinforcing feelings of trustworthiness in the Self and in the process of evolutionary transformation.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, the inclusion function of Spiritual Leadership promotes the hosting and holding qualities of the culture of embeddedness by attending to, recognizing, seeing, and validating the client as a worthy and loveable person, despite the often confusing and recriminating feelings that might grip the client's heart.

But, as mentioned in Section 1, inclusion is not enough to promote spiritual evolution. As in the Pentateuchal narrative, the impetus for growth is presented by the presence of opposition. It is to this issue that I turn my attention in the next section.

The Direction of Contradiction

When I ask my clients what they think would be the most important needs of their children, besides food, shelter and clothing, their answers are quite homogeneous: love, support, openness, affection, attentiveness, fun, respect, validation, visibility, and flexibility. I was surprised to find that when I collected their lists, they missed what I perceive to be fundamental needs of their children: limits, parents behaving on behalf of their convictions, and clear consequences for certain actions.

In my estimation, parents today are not comfortable with such words as power, control, and authority especially when they are asked to be introspective about the intimate relationships in their lives, despite the fact that child psychologists constantly stipulate that children require a competent executive

¹⁵⁶ L. Steffe, J. Gale, *Constructivism in Education*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 189

¹⁵⁷ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 125

¹⁵⁸ Hegel, trans. J.B. Baillie, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 58

¹⁵⁹ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 126

force protecting them, and a sure sense that a trustworthy ‘someone’ is in charge of the vagaries of life.¹⁶⁰ Piaget believed that these forces are paramount because children are constantly engaged in the process of learning to take charge of their impulses and needs, to exercise control over themselves in more sophisticated ways. As such, they learn to pursue their own goals and aspirations with a new and greater measure of independence and autonomy, and consequently, take greater ownership and pleasure in partaking of the relationships and activities they co-created.¹⁶¹ In summary, I believe that it is a well-known and often under-appreciated fact that one of the main functions of caregivers is to first, constructively set limits and then, to preserve those boundaries until it is deemed that the care receiver no longer requires them for his or her current state of spiritual well-being.

Likewise, the second function of the Spiritual Leader in the creation of the culture of embeddedness is the promotion of contradictory stimuli that constructively challenge the client’s current and particular meaning-making. Thus, the Spiritual Leader is setting limits and promoting the differentiation of the client’s consciousness by gradually and gently nurturing an environment in which the client must take charge of greater levels of autonomy, self-control, and self-confidence.¹⁶² The challenge of contradiction can be boiled down to the same challenge as that voiced by the Direction of Inclusion: do Spiritual Leaders feel more loyalty to the client’s present state of development or are they more committed to the motion of the developing Self? As we focus more stringently on the developing Self, I believe that we find ourselves confronted by the often unpleasant and nostalgic consequence of releasing and losing the client, as we have come to know him or her. Therefore, the Spiritual Leader must tackle feelings of loss and sadness as he or she lets go of the ‘client-as-present-equilibrium’ in order to more fully join with and embrace the ‘emerging-Self-as-evolution’. Thus, the client’s differentiation and growth is limited to the extent that the created culture of embeddedness can host opposition and otherness.¹⁶³ Erikson speaks eloquently on this topic by highlighting his belief that the level to which care seekers are permitted to develop a sense of dignity and personal independence is proportional to the caregiver’s ability, rooted in personal self-awareness and inner strength, to contradict and let go of that which has come to be loved: the old form of the client.¹⁶⁴

Kegan states that the failure to assist a care seeker in the natural emergence of the Becoming Self can often take the form of a holding that is too firm, or of a separation anxiety that is too harshly expressed.¹⁶⁵ These actions can unfortunately have the effect of further entangling the relationship between client and Spiritual Leader, and thereby additionally mire the client in the current culture of embeddedness. As such, he warns against the vulnerable side of ourselves that can prefer to remain over-connected and protective of our care seekers, because of a personally vested desire to play out one’s individual emotional legacy. In my opinion, this usually unconscious activity is tantamount to the abandonment of the client,

¹⁶⁰ M. Mackie, *Constructing Men and Women*, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston of Canada, 1987), 36

¹⁶¹ P. Richmond, *An Introduction to Piaget*, (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 100

¹⁶² R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 127

¹⁶³ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 127

¹⁶⁴ E. Erickson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton Books, 1968), 113

¹⁶⁵ R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 128

since the very impetus required for growth is unfairly removed from the possible arising stimuli. Thus, in the most crucial of moments, when the client is building the strength, vision, and stamina to make object the complexities that were once subject, the Spiritual Leader's unwitting behaviour would foster dependency and closeness, rather than independence and intimacy. Through this unfortunate circumstance, the Spiritual Leader would sabotage the opportunity for growth laid in front of the client and allow fear and over-connectedness to reign supreme within the culture of embeddedness.

The Direction of Contradiction carries with it a strong caveat, however. Throughout the entire process of Spiritual Leadership, it is my belief that the client must never doubt the Spiritual Leader's presence and commitment to the process of healing. Therefore, the client must have unwavering confidence that the Spiritual Leader will remain with him or her, without the slightest possibility of abandonment. The next section is an elucidation of this important environmental factor of the therapeutic relationship: the Direction of remaining with the client.

Remaining With The Client

The third function of the Spiritual Leader in the creation of the culture of embeddedness is that of remaining staunchly in place during the entire period of transformation and re-equilibration. It is during this troubled and often tumultuous time that the part of the client that was once perceived as 'not-me' can be successfully integrated as an object in the new equilibrium. We must recall that growth is not simply a process of separation and repudiation. This is only half the story. The other side of growth is the reconciliation, recovery, and re-cognition of the Subject by the Emergent Self. But, in the first stages of the re-equilibration, the culture of embeddedness that was once the seat of comfort and security can itself be experienced as thrown over and tipped into chaos.¹⁶⁶ As with all transitions of growth, there is a strong likelihood that the client will view the culture from which he or she is emerging with anger and repudiation, as a defensive act forbidding a backsliding into a state that now appears insufficiently developed. Therefore, the Spiritual Leader's continued and unwavering presence acts as an essential lifeline in the storm of transition. It takes a special wisdom and self-awareness from the Spiritual Leader to understand that by remaining in place so that the client can have a steady presence to ignore, reject, repudiate, cling to, reach out toward, or disdain, the Leader provides a new and superlatively important interrelation for the developing client: the ability to intimately and innocently begin the integration and differentiation that marks the new and more evolved culture of embeddedness. Therefore, it is exactly because the thrown over culture of embeddedness is as much the 'old-me' as it is the 'not-me', that it must remain in place so that the client can reorient a relationship towards it.¹⁶⁷

In my experience, Spiritual Leaders often feel anxiety at the whirling emotions and recriminations that arise within the client at this crucial juncture. In their natural desire to reduce these negative emotions, they may give into the temptation to distance themselves from the relationship, in order to pull away to what they perceive as a safer distance. Tragically, a distancing at this exact time often is interpreted by the

¹⁶⁶ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 129

¹⁶⁷ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 129

client as type of unrecoverable loss, a confirmation of the client's worst fears regarding the tenuousness of the life project. This can result in a sense of despair, and a loss of good faith in the world – some of the very bases of a healthy spirituality.¹⁶⁸ I believe that natural growth never involves an irrecoverable loss: what we separate from in differentiation, we find anew in integration. In fact, it is this unnatural sense of irrecoverable loss that separates unhealthy despair and depression from the healthier forms of sadness and grief. It is the loss of the function of integration, in my opinion, that leads to a loss of hope and a loss of personal power. As such, the disappearance of the culture of embeddedness at the threshold of transformation is often interpreted by the client as a rejection from the emerging context, rather than as an objectification of the old context.¹⁶⁹ In other words, the customary repudiation of the emerging object is replaced by the unhealthy repudiation of the emerging Self, a process that heightens negativity and demeans growth.

In light of the foregoing, the role of Spiritual Leaders never to abandon or distance themselves from their clients is an overriding requirement for a healthy transition from one culture of embeddedness to another more developed and more integrated one. By remaining firmly in place, Spiritual Leaders protect the client's opportunities for growth by positioning themselves in the roles required for the smoothest transition of the client's consciousness to a new equilibrium. Furthermore, by simply holding a presence within the evolving culture of embeddedness, Spiritual Leaders ensure that the clients' need for innocence and good faith is advanced and validated. In my opinion, herein lies the basis for the further belief in and development of a deeper spirituality.

¹⁶⁸ P. Malone, T. Malone, *The Windows of Experience: Moving Beyond Recovery to Wholeness*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 155

¹⁶⁹ L. Steffe, J. Gale, *Constructivism in Education*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 140

Chapter 6: Creating a Proper Attitude

Attitude Within the Culture of Embeddedness

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss very important elements in the creation of a culture of Embeddedness. Both chapters, however, discuss elements that are external to the Spiritual Leader. In other words, neither the goals of the therapeutic relationship nor the environment necessary for evolution are processes that are meant to work on the internal state of the Spiritual Leader. As such, the following section discusses elements in the co-creation of the Culture of Embeddedness that are internal dispositions held by the constructivist-developmental Spiritual Leader in the creation of the Culture of Embeddedness. The two topics of relevance to our discussion will be client-centeredness and counter-transference.

Client-Centeredness

Keirkegaard once said: “If real success is to attend to the effort of bringing a person to a definite position, we must first of all take great pains to find him where he is and meet him there. This is the secret of helping others. In order to help another effectively, I must understand what he understands.”¹⁷⁰ To paraphrase this great thinker, only to the extent that an interpreter/listener recognizes and comprehends the reasons that allow the speaker’s observations to appear rational, true, and reasonable, does he or she begin to understand what the speaker could mean. Therefore, to understand others is to be able to put oneself within the speaker’s framework so as to be able to generate subsequent statements from preceding ones consistent with that framework. This practice does not stem from the ability to impose a framework on an Other, but rather from the ability to organize the world as the Other organizes it. As such, the Spiritual Leader’s main orientation is that which focuses him or her on the meaning-making of the client.

Spiritual Leaders have a dual involvement with meaning-making. They work sincerely and tirelessly to vest themselves in the framework of their clients so as to more fully be of use to their evolving and emerging Selves. Yet, Spiritual Leaders, as fellow human beings on their own unique journey, are unavoidably meaning-makers themselves. I believe that it is through the willful and innocent management of this coordinated dual processes of meaning-making within the therapeutic relationship that Spiritual Leaders create an effective culture of embeddedness for their clients. As such, when Spiritual Leaders have an awareness that their meanings differ from those of their clients, I call them attuned helpers. When Spiritual Leaders have the understanding of what goes on within their clients as they make meaning, I call them empathic counselors. When Spiritual Leaders understand what is at stake for their clients as they struggle with meaning, I call them congruent educators. And, when Spiritual Leaders recognize the delicate process through which to accompany clients in order to achieve growth, I call them leaders on the path to Holiness. I can think of no better orientation through which Spiritual Leaders can master these wonderful titles than the client-centered approach.

¹⁷⁰ S. Keirkegaard, Dru, A. (trans.), *The Journals of Keirkegaard*, (New York: Harper, 1959)

In order to masterfully pursue the client-centered approach, we must first have an understanding of who our clients are. In my opinion, clients are the creators of their respective worlds. They are the meaning-makers and not the made-meaning. They are the evolving spirit and not the categorized stage. They are the masters, the servants, the parents, and the children of their uniquely constructed worlds. They are the Spirit's ever-progressive thrust toward development, maturity, and Holiness. They are the innocent, striving souls who are doing the very best that they can with the resources they have allowed themselves. They are reflections of all the people we have come to love, come to fear, come to emulate and come to avoid. To the Spiritual Leader, they are foreign entities and familiar faces, objective sources and subjective mirrors. As such, the view from the constructivist-developmental approach is indeed a delicate matter. Its delicacy lies in the fact that the Spiritual Leader is attempting to join with the client in a very intimate way: the Leader is trying to become an integral part of the client's very evolution. Thus, I believe that it is the Spiritual Leader's sacred responsibility to ensure that his or her focus lies entirely within the internal context of the client's constructed meaning-making. Responsible Spiritual Leaders understand that it takes much more than merely a good explanation or rationalization to have clients transform and evolve from their well-defended equilibria. They understand that mere instruction-giving is tantamount to distracting the client from the true work of evolution. Consequently, they develop the instinct to no longer instruct clients, but rather to walk with them empathically as the clients discover new meaning and emerge more evolved Selves.

The Spiritual Leader's attitude, then, is to act as a resonator and mirror to clients, within the clients' meaning organization, in the construction of the culture of embeddedness, in order to compassionately accompany them through the delicate and difficult process of evolution and re-equilibration. In constructivist-developmental terms, this is the essence of the client-centered response.

The client-centered response was created and passionately championed by Carl Rogers, a therapist who was notorious for his refusal to answer his clients' questions. His refusal was not in any way malicious, but was based on a concern for the growth and well-being of those he was helping: he believed that his first responsibility was to persuade his clients to find their own answers. He was particularly concerned with ensuring that his presence not promote a relationship in which the clients come to be dependent on him for any reason. As such, he sought to guide them to a place of differentiation and individuality.¹⁷¹ Therefore, Rogers' hope for his clients betrayed a clear bias, as far as his construction of the form of a healthy person is concerned. Seen from an extra-theory point of view, Rogers' bias was toward guiding the client to perceive himself or herself as the evaluator of experience, rather than as the reactor to external opinions. He wanted his clients to place the basis of the standards for life within themselves, and therefore, to become the judges and the agents of their own lives. In the language of constructivist-developmentalism, Rogers hoped very strongly for the furtherance of a particular type of spirituality, highly weighted toward the development of differentiation.¹⁷² Although Rogers called his approach non-directive and client-centered, there was a definite direction and preference to his therapy

¹⁷¹ C. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961)

¹⁷² R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 245

style: he was insistent that clients not be successful in any attempts to live within his authority, or to establish bonds of loyalty to him.¹⁷³ Consequently, Rogers was not open to many roles clients may request or require him to take. The irony is that in the very instance of his defending the clients' rights to their own meaning-making, Rogers may effectively be refusing to support meaning-making by his unwillingness to take on the role the clients need him to take on. Thus, the culture of embeddedness is not being co-created by both partners equally. An unequally developed culture of embeddedness is of limited use in the evolution of an innocently striving client, since it does not reflect the complexities and agencies of both members of the relationship. In agreement with Kegan, I believe that such therapy, despite its strengths and deep compassion, often counsels at a level that is outside the order of consciousness of the client, thereby leaving the client frustrated and confused, with a much longer road to transformation and evolution.

In its deep belief in transformation and evolution, the constructivist-developmental client-centered response differs from the famous Rogerian response with regards to his two seminal assertions. First, in disagreement with Rogers' sole practice of furthering a differentiated order of consciousness within his clients, constructivist-developmentalism stipulates a deep sensitivity and awareness of the requirements and limitations of all the other developmental stages. According to the constructivist-developmental conception of client-centeredness, the responsible Spiritual Leader should first be able to assess the clients' construction of spirituality and second, be able to provide them with the culture of embeddedness they truly need in order to join intimately with the Leader. After the joining has successfully solidified, the Spiritual Leader can do his or her part in the relationship to create a culture of embeddedness that promotes the evolution of consciousness. The crux of this theory is found in the refusal to assume a particular order of consciousness, or to presume a particular level of functioning on the part of the client. I believe that it is only in accepting, sincere, and relevant twinning, that clients and Leaders can move forward in the processes of healing and evolution.

In disagreement with the second seminal Rogerian assertion, constructivist-developmentalism is not solely focused on the differentiation of clients. It states that a responsible Spiritual Leader is just as concerned with forces of differentiation as he or she is with forces of integration. Although the Rogerian conception fosters a strong sense of autonomy and personal identity, it does not go so far as to also actively and vocally promote the healthy integration of the differentiated self into the newly perceived subject-object balance. Constructivist-developmentalism does not believe that autonomy is the final ground of psychological health. Rather, the theory stipulates that psychological health is inseparable from philosophical and spiritual health. Therefore, the very functions of an integrated socialization and internalized retrospection are paramount to the fullest expression of a complete Self. It is not enough to simply grow into ourselves. It is crucial that we also internalize the complexities of the world into ourselves, and ourselves into the complexities of the world. As such, we emulate the example of Divine 'I', who is both fully differentiated and fully integrated.

¹⁷³ C. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961)

The client-centered orientation is an extremely powerful and demanding practice that requires great presence, congruence, and attunement from the Spiritual Leader. Throughout this approach, the Leader must not seek to or decline to take on any roles required by the client (within the boundaries of professional ethics, of course). The Leader only seeks to be present and to protect the growth opportunities for the client. The Leader co-creates the culture of embeddedness and holds the proverbial door open, while actively resonating with the organized world of the client. In so doing, he or she turns away from the seductive temptation to solve the clients' problems or to try to make the entire process less painful. The Spiritual Leader, then, prizes the client as the 'Self who makes meaning' and not as the 'person with made meanings'. In my opinion, when properly practiced, the client-centered orientation is one of the clearest manifestations of Christ-like love.

It cannot be overstressed, however, that despite the effort to remain client-centered, the Spiritual Leader must have certain preferences and attitudes that are entirely his or her own. This is a natural and expected by-product of the simple fact that Spiritual Leaders are themselves human travelers on the road of evolution. I believe that it is important to discuss this complex element of the therapeutic relationship. As such, the next section discusses the art of counter-transference. This artful practice involves the combined elements of the Spiritual Leader using his or her reactions as therapeutic information, on the one hand, and of bracketing these very motivations in order to walk solely with the client's agenda, on the other.

Counter-Transference

Kant once wrote: "We can only conceive of another subject by imputing our own subjectness to another entity."¹⁷⁴ To develop viable ways of being in the world, each person must learn to make predictions about the objects he or she constructs. These predictions, when left unattended, often take the form of an infusion of the Other's consciousness with our own, thereby resulting in a homogeneous and self-constructed view of the world. In other words, according to Steffe and Gale, we default to generating explanations of how Others function on the basis of our subjective experiences.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, in the office of every Spiritual Leader, there are ghosts: these are the shades of the Leaders past, the complexities of his or her present, and the dreams of his or her future. Together, they compose the monolithic structure that is the Spiritual Leader's construction of Self and reality. These constructions, and its actions upon the client, are generally referred to as Counter-Transference. Although counter-transference is a vital component of the culture of embeddedness, it is at the same time, a potential hurdle that limits the Leaders vision of the client as he or she truly is. In other words, the Leader's constructed reality can, if left unchecked, go so far as to also construct the very client in his or her meaning-making. This danger carries ramifications for the perception of the conscious preferences the client makes, and as such can present itself as a fundamental stumbling block to intimate joining. For example, a Spiritual Leader who demonstrates the capacity to reflect on rather than be driven by feelings may lose sight of the fact that his or her client might not be constructing reality in the same manner. As such, the client may not exhibit similar reactions to the

¹⁷⁴ Kant in L. Steffe, J. Gale, *Constructivism in Education*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 12

¹⁷⁵ L. Steffe, J. Gale, *Constructivism in Education*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 14

Spiritual Leader when confronted with the same compelling stimulus. Thus, attending to the feelings that arise in me (as the Spiritual Leader) may give insight into the culture of embeddedness and the manner in which the client makes meaning, but can never be used as a benchmark through which to determine how a client puts his or her world together. Consequently, if the client does not exhibit the same emotions I am feeling, it does not automatically imply, as a great number of unfortunate Leaders immediately assume, that the client is in some type of denial. As such, the Spiritual Leaders main attitude in regards to his or her emotions is to use them as a guidepost to understand the culture of embeddedness, and then to bracket them in order to more fully see the client.

Bracketing is a considered and practiced activity that involves a Spiritual Leader's emotional and willful control. Through this process, Leaders intentionally put their emotional constructions and preferences aside in order to forge an intimate connection with the client, unimpeded by the vagaries of personal bias. It is a function of discipline because, as an art form in itself, it requires time, practice and perfection. It is a function of responsibility because it requires ownership, confidence, and a balanced response to the intricacies of the clients meaning-making. And, it is a function of spirit because it creates the circumstances through which a Leader can perceive the total acceptability and beauty of the client as a child of God.¹⁷⁶ Bracketing, then, is a fundamental component of Spiritual Leadership that under girds the ability of Leaders to foster the Direction of Inclusion because it accepts and acclaims the client as he or she truly is. It is a fundamental component of the Direction of Contradiction because it allows the Spiritual Leader to act outside the lens of personal preference and experience, and thereby challenge the client in the unique way, and at the unique construction of consciousness, that is most useful to healing and growth. And, it is a fundamental component of the Direction of Remaining With The Client because Leaders can more effectively and efficiently forge the intimate connection required to provide presence and support as the client passes from one culture of embeddedness into a new one.

As with all components of Spiritual Leadership, however, the practice of controlling counter-transference is a dialectical one. Although the discussion so far has focused on the bracketing of emotions and preferences, it is in no way to be interpreted as a call for the elimination of the Spiritual Leader's emotional and preferential sides altogether. In classic dialectical fashion, the presence of the Leader's emotional and preferential drives is crucial to the success of a healing relationship. How so?

When Freud developed his psychoanalytic theory, he simultaneously developed two main tenets of connection. In his first tenet, he stated that a healing relationship with another could be successful only if client and Helper engage in a fully motivated partnership, and a sincere contract of pursuing growth. His second tenet was particularly relevant to counter-transference: he believed that a Helper will not perceive in the client what he or she has not learned to recognize in their own Self.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, a Spiritual Leader must divide himself or herself into two parts: the observer and the observed. A Spiritual Leader has to relinquish the safety of the authoritarian 'expert' role, the all-knowing parental figure that carries all the answers in a magic storehouse of information. By observing his or her own emotions and preferences

¹⁷⁶ S. Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1978), 34

¹⁷⁷ E. Erickson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton Books, 1968), 147

throughout the personal and professional development that has led the Leader to this place in history, he or she names, understands, makes object, and works to overcome the very difficult forces that are now arising for the troubled client. Thus, the Leader and the client stand together as fellow human travelers on God's path, each striving for a higher conception of meaning-making that renders the world more orderly, more loving, more holy. Consequently, the strings of the Spiritual Leader's motivations will be pulled, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously, by the sheer fact that he or she is in a relationship with a client, who is both object and mirror. The Leader will not be able, for long, to escape the necessary conflict between his or her emotional participation in the observed events, and the methodological rigour required to impute counter-transference into the creation of a culture of embeddedness which encourages the advancement of the clients evolution. Therefore, the Spiritual Leader's great discipline is an act of piety in which the Leader learns to develop the ability to integrate the observational field of the relationship, with the methodological responsibilities of Leadership, with the human obligations of respect, attunement, and love. As such, according to Erickson, the inexorable presence of counter-transference requires a fundamentally ethical orientation of Leader to client, an orientation that is the incarnation and ground for the compassion and love expressed in the relationship.¹⁷⁸ This ethical orientation, in my opinion, stands as the basis from which the Leader engages and wrestles the inescapable conflict between the rational aims of the observer and the self-preserving fixations of the observed, where observer and observed are *both* internal and external. Stated in this fashion, the ethical orientation no longer limits itself to the professional field. As stated by scholars such as Richmond, the ethical orientation spreads its wings of influence and touches the motivations underlying all relationships in the Spiritual Leader's life.¹⁷⁹

Hence, to paraphrase Erickson, it is the mark of responsible and adept Spiritual Leaders that much can go on within them without clogging their communications within the moments of the healing relationship. Aware, yet emptied of professional dogmatism and stringent orthodox adherence to their Religion of History, Spiritual Leaders carry with them an implicit insight and specific style of action.¹⁸⁰ This style of action creates a culture of embeddedness, geared entirely toward the client's center, protecting the opportunities that arise and leading the client to new choices and new consciousnesses. To my mind, it is a mighty drivenness, an intense and flexible energy, an unconventional originality, and a fundamentally ethical and moral orientation toward the development of Holiness. And none of these powerful elements would be possible without the responsible and considered manipulation of counter-transference.

¹⁷⁸ R. Coles (ed.), *The Erik Erickson Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 159

¹⁷⁹ P. Richmond, *An Introduction to Piaget*, (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 163

¹⁸⁰ R. Coles (ed.), *The Erik Erickson Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 183

Chapter 7: Constructivist-Developmental Practices

The Application of Constructivist-Developmental Methods

As I turn my attention to the actual application of some constructivist-developmental techniques, I would like to very briefly mention the classic psychological theory that has been one of the most influential in the field of classic education: behaviourism. In general, behaviourism states that learning has not occurred unless an observable difference can be seen in the behaviour of the learner. This theory has tended to focus on the learner's performance rather than on the evolution of consciousness.¹⁸¹ Training, then, may modify behavioural response but it leaves the responding subject's comprehension and transformation to the element of chance. In my opinion, behaviourism had succeeded in removing from the playing field, the distinction between training for performance, and guiding for the generation of transformation. Within the constructivist-development view, learning is seen as a process of changing what is known by constructing patterns of consciousness that solve the arising problems of meaning.¹⁸² Confident that clients construct their own knowledge, Spiritual Leaders can gain a clear sense of what I believe their mission to be: to draw out rather than to put in. In other words, their role would do well to focus more on the organization of the client and the opportunities that can be capitalized on the achieve evolution, rather than on the prescriptive and decisive orientation traditionally associated with education and Leadership.

Before turning my attention more fully to the activities of Leadership, I think it would be beneficial to summarize four brief topics we have covered, which are of direct relevance to the practice of constructivist-developmental Leadership techniques.

- 1) Constructivist-developmentalism is theory of consciousness which holds several principles as essential: a) knowledge is not passively received but is actively interpreted and integrated by the learner/client; b) meaning is actively built up by the evolving Subject; c) the function of equilibration is adaptive and tends toward viability; and d) thought and emotion serve the client/learner's immediate experiential world. These are the conceptual foundations on which Spiritual Leaders can have confidence in the judgment and agency of each client in the process of his or her development and growth.
- 2) Constructivist-developmentalism holds several tenets as true: a) we are not made up by the experience of an Other, b) the Other is not made up by his or her experience, c) we are not made up of our own experience, d) the Other is not made up by our experience. These are the conceptual foundations which protect constructivist-developmental practitioners from taking on responsibilities that are not their own, as well as unwittingly assigning to their clients responsibilities which do not belong to them.
- 3) Constructivist-developmentalism makes the following assumptions about clients engaged in real life events: a) clients think individually to make personal meaning out of events;

¹⁸¹ L. Steffe, J. Gale, *Constructivism in Education*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 4

¹⁸² G. Gagnon, M. Collay, *Designing for Learning: Six Elements in Constructivist Classrooms*, (Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, California, 2001), 15

b) clients think collaboratively within their culture to make shared meanings of particular events; c) clients connect their prior knowledge and experience to the current evolutionary challenge; d) clients actively question themselves and their culture to help reconcile the challenges inherent in growth stimulating events; e) clients can present their conceptions of the therapeutic relationship in many different ways; and f) clients can reflect currently and retroactively on the complexities and processes of a particular transformation event. These are the conceptual foundations of the **Context-Phase-Stage-Style (CPSS)** model of Leadership described below.

In light of the above summaries and in the wake of the many exigencies required of the Spiritual Leader while in relationship with a client, several pedagogical and interrelational implications arise as the foundations of the CPSS model: 1) the Spiritual Leader must carry a deep respect for, and a knowledge of how to accompany the client through the complex maze of the clients previous experiences (Direction of Inclusion); 2) psycho-educational practices which encourage the client to remedy challenges are an integral component of the Spiritual Leadership relationship (Direction of Contradiction); 3) the client engages in a super-rational and epiphenomenological self-regulation throughout the process of transformation; 4) Spiritual Leaders are called upon to engage in the creative representations and reflections of concepts and challenges in order to facilitate client spirituality and evolution; 5) Spiritual Leaders must always hold in the forefront of their minds the goals of the client as well as the differences between the client's goals and the Leader's preferred outcome; 6) Spiritual Leaders and clients must incorporate the complexities and vagaries of the client's social context and Religion of History, including inherited mottos, myths, and folk logic, into the relationship; 7) Spiritual Leaders must remain circumspect and reflexive, resisting the tendency to associate a single path with absolute truth; 8) the concern of Spiritual Leaders is not just the clients' knowledge, but most importantly his or her spiritual development (Client-centeredness); 9) the Spiritual Leader's knowledge of subject matter and diagnostic skills is not as important as his or her convicted belief in the personal theory of human consciousness evolution; 10) the Spiritual Leader is called upon to recognize and honour areas of strength as well as elements of limitation within the clients constructions; 11) although Spiritual Leaders may be tempted to know their clients by interpreting the language and actions of the relationship in their own conceptual constructs (counter-transference), they must bear in mind that clients have independent realities of their own, carefully constructed to reflect the current state of meaning-making, and carefully defended to maintain balance and equilibrium. With the foregoing summaries in mind, I turn my attention to the CPSS model of conducting the Spiritual Leadership relationship.

The CPSS Model

The CPSS model is a platform upon which Spiritual Leaders can approach their clients. It is a model, based on constructivist-developmental tenets, that is meant to glean relevant information from the client in order to build a better suited and customized culture of embeddedness through which the client can transform. It is comprised of four main components: social **C**ontext, life **P**hase, constructive **S**tage, and

personality Style.¹⁸³ These four components are introduced into the relationship to foster client self-awareness and self-acceptance, so as to promote the ability to maximize positive inclinations and accumulated strengths, bringing these powerful attributes to the process of the client's transformation and re-equilibration. The model can provide Spiritual Leaders with a framework for applying the various complexities of the constructivist-developmental stage theory, the interpersonally driven process of co-creating the culture of embeddedness, the intra-personally oriented practices of client-centeredness and controlled counter-transference, and the intuitive, inspired insights which found the basis through which the Leader can intimately join and connect to the client. I will discuss each of the elements of the CPSS model separately.

Context

The constructivist-developmental stage theory believes that human consciousness is inextricably linked to the cultural and social surround in which it is evolving. As such, a person's reality, thoughts, facts, emotions, preferences, and so on, are intrinsically culture-influenced and community-maintained internal entities.¹⁸⁴ From this perspective, the social dimension of experience is so pervasive that no person, at any given time, can be separated from his or her past social experiences or present cultural influences. According to Gagnon, even when we are alone, our very consciousnesses and meanings are bound up in the languages and conventions, social categories and cultural values of our contexts.¹⁸⁵ Through this dimension of approach, Spiritual Leaders and clients are asked to look through the specific lenses of family, community, and cultural surround in order to better understand the elements of the construction of meaning of the clients. To this end, Mackie highlights the eight specific social identities of gender, ability, race, religion, ethnicity, age, class, and sexual orientation, and suggests that each permutation of identity carries with it a cumulative layer of meaning influence within the contextualized client.¹⁸⁶ Awareness of the Spiritual Leader to these facets of social existence sensitizes him or her to the dual issues of internalized client assumptions based on these contexts, as well as external issues of power, aggrandizement, or oppression through which clients must struggle. It is to all these elements that Spiritual Leaders must attend as they assess the client's social context.

Context assessment is essentially the Spiritual Leader's practice of considering the impact of the client's social surround, social identities, internalized assumptions, and externalized defenses on the present constructive meaning-making of the client, as well as the practice of negotiating how these elements are

¹⁸³ K. Eriksen, *Toward a Constructivist and Developmental Identity for the Counseling Profession*, Journal of Counseling and Development: JCD September 30, 1999, <http://www.media-server.amazon.com/exec/drm/amzproxy.cgi>, accessed on September 18, 20051

¹⁸⁴ K. Eriksen, *Toward a Constructivist and Developmental Identity for the Counseling Profession*, Journal of Counseling and Development: JCD September 30, 1999, <http://www.media-server.amazon.com/exec/drm/amzproxy.cgi>, accessed on September 18, 200514

¹⁸⁵ G. Gagnon, M. Collay, *Designing for Learning: Six Elements in Constructivist Classrooms*, (Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, California, 2001), 256

¹⁸⁶ M. Mackie, *Constructing Men and Women*, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston of Canada, 1987), 56

best accessed to protect opportunities for growth and facilitate transformation.¹⁸⁷ The best tool at the Spiritual Leader's disposal for this type of assessment is questioning. The constructivist-developmental framework for posing questions can be summarized as Explore-Know-Act.¹⁸⁸ In the first instance, the Spiritual Leader is challenged to explore the situational, family, community, and cultural contexts in which the client developed and in which the client currently exists. In the second instance, the Spiritual Leader is challenged to get to know the implicit, socially derived assumptions that are embedded in the social constructions of the client. And in the third instance, the Spiritual Leader is challenged to act in the relationship in order to better foster growth, connection, and transformation. In this context, the word 'act' can mean everything from accepting, to contradicting, to remaining in place. Although an entire thesis could be written on the art of questioning, I believe that discussion to be beyond the scope of this particular work. I will simply provide a sample framework of questions for assessing a client's social context. Since constructivist-developmentalism is focused on the underlying meaning-making of the client, all questions posed are open-ended and are meant to encourage the client to truly investigate the hidden influences in which he or she has constructed their reality:

- What did your family's social class mean to you?
- What were your family's messages regarding sensitive issues such as work and love?
- What did your family's attitudes toward sensitive issues mean to you?
- What role did religious faith play in your conception of goodness?
- How do you experience your role in your current family?
- What does that fairy tale mean to you?
- What's it like for you, to be Italian?
- What have you enjoyed most/least about being a woman?
- What was that tragic event like for you?
- What made Mr. Smith so influential for you at that time?
- What kind of person would you go to today if you needed support?

According to Steffe and Gale, many clients are unaware of the degree to which social contexts have affected them. They suggest the reason for this awareness gap to be the counter-intuitive inclination of its ramifications in our Western, 'hyperindividualized' culture.¹⁸⁹ To help counter-balance this individualistic bias, I believe that Spiritual Leaders are called upon to be intimately aware of the continuing influences of their own social contexts. As such, they will more easily recognize complexities in the lives of their clients and be more useful in the protection of opportunities for growth. Herein lies the essence of counter-transference. Consequently, context-oriented interventions encourage the Spiritual Leader to be present for the client in two distinct ways: first, they help the client objectify, name, categorize, understand,

¹⁸⁷ K. Eriksen, *Toward a Constructivist and Developmental Identity for the Counseling Profession*, Journal of Counseling and Development: JCD September 30, 1999, <http://www.media-server.amazon.com/exec/drm/amzproxy.cgi>, accessed on September 18, 2005

¹⁸⁸ G. Gagnon, M. Collay, *Designing for Learning: Six Elements in Constructivist Classrooms*, (Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, California, 2001), 146

¹⁸⁹ L. Steffe, J. Gale, *Constructivism in Education*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 255

and rewrite the social narratives that prove themselves to be foundational in their lives; and second, Leaders can use the contextual information to help their clients transform their consciousness of the importance of the social component, and thereby encourage them to mine the positive and action-producing power of these same contexts. These contextual investigations remind us of Winnicott's salient statement: "There is never just an infant."¹⁹⁰

Phase

A Phase is a psychosocial construction which refers to an interval of time in the lifespan of a person during which certain themes, such as education, career development, or family formation, are ascendant.¹⁹¹ Erikson believed that a person who effectively achieves his or her perceived tasks for that era is more likely to function effectively in the particular culture in which he or she is embedded.¹⁹² As such, phase considerations form the basis of the successful evolution from one psychosocial stage to a more generative one. According to Richmond, a phase is comprised of two main elements: first, a coalescence of physical, cognitive, and emotional states of readiness to tackle the complexities of the perceived life era on behalf of the subject; and second, a conglomeration of the social expectations made of individuals by the cultural surround, which are generally uniform, and age-specific demands on each member of the culture.¹⁹³ Scholars such as Erikson and Rodgers claim that the social expectations of psychosocial stages carry with them a number of implications to growth. They define a developmental crisis as the transition individuals undergo when their behaviour and expected mindsets do not match the psychosocial exigencies of the cultural surround. In these cases, the individual is confronted with the frightening prospects of redefining the Self in relation to its context in order to better fulfill the perceived demands.¹⁹⁴ In addition, Rodgers states that although a crisis may make itself known in its purest form when an individual is embedded in a particular psychosocial stage, preparatory mini-crises may arise in earlier phases, thereby allowing the individual to enter the crisis with an already constructed reality.¹⁹⁵ For example, the crises which challenge adults around the issues of career choice and generativity, will often have been preceded by crises in the choices of educational institutions, and meaning in work. Also, Erikson points out that a psychosocial stage cannot be reached unless the challenges of the previous psychosocial stages have been adequately conquered and integrated.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, the challenge of developing intimate relationships in adolescence, for example, cannot be adequately overcome unless the prior challenge of achieving childhood autonomy is constructively weathered. As such, successfully meeting the critical events which arise in each stage, by learning and integrating the required conscious and behavioural aspects of required

¹⁹⁰ D. Winnicott, *The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment*, (New York: International University Press, 1982), 144

¹⁹¹ K. Eriksen, *Toward a Constructivist and Developmental Identity for the Counseling Profession*, *Journal of Counseling and Development*: JCD September 30, 1999, <http://www.media-server.amazon.com/exec/drm/amzproxy.cgi>, accessed on September 18, 2005

¹⁹² R. Coles (ed.), *The Erik Erickson Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 342

¹⁹³ L. Steffe, J. Gale, *Constructivism in Education*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 355

¹⁹⁴ R. Coles (ed.), *The Erik Erickson Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 268

¹⁹⁵ Rodgers in G. Gagnon, M. Collay, *Designing for Learning: Six Elements in Constructivist Classrooms*, (Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, California, 2001), 278

¹⁹⁶ R. Coles (ed.), *The Erik Erickson Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 280

tasks, leads the individual to a place of societal approval, positive self-image, and increased likelihood of success in future tasks.¹⁹⁷ By corollary, then, failure to achieve certain tasks can lead to societal disapproval and a construction of reality and Self based on that disapproval.

Thus, if the dominant groups in Western society expect school-age children to be industrious in their school work, adolescents to begin interacting romantically with one another, adults to teach and mentor the younger generation, and elders to shift their focus toward modified career choices and leisure pursuits, the societal and popular conception of individual health will likely revolve around the achievement of these phases at the right time in development. Aberrations of this pattern are unfortunately frequently judged as abnormal, eccentric, and even dysfunctional.¹⁹⁸ In addition, Mackie's eight social identities described above modulate these expectations in often prescribed and predictable ways.¹⁹⁹

Spiritual Leaders and clients are inescapably affected and individually moulded within these psychosocial stages. Even without the formal knowledge of Erikson's stages described in Chapter 2, it is my belief that both members of the therapeutic relationship are well-imbued with an intuitive knowledge of the complexities and exigencies set forth by the cultural surround in general. It is in its more specific incarnations that psychosocial stages can be elusive to an unaware or inattentive Spiritual Leader. For example, the broad societal expectation that young adults prepare for the challenges of marriage can be concretized in a subset of the population as a stipulation that each member of the subculture will only marry a heterosexual mate. I do not believe that a Spiritual Leader can be aware of the detailed and specific complexities of the subculture in which the client functions, unless investigations and assessments of the client's constructions of life phases and exigencies take place.

According to Eriksen, Spiritual Leaders can assess phasic complexities and considerations by questioning the client on issues of engagement in the perceived tasks of their specific life phase.²⁰⁰ The questions asked must be focused on the most salient features of the ideal life stage:

- How is the balance of work, leisure, and family going for you?
- Tell me some of the things you are very good at. How do you express these skills?
- How are you doing in school? How do you get along with your classmates?
- How do you feel about how you look? What would make you feel better?
- Now that you're 60 years old, what do you see as important?
- At work, what are you doing that is consistent with what you love to do?
- How satisfied have you been to date with your occupation?
- As you look back over your life so far, what are you most/least proud of?

¹⁹⁷ K. Eriksen, *Toward a Constructivist and Developmental Identity for the Counseling Profession*, Journal of Counseling and Development: JCD September 30, 1999, <http://www.media-server.amazon.com/exec/drm/amzproxy.cgi>, accessed on September 18, 2005

¹⁹⁸ G. Gagnon, M. Collay, *Designing for Learning: Six Elements in Constructivist Classrooms*, (Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, California, 2001), 95

¹⁹⁹ M. Mackie, *Constructing Men and Women*, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston of Canada, 1987), 56

²⁰⁰ K. Eriksen, *Toward a Constructivist and Developmental Identity for the Counseling Profession*, Journal of Counseling and Development: JCD September 30, 1999, <http://www.media-server.amazon.com/exec/drm/amzproxy.cgi>, accessed on September 18, 2005

Questions similar to these can help Spiritual Leaders evoke responses from the client regarding his or her identity, competence, intimacy, generativity, fulfillment, autonomy, achievement, and inner state. Also, the interchange will help highlight gaps between client's readiness and societal expectations, as well as the value structure the client brings to these requirements. Should the client be unaware of the life phase requirements that he or she has internalized, such questions can help the complexities of culture to be brought forward for the client's consideration. In helping clients become more aware of their societal expectations, Spiritual Leaders can protect and foster opportunities for the client to reconstruct and objectify their responses to these demands. Once objectified and brought into the sphere of the visible, the phase tasks through which the client is struggling can be named and honoured by the Spiritual Leader, who can evoke the powers of such practices as intentional reciprocity, Biblio-therapy and psycho-educational programs, in a compassionate and prayerful fashion. Therefore, clients can come to feel a greater degree of readiness toward upcoming life stage transitions as well as feel normalized in the struggles they undergo. Also, Spiritual Leaders and clients can explore alternative, less conventional methods of achieving satisfaction in life phases, methods that more sincerely and harmoniously fit into the client's current meaning-making. And, in the final analysis, such compassionate and loving questionings can encourage the client to de-construct certain rigid interpretations of phasic tasks, interpretations that frequently result in guilt, fear, and low self-regard. Through this sincere interaction, I believe that the client will be more likely to entertain thoughts and options of investigation and progression toward a greater Spiritual health.

Stage

The foregoing Chapters dealt with the meaning, structure, and incarnation of the particular constructivist-developmental stages of spiritual growth. It comes as no surprise that knowledge of the client's stage is a useful tool in the Spiritual Leadership relationship. A caveat must be stated, however: I believe that Spiritual Leaders must be very careful to nurture, love, and foster the client as the person who evolves and continually makes meaning. Too often, I have perceived stage theories fall into the hands of practitioners who are more concerned with categorization, stereotyping, and stage progression than they are with a connected relationship with the client. Knowledge of stages is important relationally, only insofar it provides the Spiritual Leader with a somewhat understandable set of organizing principles under which the client prefers to function. As such, stages give a hint into the client's epistemology. It is assumed in stage models, though, that the more flexible, open, complex, and accepting constructive capacities are hallmarks of greater maturity and capacity for self-authored growth.²⁰¹

Stage assessments can be undertaken through a specific type of questioning: questions that are meant to elicit the meanings that are held behind the client's statements and actions. In this way, both the Spiritual Leader and client can have a clearer view of the epistemology within which the client is embedded.

²⁰¹ K. Eriksen, *Toward a Constructivist and Developmental Identity for the Counseling Profession*, Journal of Counseling and Development: JCD September 30, 1999, <http://www.media-server.amazon.com/exec/drm/amzproxy.cgi>, accessed on September 18, 2005

- How did you come to decided that.... ?
- Why is that important to you?
- What is at stake for you in this situation?
- What makes you feel most uncomfortable, nervous, or afraid about that?
- If this situation were to turn out another way, what would be the cost for you?
- How would you have preferred this situation to work itself out? Why?

Following an initial response to such questions, clients and Spiritual Leaders can proceed to an investigation of the underlying assumptions that make up the current order of consciousness, to create an internal meaning-making spiral that feeds and illuminates itself, thus presenting itself ever-more for objectification. It is also through such questioning that elements of internal authorship (or lack thereof) can be highlighted and attended to within the healing relationship. As such, gaps in differentiation and integration can be further objectified in order to be more diligently worked upon by the emergent subject.

Upon the realization of the identity of the emergent subject, Spiritual Leaders can more effectively join in an intimate fashion and create an appropriate culture of embeddedness by matching the clients in areas of strength and gently mismatching the client in areas of limitation. The resultant culture of embeddedness will create an environment, which holds the client in his or her strengths, contradicts the client in areas of limitation, and remains with the client unwaveringly throughout the entire process. As such, a proper application of stage knowledge combined with the attitudinal and environmental complexities mentioned earlier in this chapter will lay a solid groundwork upon which the client can evolve spiritually and learn to be self-directed.

Style

I do not believe that a full discussion of personality styles is within the scope of this thesis. That does not preclude me, however, from stating the important contributions personality styles make to the therapeutic relationship between Spiritual Leaders and clients. Personality styles can be defined as the preferred modes through which an individual is comfortable operating. Therefore, personality styles are the relatively consistent inclinations that individuals display across various contexts. Often, the word personality 'trait' or 'type' is used to name elements of personal preference with regards to conduct and being. Scholars such as Eriksen and Kagan often use the more biologically driven notion of 'temperament' in helping their clients know, accept, and manage their particular inclinations and preferences.²⁰² Such terms as energetic, artistic, even-tempered, extroverted, investigative, compulsive, and reactive are among some very common descriptors of what I am calling personality styles. Steffe and Gale make a point of reminding us, however, that much like stage conceptions, personality styles should be recognized as constructed approximations of a client's experience, arrayed on a continuum of experiential responses,

²⁰² K. Eriksen, *Toward a Constructivist and Developmental Identity for the Counseling Profession*, Journal of Counseling and Development: JCD September 30, 1999, <http://www.media-server.amazon.com/exec/drm/amzproxy.cgi>, accessed on September 18, 2005

rather than being reified and totalized in all-or-nothing terms.²⁰³ As such, I believe that Spiritual Leaders must be vigilant in deconstructing their own biases regarding personality styles in order to better ensure a sincere and flexible joining with the client, who is innocently relying on them for compassion, fairness and openness. Eriksen points out that ‘style’ differs from ‘stage’ in that it represents a long-term constructive preference rather than a current and developing constructive capacity.²⁰⁴ In other words, whereas stages are transient structures that help us construct and make meaning of our worlds today, styles are quasi-permanent inclinations that allow us to deal with the complexities of the stages within a particular mode of action. Stages and personality styles, however, are similar in their concern with an individual’s consistent tendencies across life’s contexts, whether it be in epistemology (stages) or in preference of action (style).²⁰⁵

A central value of knowledge of personality styles is that it highlights for both Spiritual Leader and client the wealth of human diversity, which in turn is a seminal component of the appreciation of an Other-constructed reality. As such, the range of assets and strengths, interests, and modes within the human community can be perceived and normalized within the context of the culture of embeddedness. This normalization is of great importance, in my opinion, since culture has a tendency of prizing certain personality features over others, thereby resulting in a mild, yet palpable discrimination against the members of society who exhibit the non-dominant traits. Normalization serves to equalize the playing field thus opening a door to a myriad of options that may not have been readily available to the client before the Spiritual Leadership relationship.

An assessment of personality style is, in my opinion, one of the most intuitive and automatic events within any relationship. Within minutes of meeting a new person, we have usually formulated a conception of that person’s style, as well as an opinion regarding the effectiveness of that style. Personality theorists, however, go to great lengths to state that apparent personality traits may not be direct reflections of the true, underlying personality style. Therefore, many style-assessing tools have been created, and have permeated the fields of education and psychology for many decades. The Spiritual Leader, however, can make a reliable assessment of personality style by engaging in a focused and gentle form of questioning:

- What kind of work environments do you prefer?
- What are your favourite school subjects? Why?
- Where do you tend to get your energy?
- What do you usually require to make decisions?
- Are you easily distracted by elements of the environment?
- How often do you simply sit in silence?
- How would you plan a special outing for your spouse?

Clearly, a sound knowledge of personality theories is required in order for such an assessment to be accurate. As such, it is my belief that, in addition to topics such as education, psychology, theology, and

²⁰³ L. Steffe, J. Gale, *Constructivism in Education*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 312

²⁰⁴ K. Eriksen, *Toward a Constructivist and Developmental Identity for the Counseling Profession*, *Journal of Counseling and Development*: JCD September 30, 1999, <http://www.media-server.amazon.com/exec/drm/amzproxy.cgi>, accessed on September 18, 2005

²⁰⁵ R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 232

Biblical philosophy, Spiritual Leaders must have a firm educational grounding in the complexities and interrelations of personality styles.

The knowledge of the style preferences of clients leads to several important and healing implications. The first is the awareness of the client of his or her own preferences in an objectified manner, a knowledge that can be promoted using the Explore-Know-Act model proposed above. Through a knowledge of their own styles and an awareness of the common challenges faced by those who share their personality preferences, I believe that clients can begin on a road to inner peace and self-acceptance that forms the very basis of development through the stages of spiritual growth. In addition, clients can begin to name the very real strengths and assets they carry within them, elements that may have been taken for granted in the past. Once named, once made Object, these strengths can be called upon in a new and intentional fashion that increases the client's stamina and drive for growth and development.²⁰⁶ In contrast, the objectification of personality styles can go a long way to helping the client foster the non-dominant traits within the Self. According to Myers, these are the traits that are most called upon in times of crisis.²⁰⁷ Therefore, an intentional objectification and development of non-dominant capacities carries within it the possibility of more effectively and efficiently weathering the storms of future crises, thereby increasing the likelihood and smoothness of meaning development.

A Final Thought

The foregoing discussion has outlined a great number of capacities, complexities and talents that I believe Spiritual Leaders are called upon to develop. I believe that these abilities are crucial in guiding and walking with another as he or she finds their unique expression of Spiritual maturity. Since my definition and framework of Spirituality outlined in Section 1 is inclusive of all the other major elements of Being, I believe that it is the role of Spiritual Leaders to be well-educated and well-seasoned in the myriad realms and orders that make up human consciousness. Therefore, Spiritual Leadership is not only one of the most important occupations to my mind, it is also one of the most taxing in terms of preparation, study, and personal maturity. My hope is that this work and the subsequent work that flows from it, will help transform the consciousness of the profession of Spiritual Leadership into a consciousness that understands its role to be so much more vast than the current popular formulations would have us believe. As Spiritual Leaders, we are not simply Ministers, or Educators, or Scholars, or Counselors. By the very nature of the intimate depths we must touch in our congregants, students, readers, or clients (whether it be conscious or unconscious action), we have no recourse but to be superbly responsible and uniquely congruent as we attempt to bring light to the quest for God. As such, my conception of true Spiritual Leadership evokes the image of one of the most encompassing, complex, and taxing professions of our day. A true Spiritual Leader, then, is an Educator, a Minister, a Scholar, a Counselor, a Friend, and a Disciple: all of these roles, all at once, all of the time. Spiritual Leadership is one of the last bastions of co-natural knowledge: the type of knowledge that cannot be passed on unless it is deeply believed and faithfully lived. It is through this

²⁰⁶ P. Richmond, *An Introduction to Piaget*, (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 190

²⁰⁷ Myers in A. Barnet, R. Barnet, *The Youngest Minds*, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1998), 190

deep belief, this faithful living, that I believe Spiritual Leaders learn to make meaning; and the meanings themselves are the holy beacons that will light the path of clients, as they struggle and yearn to more clearly see.

Prologue Extended

Our discussion throughout these pages has focused on human evolution and transformation, and how this evolution can be strengthened and furthered by the actions of adept, prayerful, and knowledgeable Spiritual Leaders. I have argued that human growth is an Emerging evolution of consciousness which gives rise to meaning-making and spirituality. I have described a comprehensive framework within which this evolution can be elegantly portrayed and understood. In addition, I presented this framework as the founding platform upon which Spiritual Leaders can approach their clients. As such, Spiritual Leaders humbly accompany clients through the process of Emergence by co-constructing with the client a Culture of Embeddedness. The Culture is created through an unwavering commitment to the person of the client (as seen through the lens of constructivist-developmentalism) and not through a staunch defense of the system within which the Spiritual Leader functions. Taken together, these two arguments challenge the Church to redefine its role and its place in society, in education, and in the world at large. Thus, I believe that the cultural repudiation of Spiritual Leaders can be curbed and transformed into a powerful force for human evolution.

It is my belief that this repudiation, which is commonly observed in Western culture, stems from an angered loss of trust in the institution of Spiritual Leadership. In other words, many voices in today's culture are crying out that they feel betrayed by the institution of Spiritual Leadership, because this Leadership has proven to be a very negative and confusing force in their lives. Too often for my own comfort, I have come face-to-face with stories in which clients have felt betrayed, coerced, and even abused by the attitudes and biases of Spiritual Leaders. The gradual distancing of society from the influences of Spiritual Leadership is making itself felt very strongly, from coast to coast, in our evolving and growing country. No longer are the old standards and adages sufficient to lead the complex population through the labyrinth that is their daily experience. No longer do magical stories and heart-warming parables carry spirit-altering effects within the souls of a cynical and guarded society. No longer do scripted answers and platitudes hold comfort for a dynamic, intelligent, educated, and autonomous people. Our culture is sending clear messages of what it needs to rectify this downward spiral of experience and openness: it needs a transformation in the consciousness of Spiritual Leadership.

In the first prologue of this work, I asked a couple of questions: can we redefine the role of Spiritual Leaders in order to develop and accept a founding epistemology that transcends and unites views and cultures that have traditionally pitted us against one another? Can we redefine the role for Spiritual Leaders in order to set the basis for a Christian culture that is built upon concern for each individual, and not upon concern for the propagation of a traditional system? It is my belief that, in overlooking these pressing issues, we create a culture of Spiritual Leadership that denies the beauty and value of each member of humanity. It is my belief that, in staunchly defending Spiritual Leadership in the form in which it has always existed, we denigrate the evolutionary force through which humanity has been created to progress. It is my belief that in eclipsing our vision of the person for the comfort of a plush and sedentary

epistemology, we demean Yahweh and His Holy Spirit by representing them as partisan, culturally-embedded, narrow-minded and even political. As such, I believe that it is in invoking the Name of Yahweh toward non-transformational or partisan ends, that we truly take it in vain.

Can Spiritual Leadership evolve the strength of consciousness necessary to transform its goals from compliance and obedience to transformation and growth? Can Spiritual Leadership evolve the impetus toward life that would transform its static and self-righteous stance into a dynamic and client-centered stance? Can Spiritual Leadership evolve the security of spirit to transform itself from the Guardian of God to the Child of God? Can Spiritual Leadership find the groundedness within its evolution to transform its focus from the letter of the Law to the Christ-like Spirit of the Law? Can Spiritual Leadership evolve the ability to transcend the distinctions of 'conservative' or 'liberal', and embrace an epistemology of spirituality, meaning, evolution, and coherence? Can Spiritual Leadership evolve the vision of spirit to shift its energy from condemning the incompleteness of other cultures to examining the incompleteness of its own?

The answers to these questions are the future work of this thesis. I believe that the institution of Spiritual Leadership is itself undergoing an evolutionary transition. Just as the person's path to transformation involves the weathering and accommodation of opposition, so Spiritual Leadership stands at the threshold of transformation as it finds opposition in the voice of its vulnerable and innocent clients. It is the purpose of my research to be an encouraging and fearless voice that walks compassionately next to the groaning and re-equilibrating Leadership, as it transforms itself into the powerful instrument God has decreed it to be. I believe that at the end of this challenge, should Spiritual Leaders choose to take it on, lies a world in which Spiritual Leadership returns to a place of trust and ascendancy in the daily struggles of culture and of humanity.

Just as the story of the Pentateuch ends with Moses, standing on a distant hill, watching as the future of his people lay uncertain before their feet, so the story of the evolution of Spiritual Leadership lay before us as an unfinished and on-going work. As such, we are truly at the beginning of this epic quest. Thus, the end of the Pentateuch tells us clearly that God has ordered the created universe such that we will never be released from the mission and challenge to continually learn too see.

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