Faith and Unfaith

Faith Maturity in Canada's At-Risk and Street-Involved Youth

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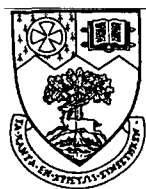

MIKE WOOD DALY

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AUTHOR: Michael H. Wood Daly

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Charles Fensham

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Michael Wood Daly

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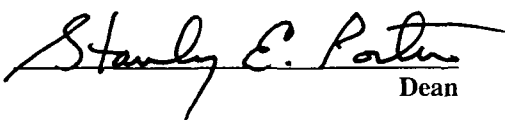Second Reader

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I am thirsty,
       Let me drink

I am tired,
       Let me sleep

I am hungry,
       Let me eat

I am lost,
       Let me find the way.

(Maya Chacaby – Age 24)

ABSTRACT

What is faith? And who has it? Traditional arguments suggest that "faith" means: "faith in God" or "faith in gods" and therefore that faith is an idea reserved only for religious communities. The unfortunate implication is that those who do not "have faith" in God have "no faith" at all. It is the author's thesis that "faith" can be seen in a broader context and that the implications of this broader perspective hold important implications for ministry with at-risk and street-involved youth.

Relying heavily on the foundational work of James Fowler, the project describes faith as a process of "meaning-making" and applies this understanding to the author's work with street-involved youth in downtown Toronto. Through a survey of current research, developmental theory, theological frameworks, biblical themes and surveys with street-involved youth the study draws important conclusions for ministry with street-involved youth and other marginalized groups not traditionally associated with the church. The author argues that street-involved youth share many of the core values traditionally associated with "faithful" living and that these shared values provide significant opportunities for street-youth *and* church communities to grow in faith.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

funding bodies and individuals that have contributed to this project and without whom this project would not have been possible.

The project, of course, would also not have been possible without the input, participation, and yes, even mentorship, of the at-risk and street-involved youth of the Ground Level Café who agreed to answer my questions, offer their opinions, and wholeheartedly give voice to the meanings and values of their community and culture. This voice finds particular clarity in the poems included in this work that have been written by some of the young people involved our program. Many thanks as well to my colleague Lisa Page, for joining our endeavour with ready hands, an open heart and dedicated spirit.

And to my families, those of both birth and marriage, thank you! Your faith and patience in me and in this work are clearly embedded between the lines of these pages. To Jan, my wife, friend, confidant, proof reader and mentor, thank you for sharing in and helping me along this journey. And finally, as I place the finishing touches on the chapters of this thesis, thank you to our daughter Bethany, whose wide eyes and happy spirit teach me daily about faith's journey and of the chapters in life that await us together.

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Mike Wood Daly
Toronto, Ontario
April, 2002
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INTRODUCTION

Asking the Question

What is faith? And who has it? For centuries, theologians, sociologists, historians, psychologists and even magazine editors[1] have debated the issue; focusing their discussion on the world's various religions and the many traditions associated with them. Wherever and however there discussion has led them, the conversation usually ends with the conclusion (or is it their assumption?) that "faith" means faith in God (or the gods). The unfortunate implication is that those who do not "have faith" in God have "no faith" at all.

In 1981, James Fowler encouraged the religious and non-religious alike to challenge these assumptions and to consider "faith" from a radically different perspective. In his book, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning,* Fowler lifts the concept of human faith from its traditionally religious context to define it as the process of "meaning-making". "Faith", he writes:

> ...is a person's or a group's way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives. Faith is a person's way of seeing him

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[1] In April 1964 the cover of Time Magazine asked the question, "Is God Dead?"

or herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose.[2]

Faith, as described by Fowler then, is often but not necessarily religious. Instead of describing one's place within a particular tradition or institutional context, the term "faith" gives flesh and bone to the things that bring us meaning and purpose in life. Whether we are religious or not; Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, or not; we are all concerned with how to put our lives together with "what will make life worth living."[3]

For those of us who claim belonging in the Christian community, this presents a significant challenge. What does it mean for us to view faith with the kind of 'open-endedness' Fowler suggests? What does it mean for us to begin seeing people who have typically been regarded as people *without* faith, instead as being people *with* faith? Perhaps not our faith, our beliefs, or our values, but nevertheless: faith. And not just a half-hearted, less-than or misguided faith, but real faith; one illustrative of people longing and working to find meaning and purpose in their lives.

One such group that falls outside our typically narrow way of defining "people of faith", is the at-risk and street-involved youth with whom I work. As the Director of a non-profit agency for employment-disadvantaged youth,

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[2] James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995) p 4
[3] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 5

I am regularly confronted with these young people's capacity to grapple with questions of meaning and value, to find coherence in the "multiple forces and relations"[4] in their lives and to give flesh and bone to that which they find holy and significant, building "faith" both within themselves *and* within me.

My thesis is that these at-risk and street-involved youth have faith. With Fowler, I believe that they share a universal quest for meaning and purpose; that they hold and defend certain values, many of which, resonate with those espoused by us within the Church, *and* that these values have much to teach us about ourselves, our own faith, and the ministries we seek to undertake.

Our task is to discover what this faith looks like. How similar is it to our "common" understanding of faith? How does it differ? What gives these youth meaning? What is it that lends coherence to and helps usher in for them the "force field of life?"[5]

To answer these questions, we will first need to establish a context or framework: a snapshot of these at-risk and street-involved youth. Who are they? Where do they come from? What are their communities like? Chapter

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[4] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 5
[5] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p 4

1 begins the task by describing the project setting: the Ground Level Café and the downtown Toronto community of Parkdale.

Chapter 2 attempts to narrow the focus, first by describing Canadian youth in general and then those living on (or "close to") the street in Toronto. Central to our discussion here will be the works of Reginald Bibby[6] and Michael Adams,[7] as well as recent studies conducted by the Shout Clinic[8] and the City of Toronto itself.

Thirdly, we will explore faith as it relates to western society's theoretical foundations of psychological and social development. What are the factors of family and society that contribute to our make-up? What do we share with these youth as partners in the human family? How do we differ? In so doing, it will be important for us to ask: "Why Fowler?" and "Why 'faith'"? What is it about his theories that are so significant to our area of study? What limitations do they present? Is it really faith we are talking about or is there some other term that better describes the framework of meaning and value we observe in street-youth? To help us in this task we will survey the

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[6] Reginald W. Bibby, *Canada's Teens: Today, Yesterday and Tomorrow* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 2001)

[7] Michael Adams, *Sex in the Snow: Canadian Social Values at the End of the Millenium* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1998)

[8] The Shout Clinic is a youth serving agency focusing on health issues of at-risk and street-involved youth. It is situated on Jarvis Street near Wellesley in downtown Toronto.

standard works Piaget, Erikson, Kohlberg, as well as William Cantwell Smith, Carol Gilligan, Brian Gerrish and, of course, Fowler.

Drawing on the works of H. Richard Niebuhr and Stephan Bevans, Chapter 4 proposes a series of theological models intended to stand alongside the psycho/social models established in Chapter 3.

Chapter 5 shifts our attention to some of the dominant theological themes relating to our work. These include: creation, the city, exodus and exile, the stranger and shalom.

Chapter 6 presents my own contribution to the limited study of street-involved youth in Canada. Drawing on tools developed by Fowler, Bibby and Adams, we will share the results of surveys and interviews conducted with twelve street-involved youth connected with our youth employment program.

Finally, in Chapter 7, our learning and conclusions will be shared as a means of helping both ourselves and others gain clearer insight into the faith maturity of street-involved youth; the obstacles which stand in the way of their "faith growth"; and the elements necessary for fostering greater "faith maturity". In considering these themes, our hope is that Churches, religious

communities and para-Church ministries will be challenged to consider their own faith maturity and begin or continue to explore their capacity to minister with at-risk and street-involved youth (or other traditionally marginalized groups) in healthy and life-giving ways.

CHAPTER ONE

FROM GROUND LEVEL
Setting the Context

> So I fell asleep in the mall
> They shake,
> Really large men, angry
> Looming over me, hauling me up
>   And outa there
>   No sleeping
>   No rest
>   No place to Be
> Five minutes, why not?
> I mean no offence,
> I'm just tired.[1]
>
>   (Sue Cohen)

This project focuses on the at-risk and street-involved youth who are

employed by and associated with Ground Level Youth Ventures, a non-

profit, charitable agency for employment disadvantaged youth between the

ages of 16 – 24.

The downtown Toronto community of Parkdale in which we find ourselves

represents one of Toronto's oldest neighbourhoods. Its stately homes and

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[1] The poems that appear in this thesis are part of a collection of works by at-risk and street-involved youth connected with our agency and which appear in the SKETCH Calendars for 2001 and 2002. SKETCH is a partner agency that uses the arts to promote self-confidence and employment skills amongst street-youth.

tree-lined streets hint at an earlier affluence now reserved only for Toronto's prestigious Rosedale, Kingsway and Forrest Hill addresses.

For many, Parkdale continues to be a vibrant and life-giving place. People from more than 60 cultures, speaking more than 40 different languages, live within its boundaries.[2] It is home to a rich mix of artists, young professionals, entrepreneurs, merchants and community-interest groups. Unfortunately, for many it is also a community with overwhelming challenges. Often characterized by its rooming houses, high unemployment, drug trafficking and prostitution, Parkdale presents many significant obstacles to healthy living: particularly for its youth.

Established in 1997 as an arms-length project of the Church in the Great Hall (a member church of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec), Ground Level Youth Ventures was designed to meet the growing needs of these youth. The Church in the Great Hall began its own ministry in 1988 in Toronto's Harbourfront; a community characterized by high-priced condominiums and tourist attractions. After many persistent but frustrating attempts to establish a viable congregation in this affluent neighbourhood, the congregation moved in 1994 to a century-old building known as The Great Hall at the corner of Queen Street West and Dovercourt Road.

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[2] Parkdale Liberty Economic Development Corporation, Promotional Brochure, 1997

Built in 1889 as the City of Toronto's second YMCA, the building bears a long

history of opening its doors to the community. Famous Canadian athlete

Tom Longboat trained here, as did chocolate giant, A.C. Nielson. Rumour

also has it that the gymnasium was host to Canada's first basketball game. In

the 1930's, the building was purchased by the Polish Community Association.

They city's Polish newspaper was published here and during the Second

World War, the building provided housing space to Polish refugees. From

the 1960's to the 1980's, the building was operated as a venue for the

performing arts and became well known as home of *The Music Gallery*. Today

the building maintains its tradition of opening its doors to the community as

a place for public worship, loft apartments, artists' studios, weddings,

community events, a theatre company, concerts and film productions.

In 1997, when the tenants occupying the building's store-front space decided

to vacate their premises, the congregation was presented with the challenge

of determining how best to use the space. Would they choose to rent it out

for market value in order to support the high-cost maintenance budget for the

four-story building or would they choose to develop some form of

community ministry out of the space?

As a member of the congregation at the time, and participant in McMaster

Divinity College's Doctor of Ministry Program, I was asked to conduct a

community consultation to assist with their decision. Discussions were held

with representatives from local government, service agencies, community

residents, surrounding businesses and youth themselves. The community

had recently witnessed the closure of a federally-funded employment centre,

which in the previous year had served over 700 youth. As a result,

unemployed youth and what to do with them presented itself as one of the

neighbourhood's sexiest political issues. Conscious of these needs,

acknowledging the highly limited financial resources of the local church and

wanting to establish a model that would not rely solely on government

funding, organizers agreed to pursue the creation of a café which would

provide jobs and job training for employment disadvantaged youth. The

result was Youthworks, a precursor to the recently formed Ground Level

Youth Ventures.

As an affiliated project of the church, the program was initially seen as an

important means of gaining a highly visible profile in the community. Project

organizers and the church saw the project as helping to put a public face on

the church's ministry and to provide an important bridge between

neighbourhood and church. Most importantly, movement was intended two

ways: inward towards the church *and* outward towards the community. The

café was intended as a place of meeting where the "unkownness" of "the other" might be reduced; where space, food and hospitality might create openness between people of different communities, cultures and values and, like yeast, give rise to the building of new relationships.

In February of 1999, the Ground Level Café was established to provide street-involved youth with actual paid work. Located at ground level in the Great Hall Centre, the café provides traditional forms of job and life-skill training. Innovative models for peer mentoring empower youth with limited education, skills and experience towards long-term, meaningful employment. Its supportive work environment helps build confidence, instill worth, and encourage healthy lifestyle choices through a program that emphasizes skill development, team building, interpersonal communication and problem solving.[3]

Since its inception, more than 30 young adults have completed our full-time café training program, with another 250 youth having benefited from our referral and resumé assistance services. Of the 30 young people who have completed our full-time program, approximately 75% have found full or part-time work, returned to school or enrolled in some other form of vocational or skill training. Their jobs have included positions with the Toronto Public

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[3] Please see Appendix C – Ground Level Brochure

Health Department, other local service agencies, graphic design firms, the food services sector, retail and the burgeoning local film industry.

In 2002, the Ground Level will undergo a further transformation, by moving out of the Great Hall to establish a new café and office space in a yet-to-be determined location. The prospect of this move comes with anticipation and excitement as well as disappointment. Anticipation and excitement, because the move affords the opportunity for our program to assume a space that is potentially larger and better suited to our current program needs as well as its future development; disappointment, because it highlights the distance which often exists between a church's ministry claims and its willingness or capacity to embrace that ministry and the community to which it is directed.

In December of 2001, the Church Council, at the recommendation of the Elders, decided not to renew the Ground Level's lease and to take back the storefront space we currently occupy, for Sunday School and other mid-week programs which might be seen as being "more directly related to the church."

Shortly after the project's inception, the Church in the Great Hall ended its relationship with the founding minister of the congregation – their parting characterized by hurt feelings on both sides. For almost three years the congregation functioned without a full-time minister, relying on the ministry

of several interim ministers. During this period, the small congregation of approximately 50 people spent almost all of its energy trying to survive, find healing and discern its future.

Similarly, the Ground Level project spent its first two years trying to establish itself on a shoestring budget. All of my energy, and that of our Directors, was invested in helping the project to survive. Little was left over for developing ongoing means of participation and ownership for the congregation as a whole. Even when opportunities were available and presented to the congregation, they had little time or energy left to invest. The result has been an increasing distance between the two organizations.

While these circumstances have undoubtedly contributed to the congregation's decision, they do not explain them. In its promotional materials, the church describes itself as "The Come-As-You-Are-Church."

> This is not about blue jeans. We're not big on dressing up for Sunday at the Church in the Great Hall. But when we say come as you are, we're talking about something more than a dress code. We're saying that you'll be accepted for who you are – whatever you're like and whatever you're facing in your life. Your church background (or lack of it) doesn't matter either. The Church in the Great Hall is affiliated with the Baptist Churches of Toronto. But our congregation reflects all kinds of church traditions, including Catholic, Lutheran, Pentecostal and none at all. So wherever you're coming from, *come as you are.*"[4]

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[4] Please see Appendix D - Church in the Great Hall promotional brochure.

The pamphlet goes on to say:

> But church is more than Sunday mornings. At the Church in the
> Great Hall, we're also trying to make a contribution in our
> neighbourhood. As well as providing a spiritual resource, we're
> working in co-operation with other groups and organizations to help
> meet the needs of people who live and work around us. Whatever
> your interests and abilities, come as you are – and help us make a
> difference.

Noble and creative claims - if you can live up to them. And our experience is

that the Church in the Great Hall has had a hard time with these claims, at

least as far as ministry with street youth are concerned. The appearance,

language, the culture of these young people is confusing to them. The pain

and grief many of them have suffered frightens them. As many as 40% of

street-youth identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered.

That frightens them. And while these concerns remain largely unstated, the

congregation's lack of direct involvement in the project articulates them

clearly.

Despite initial excitement for the project, and the congregation's willingness

to support it in word and through space, the congregation's direct

involvement and apparent sense of ownership has been limited. From the

outset, congregational leaders chose not to appoint directors to our advisory

board – for fear of liability. Requests to have church members act as mentors

went unheeded. Church members poorly attended prayer meetings, Open

Houses and even the café's official opening. Church members rarely visit the

café to buy coffee or drinks or even to stop in and say hello to the young people working in the café.

While the church's decision to sever this relationship saddens and disappoints us, it merely states what we already know to be true: the contemporary church struggles to know its ministry outside church walls. Our current paradigms continue to value conformity and protectiveness over diversity and risk-taking; the theoretical, theological and relational boxes we maintain are designed for "putting into" rather than "breaking out of". It challenges our sense of ownership, mandate and purpose. It asks of us: "Who will we partner with?" "How will we partner with them?" and "for what purpose?" It raises questions about meaning, purpose, value and faith – not just for others but for ourselves.

Those of us still connected with the project know that The Ground Level Café is more than just an employment service, and more than just a café. We know it as a place of ministry where the "otherness" of street-youth can be celebrated; where their learning as well as their expressions of grief and loss can be transformed into more than just opportunities but the very building blocks of new hope, new meaning and new faith.

In sharing their stories, my hope is that congregations considering similar forms of community-based ministry, either with youth or other marginalized people, might be encouraged to grapple with these questions in ways that develop healthy partnerships, ensure the long-term viability of their ministry endeavours, and ultimately build faith in the lives of those who minister and are ministered to.

TECHNICOLOUR DREAMCOATS
A Profile of Street-Involved Youth

Grange Park in October

Night yawns, softly,
climbs into my sleeping bag
and wraps her arms around me.
She kisses me goodnight
and with eyes already closed
touches her toes to mine.
Night has cold feet.

(natasha sigalov)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Andrew Lloyd Weber and Tim

Rice's first musical collaboration, tells the story of a young man named

Joseph, living in the land of Canaan. [1]   As his father Jacob's favourite son,

Joseph is also spoiled. While the rest of his 11 brothers are left to wear

sheepskin, Joseph is adorned in a fabulous rainbow-coloured coat, a gift from

his adoring father. Joseph's brothers are not impressed, and when he tells

them about a dream in which their stacks of wheat bow down to his stack of

wheat, they decide they have finally had enough.

Joseph's brothers abduct him, destroy his cherished coat and toss him in a pit,

leaving him for dead. However, when a caravan of Ishmaelites comes by on

donkeys at the last minute, the brothers relent and decide not to murder him.

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[1] Genesis 37:19-20

Instead, they sell him into slavery. Either way, Joseph is out of the picture, and they get a little extra cash. So they slaughter a goat, bloody up Joseph's coat of many colours, and return to their father, 'heartbroken' at the loss of their brother.

A short stroll down Yonge Street in Toronto, Rue St. Catherine in Montreal, Granville Street in Vancouver, or the main street of any one of Canada's other major cities leaves little doubt that Canada's urban youth share something of Joseph's colourful attire. Their patched jackets and jeans, bandanas, piercings, shaved and dyed hair, etched, scarred and tattooed skin, often reflect special belonging to one clan or another.

Unfortunately, Technicolor dreamcoats and their accessories are not the only things these youth share. Like Joseph, the youth on many of Canada's streets find themselves separated and disenfranchised from their families. They are cut off by hatred, jealousy, misunderstanding and fear, abandoned to seemingly hopeless, helpless worlds. Dreams. Dashed.

Joseph did not find himself at the bottom of a desert pit simply because of his coat of many colours; it was the culmination of years of negative family dynamics. Jacob, his father, had stolen his own brother Esau's birthright. Jacob had deceived his father Isaac along with the help of his mother,

Rebeccah. Jacob's father-in-law, Laban, had fooled Jacob on his wedding night and given him Leah to marry, instead of Rachel. Joseph's family was more than just a little troubled.

Not all of Toronto's at-risk and street-involved youth come from dysfunctional families, but many do. And those that do not have clearly experienced grief and pain along the way as well. Either way, these youth find themselves in a community that is largely abandoned, rejected, feared and even despised by much of mainstream society. Who are these technicolour youth, these Josephs and Josephines who inhabit our urban pathways?

2.1   Bibby's National Picture of Canadian Youth

To answer this question, we begin by looking at Canadian youth in general. In 1975, Reginald Bibby, a former Baptist Minister and currently Professor of Sociology at the University of Lethbridge, began the arduous task of documenting what Canadians believe and value.[2] Followed by subsequent *Project Canada* surveys in 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995 and now 2000, Bibby's work provides a vivid snapshot of Canadian social trends and values over the past quarter century. In 1984, 1992, and again in 2000, these surveys were adapted and

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[2] Reginald W. Bibby, *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1987) p. xi

expanded to include the input of some 10,000 high school youth across the country. What did Bibby find?[3]

First, he discovered there is nothing that Canadian teens value more than *friendship* and *freedom*. Almost 90% of those who responded indicated a high level of importance on being connected with friends, while at the same time having the freedom to live life as they want to.

Not surprisingly, the related traits of *being loved* and *having choices* rate a close second. Bibby puts it succinctly when he writes: "These seemingly

Values of Canadian Teens			
	Nationally	Males	Females
Friendship	85%	80	90
Freedom	85	84	85
Being loved	77	65	87
Having choices	76	73	79
A comfortable life	73	71	74
Success	71	70	73
Concern for others	62	51	53
Family life	59	51	66
Excitement	57	58	55
Parent' opinion of you	44	38	50
Your looks	39	40	39
Recognition	32	34	31
Spirituality	29	23	35
Having power	24	32	16
Being popular	16	21	11
Religious involvement	10	9	10

(Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 13))

paradoxical values are ones that are common to all of us. Most of us find we deeply value good ties with the people we care about. At the same time, we do not want to sacrifice our individuality and

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[3] Reginald W. Bibby, *Canada's Teens: Today, Yesterday and Tomorrow* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing: Toronto, 2001) p. vii ff

autonomy. The trick is finding out how to get it all. It is a delicate

balance. By the time young people have reached their teens, they

already are experiencing that tension. Friends are great, but so is

freedom."[4]

The list continues, with more than two-thirds of Canadian high school

youth placing high value on living a comfortable life, having success in

what they do, being concerned for others, and experiencing

"excitement" in life. Predictably, at this stage in their lives, Bibby

found that proportionally fewer numbers of young people are placing

high importance on the role parents play in their lives.

Typically, we recognize that when children value their parents, the

attitudes and values held by their parents factor significantly in how

children see themselves. As children grow older and their attachment

to friends and other "significant others" grows, we anticipate that

psychological and emotional attachment to their parents diminish. For

some, this devaluation is temporary, reflecting a natural and necessary

stage of individuation. For others, the minimizing of parents

importance in their lives may suggest that a father or mother is, in fact,

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[4]Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 11

no longer as active, significant, or even present in their lives, either because of divorce, separation, or death.

Of the less significant values included in this list, we take particular notice of the importance Canada's youth place on spirituality. Close to one in three Canadian high school teenagers indicate that spirituality plays a significant role in their lives. In contrast, only one in ten indicated that it is important for them to be part of a religious group. While religious values appear important, the religious institutions traditionally associated with the expression of these values do not seem important to these youth. For most of them, today's church just does not "cut it."

The kind of values we have been talking about are typically called "terminal values." These are what youth want to "get" out of life. It is also important, however, to consider what Milton Rockeach calls, "instrumental values", those internal forces that help shape and govern *how* these young people pursue what it is they want to get out of life.[5]

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[5] Milton Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values* (New York: Free Press, 1973)

According to Bibby,[6] honesty and humour top the list of the

instrumental values that Canadian High Schoolers consider most

important. As Bibby

puts it, Canadian

youth place high value

on integrity: "they also

like to be able to

laugh."[7] Surprising

Instrumental Values of High School Teens			
	Nationally	Males	Females
Honesty	73%	62	83
Humour	73	71	74
Cleanliness	64	61	68
Intelligence	59	59	60
Politeness	58	51	65
Forgiveness	58	47	67
Working hard	52	49	54
Generosity	42	37	47
Creativity	42	42	41

(Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 16)

perhaps, to many adults (and maybe many youth themselves) is that

cleanliness rated third on the list followed by intelligence, politeness,

forgiveness, working hard, generosity and creativity.

Sources of Enjoyment			
	Nationally	Males	Females
Friends	94%	93	95
Music	90	87	92
Your own room	75	67	82
Your Mother	71	65	76
Dating	69	70	68
Sports	66	77	57
Your Father	62	58	66
Boy / Girlfriend	62	62	62
Television	60	62	62

(adapted from Bibby, *Canada's Teens* p.24)

When asked what brings them enjoyment and how they spend their time, Bibby found that friends, music, television, family and sports all rank high on the priority list of Canadian teens.

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[6] Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 16
[7] Bibby, *Canada's Teen.*, p. 15

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Canada's youth are clearly their own people, expressing their own unique beliefs and values. They are also a "chip off the old block."

Daily Activities			
	Nationally	Males	Females
Watch television	92%	93	91
Listen to music	86	84	88
Time with friends	60	59	62
Do homework	44	34	54
Use a computer	41	48	34
Use e-mail	27	27	26
Access websites	24	31	18
Follow sports	21	37	7
Keep up with news	16	19	14

(Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p.28)

Bibby reflects:

> Sociologists are among those observers of life who make a living working from the assumption that the key to understanding people is to understand the social environments from which they come. While we may like to think we are wonderfully creative and individualistic, a prosaic peek into our lives typically reveals a more humbling reality: who we are can be traced back with embarrassing ease to the cultures, communities, families, friendships and other social settings from which we have come. That is not to say we never relate to others as creative individuals. But it is to say we are the recipients of considerable social influence.[8]

Reflecting on the major influences in their lives, Canada's youth recognize the significance of how they were raised. They also believe they have something to say when it comes to defining who they are and who they will become. Ninety-one percent of those surveyed indicated the importance of how they were brought up. Eighty-nine percent identified their own will power.

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[8] Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 30

Canada's youth are concerned about school, what to do when they

finish school, not having enough time, enough money, enough friends.

They are concerned about being misunderstood by their parents, their

looks, the meaning of life, and being bored. They do not like changes.

Many are not happy with their weight. Thirty per cent are lonely,

depressed or concerned about their parents' marriage. Twenty-five

percent are concerned about sex.

When it comes to society, they also have concerns. When asked what

they thought Canada's most serious concerns were, this is what they

said:

Canada's Most Serious Concerns According to Youth	
1. Crime	6. The Environment
2. The Economy	7. Poverty
3. Racial Discrimination	8. Violence in Schools
4. Drugs	9. Unity
5. Violence	10. American influence

(Bibby. *Canada's Teens.* p. 43)

While Canada's high-schoolers are aware of problems, this does not

prevent them from dreaming. Ninety-five per cent of those surveyed

expect to pursue a career. Eighty-five percent expect to get the job they

want when they graduate. Eighty-eight percent expect to get married

and stay with the same partner for life. Ninety-six percent expect to

own their own home; 79% to be more financially comfortable; and 49%

believe Canada will pay off its national debt in their lifetime. In summary, Bibby suggests "the Canadian dream" is alive, well and pervasive.[9] Quoting one 16-year-old from a small town in Alberta, he writes: "I believe we live in a country where anyone can succeed and where most things that hold a person back are self-made."[10]

Certainly, not much is holding them back when it comes to an activity that has traditionally been regarded as very adult. Canada's youth

Teenage Sexual Activity			
	Nationally	Males	Females
Daily	6%	9	3
Several times weekly	10	10	9
About once a week	8	8	9
2-3 times a month	7	7	6
About once a month	5	7	13
Hardly ever	13	14	12
Never	51	44	57

(Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 93)

are sexual beings too. And society knows it. Television shows like *Sex in the City, Will and Grace, Drew Carey, The Lofters* and *Temptation Island* all push the envelope of what society has typically regarded as appropriate when it comes to sex. Is it any wonder that one of the most widely viewed episodes in all of television history was the episode of *Seinfeld* entitled *'Master of His Domain'*, in which Jerry, Elaine, George and Kramer wager a bet on who can go the longest without masturbating?

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[9] Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 136
[10] Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 136

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According to Bibby's most recent survey, almost 10% of teenage men

are engaging in sex on a daily basis. While the number is significantly

lower for young women in this category, almost 25% of those surveyed

(27% males and 22% of females) claim they have sex once a week.

And, while former United States President Bill Clinton may not be

clear on the definition, it is apparent that most, though not all,

Canadian youth consider "sex" to mean "sexual intercourse." In all,

currently one in two Canadian teens are sexually involved. Of course,

one wonders: how inflated are these responses due to boasting? Even

if they are, suffice to say: Canada's youth are sexual beings and the

high numbers of them engaging in sexual activities confirm it.

Another important indicator of where Canada's youth are at is their

attitudes and behaviour with respect to drugs and alcohol. When

asked, "how often do you use ..." the following picture emerged:

Drug Use Among Teenagers

	Weekly or more	Once or twice a month	Less than once a month	Never
Smoke Cigarettes	23%	5	9	63
Males	22	5	9	64
Females	24	6	9	61
Beer, Wine, Alcohol	22	30	26	22
Males	29	29	22	20
Females	16	31	28	25
Marijuana / Hashish	14	10	13	63
Males	19	11	13	57
Females	9	8	14	69
Other Illegal Drugs	3	4	7	86
Males	3	4	8	84
Females	2	4	7	87

(Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 98)

Finally, a word about religion. Religion has always been an important part of Canadian culture. It continues to be. As Bibby recognizes:

> No organization in the country has more people, short of citizenship, who identify with it. One in four people claim to attend religious services close to every week; what organization, including professional sports teams, can even begin to think of having such followings.[11]

Though only one in five of today's Canadian high-schoolers are actively involved in organized religion, 75% continue to identify with some form of religious group or community; whether it be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, or something else. This means that: "in a psychological and emotional sense, they still 'think' they are 'religious

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[11] Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 114

22

somethings', even if they are not actively participating."[12] In fact, 45%

of the youth surveyed (almost double the number who attend weekly)

indicate that they might be more open to being involved with religious

groups "if they found it worthwhile."[13]

With this level of interest, it is not surprising that Canada's youth find

a wide variety of beliefs and religious themes to be significant.

Religious Beliefs of Canadian Youth

"I believe ..."	Nationally	Males	Females
Conventional			
In life after death	78%	73	82
In heaven	75	69	80
God exists	73	69	77
In angels	72	62	82
God or higher power cares about me	68	63	73
Jesus was the Divine Son of God	65	61	69
In hell	60	58	61
Have felt presence of God / higher power	36	36	37
Less Conventional			
In near death experiences	76	71	82
Miraculous healings	63	59	68
Have personally experienced an event before it happened	63	59	67
In ESP	59	55	62
In astrology	57	48	65
Some people have psychic power	55	47	62
We can have contact with spirit world	43	38	47

(Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 123)

In Canada, it is generally assumed that religion has played an

important role in shaping values and morality. For example Bibby

suggests that: "the dominant Christian tradition has stressed the

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[12] Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p 117
[13] Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 117

importance of interpersonal considerations in the course of making

moral decisions, attempting to transmit such ideas through Sunday

schools and day schools."[14] Bibby asked youth then: "Generally

speaking, on what do you base your views of what is right and

wrong?"[15]

What he observed was that five in ten teenagers have an "internal

focus", citing personal judgement and morality as the basis for their

decision-making; whereas slightly more than four in ten cite "external"

factors such as religion, how they were raised, as well as impact on

others.

Bases for Moral Values

	National	Male	Female
Internal Focus	**47%**	**51**	**44**
Personal judgement	18	21	16
Personal morality	9	10	18
How I feel at the time	6	6	6
Consequences for me	5	6	4
Personal beliefs	3	2	4
Conscience	3	3	3
Personal values	3	3	3
External Focus	**43**	**39**	**45**
Religion / spirituality / God	11	10	12
Family considerations	9	8	11
How I was raised	7	5	9
Impact on others	7	7	7
Laws	4	5	3
Friends	1	1	1
Other	4	3	2
Other	**2**	**2**	**2**
Varies	**4**	**3**	**5**
Don't know	4	5	3

(Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 126)

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[14] Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p 125
[15] Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 125

Bibby also makes the important observation that these responses vary

significantly based on the religious identification of teenagers. Those

identifying with Conservative Protestant churches are the most likely

to cite religious sources for their moral decisions. Teens with other

religious affiliations are more likely to base their decisions on personal

factors and external factors *other* than those of a religious nature.

Overall, his findings point to an interesting paradox - that many young

people who are not involved in organized religion are "nonetheless

seemingly interested in many things that organized religion 'is

about.'"[16] Quoting Douglas Todd of the Vancouver Sun, he writes:

"Most young people would appreciate a safe, accepting – even fun –

place where they can ask hard religious questions, and where 'doubt'

is not a dirty word." He adds: "Either the clergy's genuine welcome is

not getting out to teenagers, mass culture is just too hostile to faith

institutions, or the spiritual message isn't one that clicks with most

young people. Or all of the above."[17]

2.2 Michael Adam's *Sex in the Snow*

In 1997, Environics researcher Michael Adams released *Sex in the Snow:*

Canadian Social Values at the End of the Millenium. Billed as "an

intriguing mix of social values research, funky insights and

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[16] Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 125
[17] Douglas Todd, quoted in Bibby's *Canada Teens*, p. 14

provocative speculation,"[18] Adam's work expands our understanding

of Canada's social and psychological landscape in a different way.

Though somewhat misleading at first, the book's title plays on what he

sees an increasing trend in Canadian society towards thrill-seeking.

The "snow" is an allusion to Canada's framework of social values. The

"sex" is a reference to the new emphasis on hedonism and self-

determination.

Adams identifies eighty human trends or motivators that help define

the way we think and feel as well as the kind of lifestyles we

embrace.[19] He further suggests that these eighty trends fall within four

basic categories: 1) traditional/social, 2) traditional/individual, 3)

modern/individual, and 4) modern/social. When these four

categories are plotted as a map they appear as follows:[20]

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[18] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*, (Cover Page Review quoting the Ottawa Citizen)
[19] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*, p. 46
[20] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*, p. 48

TRADITIONAL

Traditional communities, institutions and social status	Financial independence, stability and security
Experience-seeking and new communities	Personal autonomy and self-fulfillment

SOCIAL   INDIVIDUAL

MODERN
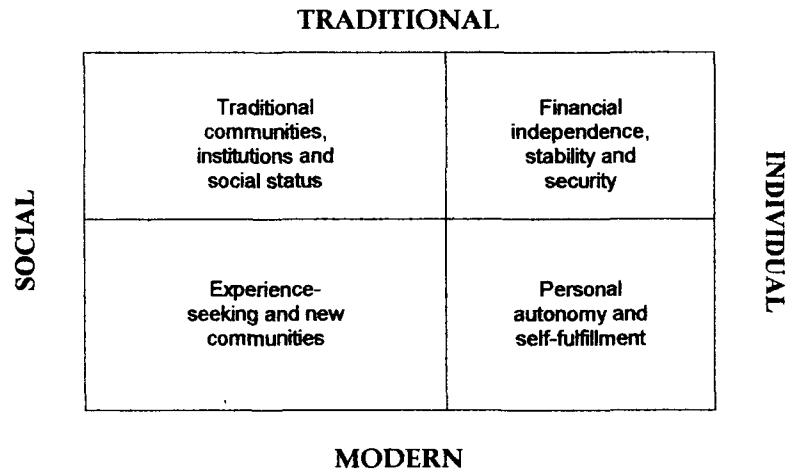
Together they provide four general depictions of the meaning

underlying people's values which suggest that Canadians are no

longer as reliant on social class, economic status, race, religion or age

as defining demographic character as they are forming connections

based on mutual interest, affinity and need.

Adams' observations suggest that Canadians who fall into the upper

right quadrant are fundamentally motivated by needs for stability,

security and financial independence. Those in the upper left place

significant value in social status, traditional communities and

institutions. People whose values place them in the lower right

emphasize personal control and self-fulfillment while those in the

lower left pursue novelty, new experiences and new frontiers.

Dividing the Canadian population

into three basic groups based on

age, Adams observed the

following: Pre-boomers (those

aged 50 or older in 1995) found

themselves in the traditional

(upper) half of the map straddling

the line between social and

Canadian Social Tribes	
The Elders:	
Rational Traditionalists	12%
Extroverted Traditionalists	7%
Cosmopolitan Modernists	6%
The Boomers	
Disengaged Darwinists	17%
Autonomous Rebels	11%
Anxious Communitarians	6%
Connected Enthusiasts	6%
Generation X	
Autonomous Post-Materialists	9%
Aimless Dependents	8%
Security-Seeking Ascetics	6%
New Aquarians	5%
Social Hedonists	4%
Thrill-Seeking Materialists	3%
(Adams, www.environics.ca)	

individual.   Baby-boomers (those aged 30 – 49) were generally found

positioned within the modern / individual quadrant (lower right), and

the Generation Xers (ages 29 and younger) found themselves just

inside the lower left, experience-seeking quadrant.

Further observation revealed that these three age-related groups could

be further differentiated into twelve groups or what Adams calls

"tribes": three among those over the age of 50, four among baby

boomers, and five among those aged 29 and younger (despite the fact

that this last group is the smallest in terms of total numbers). More

recently, Adams has added a sixth tribe (Security-Seeking Ascetics) to

this last category, increasing the total number of tribes to thirteen.[21]

These groups or tribes map out as follows:[22]

TRADITIONAL

♦ Extroverted Traditionalists (7%)	
♦ Anxious Communitarians (9%)	
	Rational Traditionalist (15%) ♦
♦ Thrill-Seeking Materialist (7%)	Aimless Dependents (8%) ♦
	Disengaged Darwinists (18%) ♦
♦ Social Hedonists (4%)	
♦ Connected Enthusiasts (6%)	♦ Autonomous Rebels (10%)
♦ New Aquarians (4%)	Autonomous
Cosmopolitan Modernists (6%) ♦	Post-Materialists (6%) ♦

SOCIAL (left axis) — INDIVIDUAL (right axis)

MODERN

*(Generation Xers depicted in red)
(This chart also does not incorporate Adams' recent addition of Security-Seeking Ascetics)

While Adams' treatment of each of these tribes makes informative and

provocative reading it is his descriptions of Generation X that concerns

us most.

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[21] Michael Adams, *Better Happy Than Rich? Canadians, Money and the Meaning of Life* (Toronto: Victory Press, 2000)

[22] Michael Adams, based on statistics provided from the on-line survey at www.environics.ca

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Born between the mid 1960's and the mid 1980's, Generation Xers are

described by Adams as the most complex and least understood of all

the generations. Children of the media age, in Canada they are the

MuchMusic generation. In general, they are fun-loving, experience-

seeking, adaptable and confident. Unlike earlier generations, they are

not afraid of the future. According to Adams, they are "social

Darwinists" who firmly believe that life is: "a jungle in which only the

strong survive ... and that they are among the strong who will

prevail."[23] They are egalitarian and pluralistic, open to new definitions

of family, permissive with respect to sex, and more interested in

happiness than duty.

There are also a number of characters which set them apart.

Autonomous Post-Materialists make up one quarter of all Canadian

youth aged 15-29, or 9% of the total population. Most like the

Autonomous Rebels of the previous generation, their fundamental

motivators are personal autonomy and self-fulfillment. They

demonstrate little interest in status or wealth. Not only do they defend

their own right to autonomy but that of others as well. They are strong

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[23] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*, p. 102

supporters of equal rights for women and minorities. As people who typically reject the traditional concepts of family and institution, they are also among the least religious of all the tribes. In fact, they express little need at all for spiritual discovery in life. They enjoy a good time, but are typically more serious, thoughtful and individualistic than most their age. Their fundamental motivators are social justice and experience seeking. They show little interest in what others think of or say about them. For them, substance is more important than style. Tribal icons include dot-com millionaires, Bart Simpson and Tennis star Serena Williams.

Aimless Dependents make up another quarter of the Gen X group or 8% of the total Canadian population. Descendants of the same generational tree as the Disengaged Darwinists (Baby-Boomers) and the Rational Traditionalists (Elders), these youth tend to approach life in a somewhat detached or unemotional way. Family ties are weak, as are those to their community and the world in general. The least adventurous of the five teenage tribes, reason seems to take precedence over feelings. Sometimes characterized as "slackers", this tribe more than any other feels detached from the rest of society. While they hold most authorities and institutions as suspect, they have not found anything effective enough to replace them, nor do they

believe they are likely to. Their fundamental motivators include

financial independence, security and stability. They represent a higher

than average proportion of blue- collar workers and the unemployed

and are more likely than not to live in communities of less than 5000

people. Though not all of them are angry, many are. Not only does

'shit' happen, their impression is that it usually happens to them.

Often fearful, they tend to find themselves shut off from much of the

good things life has to offer. Popular icons for this group include Jerry

Springer and Rap artist Eminem.

Security -Seeking Ascetics Not part of Adams original twelve tribes,

this group represents 16% of the Generation X'ers and 6% of Canada's

population. This group is comprised of an above average proportion

of women and an above average proportion of young who have young

children; it is fundamentally motivated by family, security and

stability. Adams suggests that role models for this group include their

own parents and grandparents, any parent protecting their children

and talk show host Rosie O'Donnell.

New Aquarians Numbering one in seven young Canadians, this tribe

is most closely associated with the "new age" values of

"egalitarianism, ecologism, experience-seeking and hedonism".[24]

Typified by popular figures like singer Sarah McLachlan and author

Naomi Klein, they are adaptable, concerned for others and the

environment, and value education. Generally younger and more

affluent than both the Aimless Dependents and the Thrill-seeking

Materialists, this group also comprises a significant number in the

lowest income category; likely because they have chosen to abandon

family and other social institutions in order to live by their own sets of

rules. Of all Canadians, they are also the most likely to have rejected

the traditional monotheistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Acknowledging the sometimes rigid and puritanical views or

organized religion, it is not surprising perhaps that this group also

comprises a higher proportion of individuals who identify themselves

as lesbian, gay, bi and transgendered.[25]

New Aquarians place significant value on the exercise of personal

authority, believing that it is not only one's privilege but one's right to

determine her or his own social and moral values. They are, suggests

Adams, the most post-modern of all the tribes:[26]

> They're the ones who are most open to the possibilities that life
> has to offer, whether that be surfing the net or piloting a canoe

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[24] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*, p. 113
[25] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*, p. 113
[26] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*, p. 117

through the prenumbral mysteries of the Amazon. They are also the ones most capable of taking society in new and interesting directions, for the simple reason that they are not afraid to blaze new trails.[27]

Social Hedonists These are the Bobby McFerrins of Canadian society or as Adams describes them, the "Don't worry, be happy" tribe. Comprising 12% of the Gen X population and 4% of the national number, these individuals are generally younger, less affluent and less educated than other youthful tribes and are most readily identified by their interest in immediate gratification. Families and friends are important. They are creative, flexible, and spontaneous, constantly looking for something new and exciting to attract their attention. Typified by Adams as "urban nomads", they enjoy large crowds and are energized by the city. They also have a limited attention span and are easily bored when on their own or unoccupied. Heroic figures for this tribe include: Race-car driver Jacques Villeneuve, extreme sports athletes, and movie character Austin Powers. "Yahhhh Baby!"

Thrill-Seeking Materialists represent the last of the Gen X tribes. This group represents 9% of Gen Xers and only 3 percent of the Canadian population as a whole with a slightly higher percentage living in

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[27] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*, p. 117

Toronto. Described by Adams as the "see and be seen" tribe,[28] this group tends to be reactive rather than active. Key values include a desire for money and material possessions, as well as recognition, respect and admiration. For these youth, "who you are" is less important than "whom you know, how you look and what you own."[29] Questions or challenges are often problematic, since they merely seem to get in the way of enjoying life. Michael Jordan, Vince Carter, Jennifer Lopez and Shania Twain all stand as important figures for this group. Money, winning, and fitting in: for most in this tribe that is what life is all about.

Autonomous post-materialism, aimless dependency, security-seeking ascetism, new aquarianism and social hedonism: Adams' observations seem to reveal an evolving and divergent generation. His argument is a convincing one. Yet, while there is little reason to doubt the soundness of Adam's fact gathering, I wonder if his tribes simply represent smaller, more narrowly defined wedges of the demographic pie carved out earlier by researchers like David Foot in his book, *Boom, Bust and Echo*.[30] We might also ask why the number of tribes grew by one from 1997 to 2000 (the length of time between *Sex in the Snow* and

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[28] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*, p. 109
[29] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*, p. 109
[30] David Foot with Daniel Stoffman, *Boom, Bust and Echo: How to profit from the Coming Demographic Shift*, (Toronto:McFarlane, Walter and Ross, 1996)

Adam's most recent book, *Better Happy Than Rich?*). Did Canada

change so much as to produce a whole new demographic group in a

matter of three years?

In popularizing his findings, Adams leaves himself open (or is it us he

leaves open) to an unfortunate misuse of the material by those who

would read the descriptions and attempt to "slot themselves in",

defining themselves by one tribe or another.

Despite these apparent shortcomings, Adams remains an important

interpreter of the Canadian scene. At the risk of trivializing the values

that contribute to the diversity of Canada's sociological landscape,

Adams' "tribes" represent a significant gateway for "lay" Canadians to

join the discussion of what brings us meaning and value. Adam's

most important contribution, perhaps, rests in the capacity to remind

us that when we say: "I am Canadian"[31] we say something about an

expanding diversity that, to a greater or lesser extent, has begun to

blur our image of the prototypical Canadian. Adams writes:

> It is true there have always been outsiders and eccentrics:
> "spinster" aunts, "queer old men," "Jews", "coloured folk",
> the handicapped. Today, however, these "minorities", and a
> myriad of others, are more likely to be mainstream. This is
> because *everyone* is now an outsider in some sense, even

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[31] In the late 1990s Molson's Brewery mounted an immensely successful marketing campaign making use of the slogan "I am Canadian" to promote its line of Molson Canadian Beer.

though the poor, people of colour, the mentally and physically disabled and natives are still more "outside" than others. The stereotypes often no longer exist, or when they do, they join the parade of all other minorities.[32]

2.3   Profiling Toronto's Youth

Prominent in that parade are the more than 300,000 youth between the ages of 15 and 24 who live in the City of Toronto. Over the next decade, this number is expected to grow by as much as 20%.[33] Like the city in which they live, Toronto's youth are an exciting, growing population, which reflects the ethnic, economic and social diversity of Canada. As Canada's largest city, Toronto is a magnet not only for other Canadians and immigrants but youth as well. Many see it as a place where they can lead independent and successful lives, because of its cosmopolitan character, economic and educational opportunities, housing options, and relative tolerance of diversity.

In 1996, those aged 15-24 comprised 12% of the city's total population. Surprisingly perhaps, an increased number of these youth still found themselves living with family, an increase of 2% for those aged 15-24 and 19% for youth aged 25 and over since 1991.[34] This seems to reflect society's declining opportunity for employment and economic

[32] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*,   p. 15
[33] City of Toronto, *Toronto Youth Profile – 2001* (Toronto: City of Toronto, 2001)   p. 1
[34] City of Toronto, *Toronto Youth Profile: Volumes 1* (Toronto: City of Toronto, 1999)   p. 3

independence. Due to this scarcity and increased requirements for education and training, more young people tend to be staying at home and in school.

Despite these factors, a significant number of Toronto youth do move away from the family home, with most of them residing in the Toronto Community Council Area (the former Old City of Toronto). In 1995, there were almost 16,000 youth-led families living in this area, of which more than half were lone-parent families. Canada's 1996 census revealed that young women led 98% of these youth-led families and that nearly 25% of them had two or more children.[35]

Tragically, the numbers of youth who have become economically marginalized has increased steadily in recent years. The City of Toronto estimates that at least 10,000 youth aged 16-24 spend some time on the streets of Toronto each year.[36] The Shout Clinic, a youth-serving agency located on Jarvis Street in Toronto's downtown core, suggests that as many as 2,000 young people find themselves on the street each night.[37] To make matters worse, the economic recovery of the late 1990's made little impact on youth unemployment. In the first

[35] City of Toronto, *Toronto Youth Profile – 1999*, p.4
[36] City of Toronto, *Toronto Youth Profile - 1999* p. 4
[37] Gaetz, Stephen and Bill O'Grady, Bryan Vaillancourt, *The Shout Clinic Report on Homeless Youth and Employment* (Toronto: Central Toronto Community Health Centres, 1999)

quarter of 1999, the unemployment rate for those aged 15 – 19 was

15.8% and 11.6% for those aged 20-24, compared to the city average of

6.7%.[38] In 1996, the median income for youth-led, lone-parent families

was $14,700, compared to $22,000 for all lone-parent families and

$45,000 for two-parent families.[39] In the wake of September 11th

terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington D.C. and the

resulting economic downturn in our global and local economies, the

economic prospects for many of Toronto's youth remain bleak.

In summary, most young people are doing well, have positive

relationships with their families, are relatively well educated, and able

to integrate well into society; but clearly, a significant proportion face

substantial hurdles. Because of poverty, homelessness, lack of

education and unemployment, their likelihood of maintaining

employment, finding stable housing, and establishing healthy social

relationships is diminished.

2.4   A Little Closer to the Street

As indicated earlier, the Shout Clinic in Toronto estimates that on any

given night, 2000 young people find themselves homeless.

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[38] City of Toronto, *Toronto Youth Profile - 1999* p. 9
[39] City of Toronto, *Toronto Youth Profile -1999* p. 4

2.4.1 Towards a Definition of Homelessness

The term "homeless" itself carries many definitions. Organizations serving the homeless have many ways of describing what is essentially "the opposite of homefulness." Coined by Canadian housing researcher Alex Murray, and quoted in Toronto Councillor Jack Layton's book, *Homelessness*, this expression captures much of what is at the root of homelessness - a lack of a secure and safe home that offers not only privacy, refuge, security and ownership, "but is at the core of the creation of self-identity and community."[40]

In 1987, the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless defined these categories:

- **Absolute homelessness** – individuals living in the streets with no physical shelter of their own, including residents of shelters; and

- **Relative homelessness** – individuals living in spaces that do not meet basic health and safety standards (including protection from the elements, access to safe water and sanitation, security of tenure and personal safety, affordability, accessibility to employment, education and health care and provision of minimum space to avoid overcrowding).

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[40] Jack Layton, *Homelessness: The Making and Unmaking of a Crisis* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 2001) p. 33

Similarly, *The Toronto Report Card on Homelessness 2001*[41] defines

"homeless" as a condition of people who:

- live outside
- stay in emergency shelters
- spend most of their income on rent; or
- live in overcrowded, substandard conditions and are therefore at serious risk of becoming homeless.

The majority of those staying in Toronto's emergency shelter system are still single men. A particularly alarming trend, however, sees families with children as one of the fastest growing groups of shelter users. From 1988 to 1999, the number of children staying in shelters rose by 130% and continues to increase.[42] In 1999, over half of the people in emergency shelters were first-time users. Youth aged 15-24 made up almost one quarter of all shelter users, with an estimated 6,000 having used emergency shelters throughout the year.

2.4.2 Homelessness and Street-Involved Youth

Street youth, street-involved youth, homeless youth, squeegee kids, squatters, vagrants, gypsies, beggars, bums, drifters, hookers and panhandlers have all been used to describe the rootless youth of Toronto's streets. Each label brings a new association to defining the individuals in question.

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[41] The City of Toronto, *The Toronto Report Card on Homelessness – 2001*, p. 2
[42] The City of Toronto, *The Toronto Report Card on Homelessness – 2001*, p. 5

41

The definition of who "youth" are also differs, depending on who is

doing the defining. *The Toronto Report Card on Homelessness 2001*

defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15-24, but the federal

government defines youth as 16-29 in terms of eligibility for youth

assistance programs. Toronto's Yonge Street Mission defines street

youth as: "young people who either live on the street or whose lives

are focused on the street."

In 1999, the Shout Clinic surveyed 360 street-involved youth, asking

them about their background and experience.[43] What they found was

a community that largely
reflects Canada's general
population. They come from
good homes, and not-so-good
ones. Some are single; some
have partners. They are
parents, bread-winners, gay,
straight, bi and
transgendered. They were

Profile of Toronto's
At-risk and Street-involved Youth

- 76% of young men and 52% of young women had been arrested at least once
- 60% of Toronto's street-youth have not finished high school
- 60% had come from broken homes
- 58% have been thrown out of their homes
- 50% had left home because of physical abuse
- 40% had, at one time, lived in foster care
- 36% work at panhandling or squeegeeing
- 30% had been involved in some form of criminal activity within the past three months

(From the Shout Clinic Report on Street Youth)

born in Toronto; they come from across the country. They are white,

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[43] Gaetz, Stephen and Bill O'Grady, Bryan Vaillancourt, *The Shout Report*

black, Asian, aboriginal, immigrant and refugee. Toronto's at-risk and

street-involved populations represent a wide range of vulnerable

population groups.

Most often their homelessness is a result not just of one factor but

many. *The Toronto Report Card on Homelessness 2001* shows the

following factors contributing to homelessness:

- **Poverty:** Changes in the labour market show that there are more jobs, but an increasing number offer low wages and underemployment. More people hold down more than one job to survive. Median incomes have not kept pace with the rising cost of basic necessities. Public policy changes to Employment Insurance eligibility and welfare cuts have created an increased incidence and depth of poverty in Toronto. Low-income people survive on incomes dramatically lower than the rest of Toronto's population.[44]

- **Lack of affordable housing** Greater Toronto is growing by more than 30,000 households annually, and the supply of rental housing is not keeping pace with the increase in demand. Available housing continues to decline, while the cost of rental housing has increased dramatically. October 2000 saw a rental vacancy rate of 0.6%[45]. The average income in Toronto increased 9% between 1995 and 2000, while average rents rose by 29%.[46] In 1998, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment was $802.[47] At the Ground Level we pay employees $6.85 an hour (minimum wage) for 40 hours per week, leaving them with a take-home pay of about $930 a month.

- **Deinstitutionalisation:** With increasing cuts in community support services, many people suffering from mental illness

[44] The City of Toronto, *The Toronto Report Card on Homelessness – 2001,* p. 9-16
[45] The City of Toronto, *The Toronto Report Card on Homelessness – 2001* p. 11
[46] The City of Toronto, *The Toronto Report Card on Homelessness – 2001* p. 12
[47] The City of Toronto, *Toronto Youth Profile – 1999* p. 12

and addictions are homeless primarily because the supports no longer exist to help provide or keep their housing. Inadequate discharge planning by hospital, jails and welfare services further intensify the problem.

- **Social Factors:** Domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse, and the alienation of individuals from family and friends have also increased the incidence of homelessness. There is a strong link between family circumstances and youth homelessness. Several studies show that youth who come from dysfunctional households or families of origin are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviours and to leave or be forced out of their home. Many homeless youth report disruptive family situations, neglect, abuse, substance-using parents, poverty, mental health problems and unsafe living conditions.

Homeless and street-involved youth face many barriers even before they leave home. Once on the street, they face a challenging and often violent environment. Threats to their well-being include:

- **Lack of Basic Needs:** Homelessness involves a daily struggle to meet basic needs. For a variety of reasons, many at-risk and street-involved youth lack the resources, experience and/or support necessary to obtain food, clothing, shelter, adequate rest and health care. Without work, many find it impossible to find or maintain appropriate housing. Without a home, they lack the stability to find or keep the kind of work they need.

- **Substance Abuse:** Many street-involved youth come from homes in which drug and alcohol use was prevalent. Substance abuse also provides a way of attempting to deal with stressors faced at home or on the street. Homeless youth often report using drugs or alcohol to forget or cope with their problems and to reduce the feelings of sadness and depression often associated with those problems.

- **Health Risks:** Homeless people often suffer health problems related to poor diet, exposure to the elements, poverty and lack of access to health care as well as unsanitary conditions. Other health risks include sexually transmitted disease and pregnancy due to multiple sexual partners, inconsistent use of

condoms and unprotected sexual activity, even among those
who do not work as prostitutes. Studies reveal that one in
sixteen young women in Toronto become pregnant each year;
50% higher than the provincial target for teen pregnancy.[48]

- **Violence**: Violence is a constant threat to street-involved
  youth. Violent or criminal acts may sometimes be used as a
  means of getting money for food, shelter or substance abuse
  habits.

- **Victimization**: Homeless youth are also vulnerable to
  exploitation by adults and other youth. High numbers of
  street-involved youth are assaulted and/or robbed and are
  easily taken advantage of. Many display histories of physical,
  sexual or emotional abuse and neglect, which often increases
  their vulnerability towards homelessness.[49]

While there is little evidence of recent increases in youth crime,

it is difficult to deny the temptation for many on the street to

pursue such undesirable income producing activities as drug

dealing, prostitution and theft. This reality as well as our

misperceptions of the reality often leads to discrimination

against young people. Negative stereotypes further marginalize

those who are struggling, and place unnecessary barriers on

those who are not.[50]

Finally, a word about sexuality and gender issues. Despite

higher levels of societal acceptance and the Supreme Court of

Canada's recent decision to uphold the validity of same sex

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[48] The City of Toronto, *Youth Profile - 2001*, p. 13
[49] The City of Toronto, *The Toronto Report Card on Homelessness – 2001*, p. 10-16
[50] The City of Toronto, *Toronto Youth Profile, 1999* p. 15

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marriages, gay, lesbian, bi and transgendered people continue to experience significant intolerance and discrimination due to their gender identification. Growing up is hard; growing up lesbian, gay, bi or transgendered (LGBT) is even harder. In addition to the problems and challenges all youth face, homophobia and the often-painful process of coming out to friends and family makes their experience particularly challenging. As a result, many "LGBT" youth find themselves alienated and/or rejected by family. Without their support, they often turn to the street. As many as 40% of street-involved youth identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bi or transgendered.[51] Many young people, especially young men, who "come out" are often forced out because their behaviour marks them as "different."[52] The result is that LGBT youth are 14 times more likely to commit suicide than heterosexual youth. The incidence of substance abuse amongst this group is three to five times higher than heterosexuals and as many as 25% of those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered are disowned and forced to leave home.[53]

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[51] Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Program, Central Toronto Youth Services (Toronto, 1998)

[52] The City of Toronto, *Toronto Youth Profile - 1999*, p. 14

[53] Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Program, Central Toronto Youth Services (Toronto, 1998)

We began this chapter by asking: "Who are these technicolour youth? Who are these Joseph's and Josephine's who inhabit our urban pathways?" In summary, most Canadian youth are doing well. From Bibby, we observe that the majority of them have positive relationships with their families, are relatively well-educated and able to integrate well into society. They want to belong and they want freedom to choose. They want to fit in and they want to determine their own destiny. From Adams, we observe that this freedom to choose is becoming more prevalent. Increasingly, he argues, Canadians (and especially young Canadians) are less influenced by their social and demographic origins. "Demography may not be dead," writes Adams, "but it is certainly less reliable as a predictor of values than at any time in the past."[54]

This freedom from social "boxes" is perhaps one of the greatest "perks" for contemporary Canadian youth – it is also one of its greatest threats. With the freedom to push society's parameters to the edge, many find themselves instead caught on that very edge -some by choice and some not. Increasing numbers of Canadian youth find themselves teetering on an edge defined

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[54] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*, p. 10

by poverty, homelessness, lack of education and unemployment. And despite the great Canadian "tolerance" towards people of different class and circumstance they still find themselves feeling rejected, isolated and abandoned. How do these themes play out when we begin to consider the faith maturity of street-involved youth? To consider these questions in greater detail, we turn now to Fowler's theory of faith maturity and some of western society's other pivotal theories of development.

WORDS MATTER
Faith and the Process of Making Meaning

Running
      From Dark Terror
                I find
A place called Homeless
                Fear Driven Mad. This is The Safest
I've ever Been. Running
I can Hide
         In this   no one knows my name
I can Hide
         In this   spare some change to Dry my
Tears
      Dark Corner
      Invisible and Hurting
Silenced and Alone
         Life or Death feels just like home
               Crawling up
From Dark Corner and namelessness
      I think maybe to ask for help
      I think maybe this Deep Pain is too much
(Asking for a paintbrush is easier than asking for help)
I start
      Healing my wounds
         With Blues and Oranges and Greens on canvas
I speak
      My Fear, my Pain, my sorrow
         With every painstroke
My words have no words
But I am safe now.

                                              (C)

In this chapter, we turn our attention more closely to the concept of faith.

What is faith? What do we mean when we talk about faith "development" or

faith "maturity?" Can they be measured? And if so, what are our findings

likely to reveal?

In his book, *What Language Shall I Borrow?*[1] the British hymnist and poet,

Brian Wren, reminds us of the power of language. "Words matter," he

writes. What words we use matter even more. When we attempt to name,

describe or illustrate something, how we do that makes a difference. The

words we choose, the context we use them in all convey the thoughts,

feelings, reasoning, imaging and beliefs that exist "within our heads."[2]

Words matter. And for Wren they matter most when we speak of God. For

example: "Does it matter," he asks, "that God is customarily addressed as

'he' and portrayed in all-male terms like "King" and "Father?"[3] He argues

that it does. It matters, because language not only describes our experience

but shapes it as well.

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[1] Brian Wren, *What Language Shall I Borrow? God-Talk in Worship: A Male Response to Feminist Theology* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1989)
[2] Wren, *What Language Shall I Borrow?* p. 61
[3] Wren, *What Language Shall I Borrow?* p. 3

When we refer to God only in masculine terms, Wren argues that we present only half an image of God; one that is true but partial, real yet incomplete. A male-only God fails to acknowledge that many people, men *as well as* women, recognize both feminine and masculine qualities within God. To name God only as "King" or "Father", denies this experience of humanity. Moreover, it reinforces the prevailing sentiment in society that things feminine are somehow less-than those qualities we typically regard as masculine. To name and depict God almost exclusively in the masculine reinforces these distinctions, suggesting that women are somehow "unfit, or less fit than men, to represent the beauty and greatness of God in language."[4]

To address this inequity, Wren responds by expressing new names and models, which help reframe our image of God. He explores our experience of the feminine as an appropriate and important element in the human task of naming and describing God. But Wren also resists the temptation to stop here. It is not enough simply to stand the feminine alongside the masculine. Both are real. Both are important. God *is* both masculine and feminine. But, as Wren argues, God is also more. Beyond the masculine *and* feminine, there are so many other ways to speak of God; ways that are neither masculine nor feminine; ways that are rooted in creation, in birth and death, and everything else we experience in life. And so, Wren admonishes us to go further: to

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[4] Wren, *What Language Shall I Borrow?* p. 3

open ourselves to the "open-endedness" of the incarnation and to use this as

the new way we begin to speak of God.

To illustrate, he shares the following:

Name Unnamed, hidden and shown, knowing and known: Gloria
  Beautiful Movement,
    Ceaselessly forming,
    Growing, emerging with awesome delight,
  Maker of Rainbows
    Flowing with color;
    Arching in wonder;
    Energy flowing in darkness and light:
Name Unnamed, hidden and shown, knowing and known: Gloria
  Spinner of Chaos
    Pulling and twisting,
    Freeing the fibers of pattern and form,
  Weaver of Stories
    Famed or unspoken,
    Tangled or broken
    Shaping a tapestry vivid and warm:
Name Unnamed, hidden and shown, knowing and known: Gloria
  Nudging Discomforter;
    Prodding and shaking,
    Waking our lives to creative unease,
  Straight-Talking Lover;
    Checking and humbling
    Jargon and grumbling,
    Speaking the truth that refreshes and frees:
Name Unnamed, hidden and shown, knowing and known: Gloria
  Midwife of Changes,
    Skillfully guiding,
    Drawing us out through the shock of the new,
  Mother of Wisdom,
    Deeply perceiving,
    Never deceiving,
    Freeing and leading in all that we do:
Name Unnamed, hidden and shown, knowing and known: Gloria
  Dare-devil Gambler:
    Risking and loving,
    Giving us freedom to shatter your dreams,

Life-giving Loser;
> *Wounded and weeping,*
> *Dancing and leaping,*
> *Sharing the caring that heals and redeems:*
Name Unnamed, hidden and shown, knowing and known: Gloria[5]

Another term which faces a similar predicament and benefits equally from this kind of "open-ended" consideration is the word "faith". Like "God", "faith" (or more specifically our understanding of faith) has often been conditioned by its connectedness to the worlds of religion and the many traditions associated with them. Typically, when people speak of faith we assume that faith means faith in God (or the gods). The unfortunate implication is that those who do not "have faith in God(s)" have "no faith" at all.

In the 1950's, Paul Tillich began to challenge this use of the word "faith" in his book, *Dymamics of Faith.*[6] Confronting the idea that faith need necessarily be identified with religion or belief, Tillich encouraged his readers to ask themselves what values brought "centring power" into their lives. He suggested that things like work, love, family, sex, wealth or power might all be capable of providing a person's greatest source of meaning or "ultimate concern". Around the same time, H. Richard Niebuhr began to explore faith

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[5] Wren, *What Language Shall I Borrow?* p 140
[6] Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York. Harper and Row, 1957)

as the shared visions and values that individuals and groups hold together.

He concluded that human faith grows through our experience of trust (or

mistrust) in relationship with those closest to us.[7]

Also contributing significantly to the debate was the Canadian religious

historian Wilfred Cantwell Smith. In his book, *The Meaning and End of*

Religion, he encourages readers to speak of "faiths", instead of "faith".[8] As

Brian Gerrish interprets:

> In comparison with our previous guides, Smith can be said to move
> the discussion from the particular to the general. He is not mainly
> interested in beliefs, or even the faiths, of particular historical
> communities ... but rather in faith as a universally human
> phenomenon that need not take explicit or conventional religious
> form. Indeed, so interpreted, faith defines the generically human:
> humans are beings who are open to transcendence and, as such, find
> meaning in the world and in their own lives, whether they identify
> themselves with a religious tradition or not. The opposite of faith is
> then, not disbelief in some proposition or other, but the loss of order,
> meaning and purpose.[9]

In 1981, James Fowler began to expand on these formative ideas with his

book, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and Quest for*

Human Meaning. Influenced by the developmental thinking of Piaget, Erikson

and Kohlberg, Fowler began to describe faith as a developmental process

revolving around the concepts of value and meaning.

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[7] H. Richard Niebuhr, quoted from an unpublished paper in James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995) p. 5

[8] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: MacMillan Press, 1963) p. 13

[9] Brian Gerrish, *Saving and Secular Faith: An Invitation to Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press) p. 18-19

3.1   Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

In the first half of the last century, Jean Piaget observed that developmental

stages in humans could be examined and compared. Piaget became

interested in thought processes while developing a series of questions for use

in a standard intelligence test for children. Piaget was supposed to find the

age at which most children could answer each question correctly, but what he

became most interested in were the children's wrong answers. What

intrigued him was that children of the same age tended to make the same

mistakes, suggesting to him that there was a developmental sequence to

intellectual growth. He believed that determining mental ability was based

more on how children thought than what they thought. The importance lies

in the premise that how children think reveals how they interpret their

experiences and gradually construct their understanding and expectations of

her or his world.[10]

Based on these observations, Piaget described four major stages of cognitive

development. Each of the four stages, he suggests, is related to age. Within

each stage there is a development of certain human structural features that

enable certain types of thinking. He describes them in the following way:[11]

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[10] Jean Piaget, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children* (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1952)

[11] Adapted from Kathleen Stassen Berger, *The Developing Person Through Childhood and Adolescence* (New York: Worth Publishers Inc., 1986) p. 55

Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development		
Age	**Name**	**Characteristics**
0-2 years	Sensorimotor	The infant uses senses and motor abilities to understand the world. There is no conceptual or reflective thought; an object is "known" in terms of what the infant can do to it.
2-6 years	Preoperational	The imagination flourishes as the child begins to use symbolic thinking, including language, to understand the world. Much of their thinking is egocentric, which means they understand the world primarily from their own perspective
7-11 years	Concrete Operational	The child understands and applies logical operations to help interpret experiences objectively rather than intuitively.
12 and older	Formal Operational	The individual is able to solve problems, think hypothetically and abstractly, and about the possible as well as the real.

(Adapted from Kathleen Stassen Berger. 1986 – p. 55)

3.2 Erikson and Psychosocial Development

It was from Eric Erikson and later Lawrence Kohlberg that James Fowler received his seminal thoughts. From Erikson, Fowler gained an intense appreciation for the idea that development does not end with the attainment of physical maturity.

> Filled with my Interpreter's House experience and informed by my captivation in Erikson's developmental psychology, I determined to offer courses that were at once theological and experiential, concerned with human formation and transformation. I wanted students to take seriously the fact that they began as infants and children and that in their present efforts to shape adult identity and faith they needed to revisit their earliest years and relationships. I wanted to offer them the beginnings of an ordering of predictable phases of growth in faith, taking full account of the dynamics of doubt and the struggle it entails.[12]

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[12] Fowler, *Stages of Faith,* p. 38

This "ordering of predictable phases" referred to Erikson's eight "psychosocial" stages of development[13] which span the entire course of a person's life. He

Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Significant Relationship
1. Age 1	Trust vs. mistrust	Mother
2. Age 2	Autonomy vs. doubt	Parents
3. Age 3 – 5	Intiative versus guilt	Basic family
4. Age 6 to	Industry vs. inferiority	Neighbourhood, school
5. Adolescence	Identify vs. confusion	Peer groups and outgroups;
6. Early Adult	Intimacy vs. isolation	Partners in friendship, sex, competition, cooperation
7. Middle Adult	Generativity vs. self-absorption	Divided labour and shared household
8. Aging Years	Integrity vs. despair	Humanity

(Adapted from Kathleen Stassen Berger, 1986 – p. 42)

referred to them as psychosocial because he believed that each of the

psychological developmental stages in a person's life depends on the social

relationships that exist at various points in her or his life. Erikson proposed

that each stage is characterized by a particular conflict, or crisis, that needed

to be resolved. In this theory, the resolution of each developmental conflict

depends on the interaction of the individual's characteristics and the

support provided by the social environment.

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[13] Eric Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed: A Review* (New York: W W. Norton & Co., 1982) p 32-33

Stage One typically represents the first year of life. In this stage, babies first learn either to trust that others will care for their basic needs like nourishment and physical touch, or begin to lack confidence in the capacity of others to care.

Stage Two is observed largely between the ages of two and three. Here, children learn either to be self-sufficient in activities like toilet-training, walking and eating, or they learn to doubt their own abilities.

Stage Three sees children (3-5 years of age) wanting to do "adult" activities. In the process, they sometimes overstep the limits established by parents and consequently end up feeling guilty.

Stage Four occurs as children move from about age 6 through puberty. Here, children learn to be competent and productive or to feel inferior and unable to do anything well.

Stage Five typically represents the adolescent years. As individuals move through this stage they try to figure out "Who am I?" They begin to establish sexual, political and vocational identities or are confused about what roles to play.

Stage Six finds individuals in early adulthood seeking companionship and love with another person or becoming isolated from others by fearing rejection or disappointment.

Stage Seven marks the time in life described as middle adulthood. Positive outcomes of this period include the development of productive and meaningful work, typically illustrated in activities like employment and child-rearing.

Stage Eight, occurs as older adults try to make sense out of their life, seeing life as a meaningful whole or despairing at goals never reached and questions never answered.

3.3   Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

In Kohlberg's work, we observe a shift towards a moral component in personal developmental theory.   Using a series of case study dilemmas and extensive interviews, Kohlberg began to observe a series of stages or levels of development based on moral decision-making.[14]   Kohlberg's theory was particularly influential for Fowler because it examined people's responses concerning meaning, value, and attitude towards other people. Kohlberg

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[14] Lawrence Kohlberg, *Moral Judgement of the Child* (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1965)

proposed six developmental types, which were further grouped into three

major levels of development.

A.   **PRECONVENTIONAL:** Emphasis on avoiding punishment and getting

rewards.

> **Stage One: Punishment and Obedience Orientation -** At this stage the
> most important value is obedience to authority in order to avoid
> punishment.
> **Stage Two: Naïve Instrumental Hedonism** - Here, each person tries to
> take care of her or his own needs. The reason to be nice to other people is
> so that they will be nice to you. In other words, "you scratch my back, I'll
> scratch yours."

B.   **CONVENTIONAL:** Emphasis on social rules.

> **Stage Three: Good Girl and Nice Boy -** Good behaviour is considered
> behaviour that pleases other people and wins their praise. Approval is
> more important than any specific reward.
> **Stage Four: Law and Order -** Right behaviour means being a dutiful
> citizen and obeying the laws set down by those in power.

C.   **POSTCONVENTIONAL:** Emphasis on moral principles.

> **Stage Five: Social Contract -** The rules of society exist for the benefit of
> all, and are established by mutual agreement. If the rules become
> destructive, or if one party does not live up to the agreement, the contract
> is no longer binding.
> **Stage Six: Universal Ethical Principles -** General and universal
> principles determine right and wrong. These values (such as "Do unto
> others as you would have done to you") are established by individual
> reflection and meditation and may contradict the egocentric or legalistic
> principles of earlier reasoning.[15]

Kohlberg's theories are of particular importance to our work with street-

youth in that young people between the ages of ten to eighteen are more

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[15] Stassen Berger, *The Developing Person Through Childhood and Adolescence* p. 436

likely to progress in moral reasoning than people at any other stage of the life span.[16] The probable explanation for this lies in the rapid convergence of several developmental factors during this period. Cognitive development allows adolescents to think more abstractly; psychological maturation causes them to question the moral rules and frameworks established by their parents or other authority figures; social development exposes them to a variety of ethical values; and personal experiences encourage them to make decisions on their own.

3.4   Melanie Klein and Object Relations Theory

Before delving into Fowler's theories of faith maturity, at least one other developmental theory deserves our attention. Surprisingly, Fowler makes little reference to this theory. First proposed by Freud, but later developed and refined by Austrian therapist Melanie Klein, "object relations" provides a significant backdrop to Fowler's theories of faith maturity. Klein followed Freud's lead in significant areas, such as the emphasis on instinctual drive in explaining motivation and the formation of personality; however, some of her concepts, including the significance of personality, creatively and radically departed from Freud. Unlike Freud, who based his understanding of childhood primarily on the recollections of his patients (primarily women

[16] Colby, Anne & Lawrence Kohlberg, John Gibbs and Marcus Lieberman, "A longitudinal study of moral development" *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development* 48 no 1-2. Serial No. 200 (1983).

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whom he considered neurotic), Klein took the bold step of working directly

with troubled children. Whereas Freud concluded that "drives" or

"motivations" are originally objectless (because gratification comes first and it

does not make much difference what the particular object is), Klein observed

that drives are inherently directed towards objects. The infant, for example,

seeks milk from the breast, not mere pleasure in the process of eating. For

Klein, every urge and instinct was bound to an object.[17]

These observations led her to suggest a developmental theory based not on

Freud's understanding of instinct, but on relationship. This developmental

process begins with a "symbiotic" phase in which the self is undifferentiated

from the other. As the child moves from relationship with what Klein calls

"part object" to "whole object", Self begins to differentiate from Other. This

in turn leads to a reflective and subsequently cyclical stage in which the self

ventures out to the other, using the interactive experiences of conflict and

affirmation to further develop the self's sense of identity. This is followed by

a final or more "mature" stage, characterized by object constancy where the

relationship between self and other is defined primarily by trust.[18] And so,

while strangely absent from Fowler's list of credits, this dynamic of "object

relations" helps us to understand more clearly the framework that follows.

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[17] Melanie Klein, *The Psycho-Analysis of Children* (London: Hogart Press, 1975) p. 123
[18] Meira Likierman, *Melanie Klein: Her Work in Context* (New York: Continuum Press, 2001) p. 18

3.5 Fowler's Stages of Faith

Drawing on the models of Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erikson, as well as data from over three hundred interviews, Fowler offers a six-staged framework, which suggests that the fundamental structure of faith is relational, that at its core faith can be defined as "commitment to" or "trust in." [19]

Following Smith,[20] Fowler is careful to differentiate what he describes as "faith" from the two closely related themes of belief and religion. Starting with belief, Fowler describes it as an: "intellectual assent to propositional statements that codify the doctrines or ideological claims of a particular tradition or group."[21] While belief may represent one aspect of a person's or group of people's faith, it is only a part. Faith, continues Fowler, also includes a deep personal emotional attachment beyond the "cognitive operations and content"[22] of belief.

Religion, on the other hand, Fowler distinguishes as a, "cumulative tradition" comprised of both beliefs and practices, which both express and give shape to the faith of persons past and present. These "cumulative traditions" may include such things as art, architecture, symbols, rituals, stories, myths,

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[19] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 16
[20] Cantwell Smith, *Faith and Belief*, p. 12
[21] Fowler, *Faithful Change*, p. 55
[22] Fowler, *Faithful Change*, p. 55

scriptures, teachings, and music. The root form, *religio,* means "to tie" or "to bind". A person's religion, then, is the body of beliefs and practices that binds a person together and becomes the "glue"[23] of wholeness.

Typically, these "cumulative traditions" or religions have intimately been tied to faith. "It is only in the modern period," argues Fowler, "in which many persons have separated themselves from religious communities and religious faith, that we need to distinguish between religious faith and faith in a more generic and universal sense."[24]

"Faith" as understood in this more inclusive sense, continues Fowler, may be characterized as:

> an integral, centering process, underlying the formation of beliefs, values, and meanings, that (1) gives coherence and direction to people's lives, (2) links them in shared trusts and loyalties to others, (3) grounds their personal stances and communal loyalties in a sense of relatedness to a larger frame of reference, and (4) enables them to face and deal with the limit conditions of human life, relying upon that which has the quality of ultimacy in their lives.[25]

This aspect of "ultimacy" is particularly evident in the writings of Austrian psychiatrist Victor Frankl. In his book, *Man's Search for Meaning,* Frankl suggested that if one is able to discern a "why" for living, then one will find a

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[23] David W. Sharrard, "Personal Wholeness in a Whole Community" in , *Lexington Theological Quarterly,* 13 (1978) p. 55
[24] Fowler, *Faithful Change,* p. 56
[25] Fowler, *Faithful Change,* p. 56

way to live. The human being must believe in something, must have some

purpose, or seek out some meaning that makes life worth living in order to

exist.[26] Frankl believed that the primary motivation to human behaviour was

not will-to-pleasure (as Freud suggested) or the will-to-power (as Alfred

Adler asserted) but the will-to-meaning.[27]

"It is always tempting," points out Brian Gerrish, "to react to such cheerful

theories with skepticism or scorn, and to assume that they must have been

dreamed up in the relative comfort of some professor's armchair."[28] But the

strength of Frankl's argument is precisely this: that it does not arise from the

professors' arm chair, but from his own experience of grief and degradation

in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. With countless others, Frankl

spent each day wondering if it would end in the gas chamber. Frankl writes:

> We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who
> walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last
> piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer
> sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing:
> the last of the human freedoms – to chose one's attitude in any given
> set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.[29]

They did not all survive – but then, in Frankl's view, this was not the most

important thing. What mattered most was not staying alive but knowing

how to die.[30]

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[26] Victor Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984) p. 74 ... .
[27] Gerrish, *Saving and Secular Faith*, p. 21
[28] Gerrish, *Saving and Secular Faith*, p. 22
[29] Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning*, p. 75
[30] Gerrish, *Saving and Secular Faith*, p. 23

For Fowler, this search for meaning begins in infancy with the emergence and persistence of self-other relationships, which find themselves situated within a framework of "shared centers of value and power."[31] In infancy, our "faith" is described as undifferentiated. This is the stage in which we begin to learn whether our world and the people in it are trustworthy. Fowler describes the development of rational logic and language as the signs that we are ready to move on to the next stage.

Stage One – The first real stage of faith is described as the Intuitive-Projective Stage. Typical of those aged 3 – 7, this stage is characterized by the development of imagination and fantasy. This is the stage of first awareness in which we are able to first differentiate ourselves from others.

Stage Two – Usually associated with children aged 7 – 12, this stage is described as the Mythic-Literal Stage. In this stage, stories and symbols move beyond fantasy to express more concrete realities. Story becomes an important way of claiming unity and value in their experience.

Stage Three – The Synthetic-Conventional Stage usually occurs sometime during adolescence and may be as far as some people develop. In this stage,

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[31] Fowler, *Stages of Faith,* p. 17

the person's experience extends beyond the family, typically giving rise to competing spheres of attention such as school, work, peers, and perhaps religion. Typically, it is a "conformist" stage in which the person tends to act and relate based on the expectations and judgements of significant others, not certain enough of his or her own identity to stand back and reflect critically.

Stage Four – Most appropriately, the Individuative-Reflective Stage occurs in young adulthood, although many do not undergo this transition until their mid-thirties or forties (if at all). The strength of this stage is the capacity to reflect critically on one's self and outlook. Convention is now called into question. The self is no longer defined by others. Symbols are demythologized.

Stage Five - Fowler describes this as the Conjunctive Stage. In the previous stage, we had begun to see the capacity to clarify and make certain. In this stage, we are opened up again to the ambiguities and polarities of life. We ·begin to develop what Paul Ricoeur called a "second naivete,"[32] allowing us to hold the opposites of life in creative tension. Fowler suggests that it takes both time and intention to move towards this stage and is rare before mid-life.

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[32] Fowler, *Faithful Change,* p. 187

Stage Six – This stage is considered to be exceedingly rare. Fowler describes

this Universalizing Stage this way:

> The persons best described by it have generated faith compositions in
> which their felt sense of an ultimate environment is inclusive of all
> being. They have become incarnators and actualizers of the spirit of
> an inclusive and fulfilled human community. They are 'contagious'
> in the sense that they create zones of liberation from the social,
> political, economic and ideological shackles we place and endure on
> human futurity ... The rare persons who may be described in this
> stage have a special grace that makes them seem more lucid, more
> simple, and yet somehow more fully human than the rest of us. Their
> community is universal in extent [and] Life is both loved and held to
> loosely.[33]

Fowler's list of individuals who have probably achieved this stage include:

Ghandi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Abraham Heschel, Dag Hammerskjold, Martin

Luther King Jr., and Mother Theresa.[34]

In addition to these six stages, Fowler presents seven "aspects" of faith, all of

which are present at each stage. These aspects combine to provide both an

operational definition of faith as well as specific continuities between the

stages. The seven aspects are:

1. Form of logic
2. Social perspective taking
3. Form of moral judgement
4. Bounds of social awareness
5. Locus of authority
6. Form of world coherence
7. Role of Symbols

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[33] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 200
[34] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 201

By measuring each of these aspects as they relate to the various stages, Fowler

suggests that we are able to arrive at a relatively accurate estimate of one's

faith maturity.

At this point, it is important that we pause and reflect somewhat critically,

recognizing that despite our interest in Fowler's understanding of faith and

the movement towards maturity, his theory is not without its limitations.

First, Fowler was chosen because his model suggests a universal aspect to

faith. Fowler's view of faith as "universal meaning-making", in which the

transcendent may or may not be viewed as sacred, suggests that his faith

development theory may be applicable to the religious and non-religious

alike. Working outside the context of a church congregation and especially

with a marginalized group like street-youth, this was particularly important

for me.

However, following the arguments of people like Carol Gilligan,[35] one

wonders how universal Fowler's premise might be. Beginning with the early

psychoanalytical theories of Freud, Gilligan argues that developmental

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[35] Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993)

theories have been weighted heavily towards the male experience. In her

book, *In a Different Voice,* she contends that: "By changing the lens of

developmental observation from individual achievement to relationships of

care women depict ongoing attachment as the path that leads to maturity."[36]

To illustrate, she cites the works of Piaget and Kohlberg, upon which Fowler's

work is heavily based. In Piaget's work exploring the moral judgement of the

child,[37] girls appear as an aside, "a curiosity to whom he devotes four brief

entries in an index that omits 'boys' altogether because 'the child' is assumed

to be male."[38] In Kohlberg's work, girls are omitted altogether. In fact,

Kohlberg's six stages of moral development are based on an empirical study

of eighty-four boys over a period of twenty years – not one girl was included

as part of the study.[39]

Similar problems arise when we consider Erikson's stages of psychosocial

development. While Stage One is rooted in the experience of relationship,

Stage Two and beyond emphasize indviduation over intimacy. In so doing,

women's experience is diminished. Gilligan writes: "When the focus on

individuation and individual achievement extends into adulthood and

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[36] Gilligan, *In a Different Voice,* p. 17
[37] Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (New York: The Free Press, 1965)
[38] Gilligan, *In a Different Voice,* p. 18
[39] Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981)

maturity is equated with personal autonomy, concern with relationships

appears as a weakness of women rather than as a human strength."[40]   Upon

reflection, is it any wonder that Fowler's list of "mature" individuals includes

only one woman: Mother Theresa?

This oversight of women's experience is particularly disturbing when we

remember the importance Fowler places on relationship as the developmental

"glue" for his framework. Gilligan reminds us that the story of development

or maturity when told as "going away" or "leaving home" is not everyone's

story. It certainly is not every woman's story – and it is not even every man's

story.

A further concern with respect to the universality of Fowler's model evolves

from this tension between intimacy and individuation. We are likely safe in

assuming Fowler's applicability for most North American society – at least in

its early stages. Yet, as Dennis Hiebert notes:

> There is a lingering suspicion that Fowler's theory may be little more
> than a celebration and glorification of the pluralism and relativism
> endemic in North America in the second half of this century.
> Ironically, sociological critics of culture in Canada and the United
> States have blamed utilitarian and expressive individualism for the
> modern collapse of commitment to the common good. If this is true,
> the socially dysfunctional cultural baggage in Fowler's theory may yet
> weigh down what he takes as the uplifting qualities of faith at more
> advanced stages.[41]

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[40] Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*,   p. 17
[41] Dennis Hiebert,   "The Sociology of Fowler's Faith Development Theory", in *Studies in Religion*
21 no. 3 (1992) p. 321

And what of cultures outside North America where conformity to communal tradition and practice far outweighs personal identity and development in value? The question of Fowler's sensitivity (or lack thereof) to culture is an important one. What questions or limitations does it present, particularly for our consideration of the cultural boundaries that separate street-youth from mainstream society? We will return to this question in Chapters Six and Seven.

From the outset, Fowler's model suffers from defining faith too broadly. By doing so, it presents both opportunity and danger. The prime opportunity is to dialogue with people from many different fields, disciplines, communities and backgrounds about what it is that brings people meaning and value. The danger lies in knowing exactly what it is one is talking about. What exactly is it that Fowler is measuring? For example, Steven Ivy argues that Jane Loevinger's definition of ego development is particularly close to Fowler's definition of faith.[42] Loevinger's research results in a framework that sees ego as a process of integration, a structure that strives for self-consistency and meaning, and provides the basis for life purposes and meaning.[43]

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[42] Stephen Ivy, "Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning", in *Journal of Pastoral Care* 36 no. 4 (1983) p. 270

[43] Jane Loevinger, *Ego Development: Conceptions and Theories* (San Franciso, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1976) p. 58-67

Acknowledging her work, one might ask how are faith development and ego development to be related and distinguished?

In the final section of *Stages of Faith*, Fowler himself seems unsure of the distinctions. Here the question involves the relationship between faith's structure and content as well as the relationship between stage change and conversion. Having spent most of his entire book arguing that "faith" exists beyond "religion," Fowler appears to contradict himself when he writes:[44]

> As I pointed out in the discussion of Universalizing faith, the disclosure of absoluteness or of the genuinely transcendent or holy come to expression in *particular* historic moments and communities. The way toward religious truth – and towards Universalizing faith – leads through the *particular* memories, stories, images, ethical teachings and rituals of determinate religious traditions. It think it is unlikely that persons will develop in faith beyond the Individuative-Reflective stage without committing themselves to some image or images of a faithful ultimate environment and shaping their lives in the human community so as to live in complementarity with it. Faith, ast Stages 5 and 6, will take essentially religious forms. And while the Conjunctive or Universalizing stages appropriate their religious faith traditions in inclusive and nondichotomizing ways, they nonetheless require a representation of the ultimate environment as objectively real and as the final and primal source of all being and value.

Fowler's central premise is that stage change is a developmental process while content change is a conversional change. In other words, when a person experiences a shift from a secular to a Christian world-view, this may be regarded as conversion. When a person moves from the Individuative-Reflective Stage to the Conjunctive Stage worldview, this is a developmental

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[44] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 217

process. Here, Fowler seems unable to distinguish completely between faith and religion, and in so doing reveals a problematic sense of hierarchy that does not adequately address even such traditional questions as the debate between works and grace.

Particularly helpful in addressing some of these issues is the work of Brian Gerrish. In his book, *Saving and Secular Faith*, Gerrish begins by describing faith as having elements of "belief" as well as "trust".[45] Tracing its understanding through the New Testament to the writings of Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther and John Calvin, Gerrish names a distinction which Fowler resists but nevertheless seems to imply: that there is both "saving" and "secular" faith. They are not the same, but they are similar. Gerrish is not concerned with claiming the universality of one or the other – only that their relationship is similar enough for Church and World to talk meaningfully with one another about their respective quests for meaning and purpose in life.[46]

This significant qualification helps us to maintain Fowler's theory as an important tool. Despite its limitations, it still presents an effective means of demonstrating that "street-youth" have faith – secular perhaps, but

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[45] Gerrish, *Saving and Secular Faith*, p 2ff
[46] Gerrish, *Saving and Secular Faith*, p. 33

nevertheless, faith. Moreover, it provides an important framework for comparing the "secular faith" of the street with the "saving faith" of those comprising our Church communities.

3.6   Fowler and Street-Involved Youth

Typically, as individuals grow, they move through Fowler's stages at a predictable pace. Stage One occurs sometime around the age of three and continues until about age seven. Stage two is usually associated with school-age children; stage three with adolescents; and so on. Such is the case because the vast majority of the population shares similar experiences and events, which help shape our capacity to "make-meaning" during these various periods in our lives.

Because of these shared experiences and events, we are often able to make assumptions about not only how people "make meaning" but where and in what things they find their meaning. What happens, however, when the various influences or conditioning factors that most of us share are stretched, broken, or even non-existent in the life of a developing individual?

Such is often the case in the lives of street-involved youth. Earlier, we noted the findings of The Shout Clinic, a counseling and health service for street-

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involved youth in Toronto. In a survey of 360 homeless youth,[47] they found that:

> - 60% had not finished school
> - 60% had come from broken homes
> - 58% had been thrown out of their homes
> - 50% had left home because of physical abuse
> - 40% had, at one time, lived in foster care
> - 25% reported sexual abuse

While these statistics provide a sobering picture, they suggest certain critical factors that can help us understand the faith maturity of these young people.

In Fowler, relationships are paramount from infancy through death. It is through relationships that we first discover the "other" and the "self." It is through relationships that we learn things like presence, trust and accountability. It is through relationships that we first begin to see the world, learn to make decisions and assume responsibility. When the relationships that typically enable this growth are absent, diminished or perverted, clearly our potential to mature will be threatened.

The statistics presented above suggest that this is the case for many street-involved youth. A considerable number of these young people have lived for a greater or lesser time in environments where the health of their primary family relationships may seriously be questioned and the predictable negative consequences are considerable.

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[47] Gaetz, O'Grady and *Vaillancourt, The Shout Clinic Report*

When this absence or breakdown in relationship occurs from birth, it undermines the sense of trust and mutuality usually associated in bonding with one's primary care-giver(s). Moving from infancy to stage one, we enter an imitative phase in which we are powerfully influenced by the examples, moods, actions and stories of our primary care-givers. Where the absence of care or worse, abusive attitudes and events are present, the child risks "possession" of his or her imagination by what Fowler calls "unrestrained images of terror and destructiveness, or from the witting or unwitting exploitation of her or his imagination in the reinforcement of taboos and moral or doctrinal exploitation."[48] Why this happens for some and not others is unclear. Genetic disposition may provide one possible explanation. It may also be possible, however, that culture and social context play a far more important and powerful role than Fowler assumes.

Ideally, in stage two the person begins to assume for him or herself the stories, beliefs and observances that symbolize belonging to his or her community. Story becomes the primary way of giving meaning and unity to one's experience. Essential to this stage of development are the concepts of fairness and justice as observed in the lives of others. Where fairness is absent and justice is confused or undermined, we experience again a threat to

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[48] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 134

maturity in an "abasing sense of badness embraced because of mistreatment, neglect or the apparent disfavor of significant others."[49]

It is important to recognize here that fairness and justice are both culturally defined concepts – they are not absolutes. What I hold to be "fair" and "just" may not necessarily hold true for youth from the street. Consequently, the things that threaten one's sense of fairness and justice may be quite different from those that threaten another person's sense of these same ideals. We find this illustrated in one of the interviews reported on later in Chapter Six. When asked: "What experiences have affirmed your sense of meaning in life?" a young man named G described an event in which he and two others broke into and vandalized the store of a man who, earlier that day, had insulted him for coming into his store "looking that way". After cracking a smile at what I perceived as the surprising connection drawn between "break and enter" and "life-affirming events", I continued to listen. "It was only fair," said G, recounting the events. "He had no idea who I am or where I've come from. He don't know nothin' about me so where does he get off thinkin' I ain't got no right to be in his store. All I wanted was a coke and he gets all pissed at me for comin' in 'cause of how I look. "

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[49] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 150

The response of G and his friends is not exactly what I would describe as fairness or justice. At the very least, this is not how I would have responded to these events. But for G, clearly the response was both fair and appropriate. The event was life-affirming for G, in that it helped to restore his sense of fairness and justice. Having been demeaned by the store-owner, the fairness and justice of the "street" demanded from G that the store-owner also be dealt something similar in return.

By the time many street-youth reach Stage Three a myriad of factors threaten their maturing process. By the age of thirteen or fourteen many already find themselves on the street, without even the little supports their home environment might have provided. Moreover, many of these youth drop out of school. Signs of maturing into and through this stage include the capacity to synthesize values and information, which help provide a basis for one's own identity. In school, this capacity to synthesize is encouraged by exposure not only to the new theories, beliefs and ideas contained in our curricula but to teachers and classmates. Without this encouragement, we risk missing the opportunity to view, evaluate and integrate the expectations and values our society and other societies have to offer us.

Secondly, it is a stage in which we need "mirrors" or "models": trusted people; friends in whom we can see the image of our own personality

emerging; people in whom we can begin to see our own feelings, insights, anxieties and commitments being reflected back to us.

But what if we have not yet learned to trust – or we had once learned to trust only to have that trust destroyed? Fowler describes the threat this way:

> The dangers or deficiencies in this stage are twofold. The expectations and evaluations of others can be so compellingly internalized (and sacralized) that later autonomy of judgement and action can be jeopardized; or interpersonal betrayals can give rise either to nihilistic despair about a personal principle or ultimate being...[50]

At the same time, the movement from Stage Three to Stage Four is often initiated by the experience of leaving home – either "emotionally or physically".[51] Although faith maturity is often slowed or impeded by breakdown in relationships and the experience of the street, it can also be encouraged and accelerated by the serious clashes and contradictions between valued authorities; whether they are parents, educators, police, or politicians. These "clashes" and "contradictions"[52] as Fowler calls them, are what ultimately encourage us to reflect critically on our stories, consider how our beliefs and values have been formed and changed, and evaluate how relative they are to our group of origin or current sphere of relationship.

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[50] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 163
[51] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 173
[52] Fowler, *Stages of Faith* p. 173

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As a result, it is not uncommon to witness wide gaps in the relative faith maturity of street-involved youth, not only between individuals, but between various aspects within individuals. In our work, we often observe youth being "older" than their years. Often forced to grapple with contradictions in meaning and value at an early age, they have worked hard to develop, reflect on and evaluate their own framework of meaning and value. Others are not so able, appearing younger than their years. They are unclear of the conflicts, their impact and their implications. Symbol, story, and myth surface and submerge - sometimes with keen integration, sometimes in ways that are deeply fractured.

To illustrate, let us consider the story of C. Hers is the poem that appears at the beginning of this chapter. C is a young woman who recently graduated from our program and agreed to be interviewed for our study. At the age of 15, C fled her home in northern Ontario to escape the repeated abuse of her parents and other established figures in her community. For a while she lived in Winnipeg, supporting herself through theft and prostitution. She then came to Toronto. Afraid that her abusers might track her to Toronto, she refused to sign her name to welfare or family benefits documents, choosing instead to live in parks, under roadways and occasionally in shared accommodations (disaffectionately known as "squats").

In her poem, she is running. At first we sense it is a terrible thing. Her flight

is coloured by whatever terrible things have caused her to run. She runs.

And what she finds is homelessness - another terrible thing. Or is it? For C,

homeless is the safest she has ever been. Her running is not so much

something that binds her – it frees her. She values the freedom. She values

the distance it brings between her and her terror – and those who have

brought it upon her.

She hides. Many of us value being known, but she wants to be unknown.

Her anonymity gives her time to think; time to find and pool resources; time

to reflect on what it is that has brought her to this place. She still hurts. She

still cries. In this place there is still little distance between life and death.

Both feel like home.

In this homeless home she finds a voice (a paintbrush provided by one of our

partner agencies) where the story begins to be told – even now not in words

but in colours, in strokes, and on canvas. She speaks without words. And

she is safe.

In this poem, C succinctly demonstrates part of the maturation process

typical of stage three and especially stage four. She has left home. She has

responded to the clash and contradiction of values brought on by abusive authorities. She has both told the story and stepped outside of it to reflect on where she is and where she is going. She knows she lacks trust. She is also learning to trust again. She is beginning to value self and other once more. She is maturing in faith.

She is not alone. Each day young people on the streets of Toronto join her in the quest to find purpose. Each day they work at making meaning, each day they travel the pathway towards wholeness, well-being, trust and belonging – the path we Christians call "faith."

CONCLUSION

To summarize our thoughts in this chapter, "faith" and how we speak of "faith" are important. While traditional studies equate "faith" with belief and religion (what Gerrish has called "saving faith"), there is also a broader, more expansive kind of faith that might be referred to as "secular faith." It is this "secular faith" that will be the primary focus of our research study.

The process by which this "secular faith" matures involves a process in which cognitive, moral and social factors contribute to a delicate, reflexive balance between our need to separate and our need to attach. James Fowler suggests that by evaluating a variety of aspects, including form of logic, social

perspective taking, moral judgement, social boundaries, locus of authority, world coherence and symbols, it is possible to measure the extent to which "faith maturity" is present in people.

We have also noted, however, that Fowler's model raises some significant concerns. While acknowledging the important role intimacy plays in faith development, Fowler's model clearly emphasizes individuation as the primary factor in the maturation process. The difficulty with this assumption (at its extreme) is that it leads to isolation. Conversely, intimacy without individuation leads to an assimilation or loss of identity. I would argue that a more descriptive model would be one in which intimacy and individuation are seen as equal or complementary in nature. Instead of a model that sees faith maturity as a process of individuation aided by intimacy, it may be more appropriate to describe the process of faith maturity as one of integration, where integration is defined as the wisdom to make decisions which actualize both intimacy *and* individuation. In this way, individuation and intimacy are bound together in the process of faith development.

A simple analogy of Fowler's model would see individuation as a river and intimacy as one of the tributaries feeding into it. My model sees intimacy and individuation as two rivers of equal size, joining to form a new river named

integration. In this way, individuation and intimacy contribute jointly to the process of maturation. This is the only way to find a true reading of faith maturity.

In our following chapter, we shift from individuation, intimacy and integration to some of the more important theological themes impacting our study of faith and faith maturity.

CHAPTER FOUR

WORD AND WORLD
Theological Framework and Assumptions

The Fountain of Youth

The world is but an old drain pipe
Dripping down onto the pavement in the back alley,

  And I see an old man lay down underneath it
  And hungrily wait for the drops of water to reach his tongue

The water was full of rust
  And I wondered how the old man survived so long.

(natasha sigalov)

The journey of C, as described in our previous chapter, begs the old but

critical question: "Did the gods create us, or did we create the gods?"[1] With

these words, Reg Bibby highlights the tension that exists between faith and

society, reinforcing our need to establish theological frameworks as well as

the psychosocial ones established in our previous chapter.

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[1] Reginald W. Bibby, *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Toronto. Stoddart, 1987) p. 1

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Among the first to explore this tension between Church and culture was

Eugene Nida, in his books, *Custom and Culture*[2] and *Message and Mission.*[3]

Other important writers since then have included: Robert Schreiter,[4] Charles

Kraft,[5] Leslie Newbiggen,[6] Max Stackhouse,[7]and David Bosch.[8] But the two I

would like to begin with are H. Richard Niebuhr and his classic text, *Christ*

and Culture,[9] as well as Stephen Bevans', *Models of Contextual Theology.*[10]

Both begin by acknowledging the problem.   Niebuhr writes:

> A many-sided debate about the relations of Christianity and
> civilization is being carried on in our time.   Historians and
> theologians, statesmen and churchmen, Catholics and Protestants,
> Christians and anti-Christians participate in it.   It is carried on
> publicly by opposing parties and privately in conflicts of conscience.
> Sometimes it is concentrated on in special issues, such as those of the
> place of Christian faith in general education or of Christian ethics in
> economic life.   Sometimes it deals with broad questions of the
> church's responsibility for social order or of the need for a new
> separation of Christ's followers from the world ... the debate is as
> confused as it is many sided.[11]

[2] Eugene Nida, *Customs and Culture: Anthropology for Christian Mission* (New York: Harper &
Row, 1954)

[3] Eugene Nida, *Message and Mission: The Commuinication of the Christian Faith*   (New York:
Harper, 1960)

[4] Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986)

[5] Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981)

[6] Leslie Newbiggen,   *One Body, One Gospel, One World* (London: International Missionary
Council, 1958)

_____   *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,
1978)

_____   *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*   (Geneva: World
Council of Churches, 1986)

[7] Max Stackhouse,   *Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization and Mission in Theological
Education,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988)

[8] David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY:
Orbis Books, 1991)

[9] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951)

[10] Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1992)

[11] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture,* p. 1

Confusing as it may be, there is little debate that the question still need to be

asked. Stephen Bevans writes:

> Doing contextual theology is not an option. The contextualization of
> theology – the attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of a
> particular context – is really a theological imperative. As we
> understand theology today, contextualization is part of the very
> nature of theology itself.[12]

Bevans continues by describing this approach to "doing" theology as both

new and traditional. First, contextual theology understands the nature of

theology in a new way by recognizing that those doing theology cannot be

completely objective. Because we are human, we will, to a degree, always be

subjective.

Until recently (meaning within the last 50-60 years), churches and theologians

tended to speak of theology as being rooted in two sources: scripture and

tradition, "the content of which has not and never will be changed, and is

above culture and historically conditioned expression."[13] Contextual

theology adds to this equation the recognition of human experience. It

realizes that culture, history and human thought all possess and provide

valid expressions of God's nature and relationship with creation.

As Charles Kraft writes:

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[12] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, p. 1
[13] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, p. 2

There is always a difference between reality and human culturally conditioned understandings (models) of that reality. We assume that there is a reality "out there" but it is the mental constructs (models) of that reality inside our heads that are the most real to us. God, the author of reality, exists outside any culture. Human beings, on the other hand, are always bound by cultural, subcultural, and psychological conditioning to perceive and interpret what they see of reality in ways appropriate to these conditionings. Neither the absolute of God nor the reality of [God] created is perceived absolutely by culture-bound human beings.[14]

In other words, reality is not just "out there," but also "in here." It is not something merely imposed, but something we help to create.

In this sense, contextual theology is something new. At the same time, contextual theology is something old. As we recognized earlier, human thought, culture and society have always had a say in helping us to discern, describe and define God's way in the world. Contemporary studies suggest that there is no one theology to be found in either the Christian or the Hebrew scriptures. Bevans reminds us that the Hebrew scriptures are made up of many different theologies, including: Yahwists, Elohist, Priestly, Deuteronomic and Wisdom theologies, to name a few.[15] All are different. Sometimes they even contradict one another. They reflect different times, different concerns and even different cultures as Israel itself changed from an agrarian society to one under Egyptian rule, to an independent nation under

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[14]Kraft, *Christianity in Culture,* p 300
[15] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology,* p. 3

a divinely-appointed monarch, and once more to a vassal state under

Assyrian, Greek and Roman rule.

In the Christian scriptures we also see a variety of theologies expressed. Each

of the Gospels, though focussed on the person of Christ, reflects the different

concerns of different communities. Reflecting on this variety, Niebuhr

cautions against adopting any single, unified theology. He writes: "There is

no one theology, no single Christian answer, only a series of typical answers

which together, for faith, represent phases of the strategy of the church in the

world."[16]

It is this confusing and perplexing landscape which first led Niebuhr, and

more recently Bevans, to develop their respective theoretical maps or models

of "doing" theology. While distinct in their approach, each offers five models

for examining the enduring debate between culture and faith.

4.1   Niebuhr's Christ and Culture

First published in 1951, H. Richard Niebuhr's book, *Christ and Culture*,

marked a significant turning point in the way theologians viewed the

relationship between culture and faith. In it, he observed five ways of

describing this relationship: 1) Christ against culture, 2) Christ of culture, 3)

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[16] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 2

Christ above culture, 4) Christ and culture in paradox, and 5) Christ the

transformer of culture. Of these five, the first and the last represent

humanity's attempts to answer the debate in the extreme, each occupying

different ends of the spectrum. The middle three seek a more moderate

position whereby the values of *both* Christ and culture are distinguished and

affirmed.

4.1.1 Christ against Culture - Niebuhr's first model emphasizes the

opposition between Christ and culture. We see this model illustrated

most clearly in the monastics, the Protestant sectarians and more

recently the Quakers and Tolstoyans, who consciously removed

themselves from wider society. Here, full weight is given to the

authority of Christ. Jesus is Lord. To follow Christ is to put Christ

above all things. The flip-side of this positive assertion is, of course, an

equally negative statement which says: "To be loyal to Christ is to

reject society." If Jesus is Lord, nothing else can have authority. In this

model, writes Niebuhr, "whatever may be the customs of the society in

which the Christian lives, and whatever the human achievements it

conserves, Christ is seen as opposed to them, so that he confronts men

[sic] with the challenge of an 'either-or' decision."[17]

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[17] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 40

Clearly, this presents some difficulties. Again Niebuhr writes:

> It is an inevitable answer; but it is also inadequate, as members of other groups in the church can easily point out. It is inadequate, for one thing, because it affirms in words what it denies in action; namely; the possibility of sole dependence on Jesus Christ to the exclusion of culture. Christ claims no man [sic] purely as a natural being, but always as one who has become human in a culture; who is not only in culture, but into whom culture has penetrated. [18]

Still, this model presents some important reminders. Firstly, we are reminded that the core of Christian faith is the person of Jesus Christ. To call oneself a Christian is to identify first and foremost with Christ. It is to live a life guided by his instruction and example in all matters of life. Secondly, it reminds us that as Christians, there are times when "either-or" decisions that reflect our allegiance to Christ are not only appropriate but necessary. Sometimes we must choose between Christ and culture, between revelation and reason, between God's own will and our own.

During the course of this project, I encountered one situation that brought this particular tension to the forefront. Our program receives several sources of funding for our clients. One funding stream sees government subsidies to our organization for clients hired directly by us. Another stream sees agencies paying youth directly for work the

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[18] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 69

do for us. Unfortunately, one young woman found a "resourceful" way to double her income by receiving payment from both of these sources. When our accounting caught up to her, we confronted her. She expressed no remorse. She had not lied to anyone – she just had not told us she had been getting two cheques. If we were "too stupid not to have noticed it – that was our fault."

The reality of the situation was that this young woman had endured several abusive relationships, had recently suffered a miscarriage and even more recently discovered she was pregnant again. Drugs and alcohol served not only as a means of escape but as serious drain on the little (or in this case not so little) income she did have.

We struggled with our decision. Should we correct the discrepancy and keep her on, or should we let her go? In the end, our solution was to terminate her employment but also to follow-up diligently with whatever personal and service supports we could provide. Fortunately, this story has a good ending – at least so far. The young woman is currently involved in a local detox program and has now been sober for more than a month for the first time in more than six years.

However, patting her and ourselves on the back is not the issue here. What is at stake is the reminder that this work often demands hard decisions based the service provider's sense of what is right and wrong, just and fair. What it demands from those who pursue this line of work is that they consciously discern what and in whom they believe. This is not always easy, nor always clear. At the very least, it provides a reminder to keep working at this aspect of our own identity and to see it is as an opportunity for oneself to grow in faith.

4.1.2 Christ of Culture – At the opposite end of the spectrum we encounter the Christ of Culture, typified by the first and second century Gnostics (and, as some would suggest, by much of North America's contemporary Christian culture). Here, Jesus is seen as the great hero of culture: "the fulfiller of its hopes and aspirations, the perfector of its true faith, the source of its holiest spirit."[19] Those who follow this model feel no great tension between the church and culture, between Christ and the world. "They do not necessarily seek Christian sanction for the whole of the prevailing culture, but only for what they regard as real and actual."[20] On the one hand they interpret *culture through Christ*, on the other they understand *Christ through culture*.

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[19] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p 83
[20] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 83

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The danger of assuming this position is the dilemma raised earlier by Bibby: a society where religion is little more than a product of culture rather than the other way around. Too often, theologians of this type tend towards a distorted Jesus. As Niebuhr writes: "They take some fragment of the complex New Testament story and interpretation, call this the essential character of Jesus, elaborate on it, and thus reconstruct their own mythical figure of the Lord."[21]

As with Niebuhr's first model, this type is not without its important reminders. It helps us to broaden our image of Christ, reminding us that the Community of God is for all people, not only a select few. It emphasizes God's relevance in and throughout time. It asserts that God cares about the day-to-day workings of God's people. It declares that what happens in us, to us and through us matters to someone other than ourselves.

My personal struggle in this regard, as I think it might be for others who work in ministry outside the Church, is not to romanticize the culture I work in. Each day I see the face of Christ in those I work with. What I need to remember is that I do not always see it in what

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[21] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 109

they do. The two are distinct, but easily confused. The cautions associated with this model remind me that while Christ lives and moves through culture in the lives of those who inhabit it, he does not necessarily endorse it "en toto." Even though Christ dwells within our youth, they often do some very un-Christlike things - things which undermine not only the humanity of others, but of themselves. Peering through rose-coloured glasses, it is sometimes easy to overlook these short-comings. If we are to be faithful to these youth and God, as well as ourselves, we must be careful not to.

4.1.3   Christ above culture - Niebuhr's third model seeks to establish some middle ground between the Christ who is against culture and the Christ who is of culture. The model, described as the "Church of the centre" and most clearly illustrated in the writings of Thomas Aquinas and modern-day Catholics, suggests that the fundamental issue does not lie between Christ and the world, but between God and humanity. With our second group, they share the belief that Jesus is "the fulfillment of cultural aspirations and the restorer of the institutions of true society."[22]   At the same time, there is something in Christ "that neither arises out of culture nor contributes directly to it."[23]   Christ is

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[22] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 42
[23] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 42

not merely *of culture*, but above it. Therefore, while humanity may work towards making the world all it can and should be, the best of all human achievement and community is not possible unless:

> Christ enters into life from above with gifts which human aspiration has not envisioned and which human effort cannot attain unless he relates men [sic] to a supernatural society and a new value-center.[24]

The attractiveness of this model is its recognition that while Christ is more than culture, Christ cannot be separated from it, nor culture from Christ. Unity is not only desirable, but necessary. Since Christ is of God, and since God created the earth, Christ and culture cannot be opposed to each other. To deny one would be to deny the other. And so we find scripture passages like the following:

> Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's,
> and to God the things that are Gods.[25]

> Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.
> For there is not authority except from God, and those that exist
> have been instituted by God ... The authorities are ministers of God.[26]

Secondly, this model seeks to synthesize the aspirations of our hearts with the recognition of our limitations and failures. It seeks to bring together what we can do with what we cannot do – what we can accomplish through noble thoughts, loving acts, and moral conduct and what we must rely on God for help to do.

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[24] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 42
[25] Matthew 22:21
[26] Romans 13:1,6

Its strength, however, is also its weakness. The effort to bring Christ and culture, God's own work and our own, the temporal and the eternal, the law and grace, into one system of thought and practice tends to reduce that which is absolute to something which is relative, that which is infinite to something which is finite, and that which is dynamic and mysterious to something mundane. At its most extreme, the desire to bring all things under "one roof" of thought and faith has led people of faith to such undesirable credits as the crusades, the Spanish inquisition, the conquest of Native Americans, and the residential schools of Canada's own First Nations people.

We also see this dynamic in many of the projects trying to get youth "off" the streets; not so much for the young people's benefit it seems as for our own. Recently, the Provincial Government in Ontario downloaded dollars onto the City of Toronto to deal with the "problem" of squeegee youth. Public sentiment had determined that youth standing on street corners and cleaning car windows had become undesirable. Not surprisingly, these concerns arose at the same time as Toronto was preparing its bid for the 2008 Olympics. As partner to one of the lead agencies receiving this money, however, we observed how difficult it was for agencies to use the money in ways

that actually addressed the root causes of this activity. Funding for outreach workers to pull kids off the streets was easy to justify; funding for program workers and direct services was quite a different matter. In one instance, a government source threatened to reduce funding for a skills-training program because plans had been to sell wooden chairs made by them as part of a job-fair at Nathan Phillips Square. The government official claimed that clients could not be allowed to make profits from government subsidy.

The temptation brought on by this model to bring all things "under one roof" is a serious one. Charles Kraft helps us to address it when he speaks not just of Christ above culture, but "Christ above yet working through culture." In other words, God communicates what might be considered "supra-cultural" meanings through specific cultural forms. These forms allow for an adequate, but less than perfect, perception of God's truth. The particular strength of this sub-model is its understanding that people need not be taken out of their experience to witness or respond to God. As Kraft writes: "People don't seem to need more ideals (especially foreign ones) to increase their feelings of

guilt and frustration. What they need in the first instance is assistance

in dealing with their own ideals."[27]

This observation is particularly important for those of us who work

with street-youth. Our task is not simply to remove these youth from

their environment and supplant it with a new one. Our task is to help

them learn more about their own sense of meaning and value in their

own environment based on what we know about Christ and our

values in our own environment. Kraft adds, this happens best when it

happens slowly, and from within rather than from outside. As Kraft

writes, whenever an indigenous work or form is pressed into service

to convey Christian meaning, "The process of Christianity-stimulated

conceptual transformation has begun."[28]

4.1.4   Christ and Culture in Paradox – This model, often described as

dualistic in nature, is characterized by an acceptance of the authority of

both Christ and culture, as well as the opposition between them. On

the one hand, those who answer the question this way are like the

Christ against Culture believers, refusing to accommodate the claims of

Christ to secular society. On the other, they are convinced that

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[27] Kraft, *Christianity in Culture,* p. 13
[28] Kraft, *Christianity in Culture,* p. 304

obedience to God requires obedience to the institutions of society and loyalty to its members as well as obedience to Christ who sits in judgement of that society. This is a life lived in constant tension: a citizen of two worlds, subject to two moralities, which are not only discontinous but largely opposed.

Within this framework, two important themes present themselves: law and grace. Along with those of Niebuhr's first group (Christ against Culture) these believers maintain the authority of Christ over all humanity and state it in its clearest, most literal sense. There is a law to be followed -a law that clearly defines codes of both moral and ethical conduct. At the same time, this group also insists that no human on their own, or in obedience to any law, can save themselves from what is, by nature, a sinful life. Where the *Christ above Culture* believers see God's action primarily through the influence of human thought and action, this group believes that what is desired and needed is God's grace.

The strength of this model is its utter honesty regarding the Christian predicament. For Christians, it recognizes our true desire to be more like Christ, and our utter frustration in never being able to achieve it. We resonate with the words of the apostle Paul:

> We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do ... I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this is what I keep on doing. [29]

What we encounter in this model is not so much prescriptive as it is descriptive; not so much a strategy as it is a report. This is what we know to be true about our churches, our communities and ourselves. Further, this model speaks with hopefulness about God's power to change the human condition: to penetrate, respect and respond to the deepest of all human needs.

The enduring challenge is to maintain our perspective. Easily overwhelmed by the sinfulness of humanity and overly reliant on the promise of God's mercy, we are tempted to act as though the law (divine or human) does not matter, as though morality and ethics are irrelevant. "What?" says Paul, "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Of course not."[30]

4.1.5   Christ the Transformer of Culture – Finally, we turn to Niebuhr's fifth model, typified most often by the Gospel of John, Augustine and John Calvin. Once again, the fallenness of human

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[29] Romans 7:14,15,18b,19
[30] Romans 7:7

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nature is recognized. Christ and culture stand in opposition. Here, however, the opposition does not lead, as in the first model, to a retreat from the world, or as in the fourth model, to a fatalistic endurance of "what is" in anticipation of "what might be". Here, Christ is seen as the transformer not only of people, but of the society in which they live.

Where the Christ of the fourth model rules a world that is innately sinful, this Christ rules a world that is innately good. Yes, darkness and evil are present. Yet, there is within it, planted at the time of its creation, a seed – a good one. It is to this seed that these followers are attracted and by which their work for change is fuelled. The kingdom is here, now, in the person of Jesus and in the presence of Christ's spirit. It is difficult to find, it is hard to discern. And yet, to those who look, it is there, here, waiting to emerge in all its fullness. "May those who have eyes to see, let them see."[31]

4.2   Bevans' Models of Contextual Theology

In his book, *Models of Contextual Theology*, Stephan Bevans also presents five different ways of theologizing. He argues that in every attempt to theologize,

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[31] Luke 10·23

four factors come into play: scripture, tradition, culture and social change. Each model, he suggests is characterized by the degree to which these various factors are valued. Like Niebuhr, the first two categories represent opposite ends of the spectrum, while the middle three categories stand somewhere in between. They are: 1) the Translational model, 2) the Anthropological model, 3) the Praxis model, 4) the Synthetic model, and 5) the Transcendental model.

4.2.1   The Translational Model – Bevans' first model, described as translational in character, represents the most conservative and widely used of the five categories. In this model, as with Niebuhr's first model, we find the emphasis place upon scripture and tradition. If there is a key supposition in this model it is, as Bevans writes, "that the essential message of Christianity is supracultural."[32] And so Bevans speaks of a "gospel core" - a timeless and unchanging message, surrounded by a "disposable, nonessential cultural husk."[33]

The first task, then, for theologians of this type is to strip the gospel of its cultural wrappings - the husk - in order to reveal the gospel kernel. Once revealed, this "naked gospel" must be translated or wrapped with the terms, actions, and stories that will allow it to be

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[32] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*,   p. 33
[33] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*,   p. 33

communicated both sensitively and appropriately to the culture or context in question.

Clearly, the strength of this model is its desire to take both scripture and tradition seriously. This insistence attests to the belief that Christianity does have something to say to the world, and that the things it has to say can change the world for good. Secondly, this model recognizes the ambivalence of culture and social change. On the one hand, it recognizes the degree to which culture has shaped scripture and tradition. On the other, it recognizes that these particular influences are not necessarily good or bad. Accordingly, Bevans writes: "The practitioner of the translation model can accept the good in all cultures while still being committed to the transforming and challenging power of the gospel."[34]

Still, this model presents some significant concerns. The first is the presupposition that every culture is roughly similar to every other culture, and that what is important to one will be important to the other. A second concern identifies difficulties with the concept of a "gospel core." Critics argue the unlikelihood that there can even be such a thing as a "naked gospel." Instead, Bevans offers an illustration

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[34] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, p. 36

put forward by Krikor Haleblian, which suggests that culture is rather like an onion, with various layers. "The message of Christianity," he writes, "is always inculturated, and rather than finding an essential core, one must find a way of discerning cultural patterns that incarnate or can incarnate Christian existence and meaning."[35]

Thirdly, Bevans argues against this model's implicit notion that revelation is propositional - a list of truths that Christians must believe. Instead, revelation is the manifestation of God's presence in human life, and the scriptures are only a record of it. "What this suggests," concludes Bevans, "is that rather than looking for a kernel to wrap in a new husk, the theologian should be looking for God's presence at every layer of the onion, and to point that out in terms of the older and wider tradition."[36]

4.2.2   The Anthropological Model – At the opposite end of the scale, we encounter this model of doing contextual theology. Whereas the Translational model seeks to preserve Christian identity while attempting to take history, culture and social change seriously, the

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[35] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, p, 37
[36] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, p. 37

primary concern of this model is the development or preservation of

the cultural identity by a person of Christian faith.

To help us in our understanding of this concept, Bevans offers the

words of M.A.C. Warren:

> Our first task in approaching other people, another culture,
> another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are
> approaching is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on
> men's [sic] dreams. More serious still, we may forget that God
> was here before our arrival. [37]

The premise here is that human nature, and therefore human culture,

is ultimately good, worthy and full of meaning. This model suggests

that God's revelation is found not so much on the written page as it is

within people.

We see this difference another way. Those who use the Translational

model tend to see themselves as people who bring a saving message to

a culture in a sensitive, relevant and attractive way: Those who follow

the Anthropological model look for God's revelation and presence

within the values, relationships, and concerns of a particular culture.

And so, while scripture and tradition can serve as a map, the real work

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[37] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology,*   p. 49

involves digging deep into the history and tradition of the culture in question: "for it is primarily there that the treasure is to be found."[38]

The strength of this model is that it takes human experience seriously; it encourages the theologian to start where faith and meaning and value live - within people. It takes account of our questions and our interests. It regards God as someone to be experienced in the present and not merely remembered from the past. Its weakness is that in valuing the present and romanticizing the immediate, we risk forgetting the past and ignoring the many truths that peoples both current and ancient have to offer. Surely God is revealed through word, art and creation as well as human experience. We do not need to see one as mutually exclusive of another.

4.2.3 The Praxis Model – Bevans' third model, characterized most clearly by modern-day liberation theology, is described as the Praxis model. The central premise of this model is that, "the highest level of knowing is intelligent and responsible doing."[39] Where the Translational model focuses on one's Christian identity within a particular context and the Anthropological model focuses on a

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[38] R.T. Rush, quoted in Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, p. 49
[39] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, p. 66

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particular culture and its unique way of articulating faith, here the

emphasis is placed upon the identity of the Christians within a

particular culture as that culture is understood in terms of social

change.

Reflecting on this central premise, Bevans refers us to Leonardo Boff,

who writes:

> ...the first word is spoken by what is done, that is, by a
> conscious act aimed at changing social relationships. It is
> therefore an inductive theology. It does not start with words
> (those of the Bible or the magisterium) and end in words (new
> theological formulations), but stems from actions and
> struggles and works out of a theoretical structure to throw
> light on and examine these actions. [40]

Or, as J.L. Segundo states: "Each new reality obliges us to interpret the

Word of God afresh, to change accordingly, and then to go back and

re-interpret the Word of God again, and so on."[41]

While some criticize this model for its ties to Marxism, a tendency

towards a naïve and selective reading of scripture, and a

preoccupation with what is negative in society, the strengths of this

model are many. The first is that it is open to anyone – and in

particular, the poor and the powerless. This is not a theology

exclusively for the academic or the trained seminarian. This is a

[40] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology,* p. 67
[41] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology,* p. 69

theology open to all – one that can be entered into at whatever stage or context one finds oneself. Secondly, it assumes that theology is not a finished product, valid at all times and in all places, but rather a process of continually opening oneself to the awareness of God's presence and to the tasks and relationships that presence calls forth in us.

4.2.4   The Synthetic Model – The fourth, or Synthetic model, seeks to accomplish the enviable but difficult task of keeping each of the four contextual elements (scripture, tradition, culture and social change) in balance. It tries to preserve the importance of the gospel message and the heritage of the Christian tradition, while at the same time acknowledging the role that culture has and continues to have in the task of "doing" theology.

The central tenet of this model is that each culture is both distinct and complementary; that every culture or context possesses elements that are unique and others that are held in common. This composite nature means that every culture has truths and values to offer – it also has things to learn. It is this dialogue between the two, the unique and the complementary, that defines the nature of a particular culture's

identity. Some push even further, suggesting it is only when cultures enter into dialogue that we experience true human growth.

In theological terms, it suggests that God's revelation is something that is rooted in history and therefore culturally shaped and conditioned. At the same time, it recognizes God as being operative in the present, calling women and men to work within that context for good through cultural transformation and social change. Revelation is something that is both finished and unfinished, broad and specific, timeless and yet rooted in time.

The strongest aspect of this method is its openness to dialogue and its witness to the universality of the Christian faith. And while it is always in danger of "selling out" to stronger, more dominant cultures, it does not imply that "anything goes." Quoting David Tracy, Bevans writes:

> Conversation is a game with some hard rules: say only what you mean; say it as accurately as you can; listen to and respect what the other says, however different or other; be willing to correct or defend your opinions if challenged by the conversation partner, be willing to argue if necessary, to confront if demanded, to endure necessary conflict, and to change your mind if the evidence suggests it.[42]

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[42] David Tracy, quoted in Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, p. 87

With these guidelines in mind, the Synthetic model provides a

significant and important tool for bringing culture and faith together.

4.2.5   The Transcendental Model – Finally, we turn to Bevans' fifth

model. The fundamental difference here is the model's intent to start,

not by focussing on the gospel or on a particular cultural context, but

with the theologian's own experience, religious and otherwise.

Following this path, we are led to ask questions not so much about

what a particular theology will look like, but rather:

> How well do I know myself? How genuine is the religious
> experience I am trying to interpret? How well does my
> language express this experience? How free of bias am I? Do I
> feel comfortable with a particular expression of my religious
> experience? Why or why not? Do I really understand what I
> am trying to articulate? [43]

At first glance, this method appears to be one that is very personal and

individualistic. While in many respects it is, it is also one that is

extremely contextual and communal. People do not exist in a vacuum.

A person's identity is determined at every turn by the context in which

they find themselves. We are who we are because we live at a

particular point in time, because we have a certain heritage and a

certain set of parents who have received a certain kind and level of

education, and so on. As Bevans writes:

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[43] M. Lamb, quoted in Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*,   p. 99

> From this transcendental starting point, theology is conceived as a process of "bringing to speech" who I am as a person of faith, who is, in every respect, a product of a historical, geographical, social and cultural environment.[44]

A second underlying theme of this model is that while it may seem intensely personal and private, it can also be very effective in helping articulate the experience of others who share the same basic life context. We do not live in a vacuum. The essence of community is that we share certain things in common. Using these things as starting points can prove helpful for growing together in faith.

Another essential strength is this model's view of revelation. For the transcendental theologian, God's revelation is not "out there." It is not to be found solely in words of scripture, doctrine, tradition, or culture, but rather within oneself as one opens themselves to these tools and channels of God's presence and grace. Thus, revelation is understood not as content but as an event; it is something that happens when a person opens himself or herself to reality. Bevans writes: "Theology is possible only for the converted subject, only for the person who in full openness has allowed God to touch and transform his or her life."[45]

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[44] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology,* p. 98
[45] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology,* p. 99

The Transcendental model points to a new way of doing theology. Its strength is its insistence that theology is not so much about finding "right answers" as it is about starting a journey – one in which the traveller takes up a careful and passionate search to find authentic expression for one's religious and cultural identity.

The concern of many people is that this model is too abstract or hard to grasp. A more serious concern, however, arises when we ask: "What or who provides the criterion for subjective authenticity?"[46] Thirdly, Bevans notes: "Since it is so hard to be an authentic believer and an authentic human being, it might seem that a theology that depends on these criteria would never get started."[47] He concludes that this model is likely "too ideal" and at best only a "meta-model" which helps lay down the framework for contextual thinking in any theological sense.

Having completed our summary of Niebuhr and Bevans, where do we stand? In Niebuhr's scheme, I find myself most oriented towards "Christ transforming Culture." In Bevans', I am most likely to follow the "Synthetic" or "Transcendental" models. I am also cautious, however, that as with Adams' depiction of Canada's social tribes, we

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[46] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, p. 102
[47] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, p. 102

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are sometimes overly content to read descriptions, slot ourselves in and adopt characterizations as though we had done the hard work of theology. Too easily we see these categories as being mutually exclusive rather than complementary approaches, our use of which must be determined (in part) by the ministry context in which we find ourselves.

For example, many of the street-youth we work with have no significant connection to, or history with, the Church. They have no particular religious affiliation, did not attend Sunday School or worship and as a result have relatively little understanding of what "Church" is all about. Despite this "disconnectedness" from Church, there is still a sense in which religion and religious tradition plays an important role in the development of their identity. As Max Stackhouse writes:

> Once a religion is established in a human psyche, in a society, or in a civilization, it becomes itself a motivational or cultural force in life, and may enter into a dialectical process of interaction with those "original" primary forces that gave it birth, influencing them as it is influenced by them.[48]

At the same time, there are significant numbers who did grow up within the Church. Some even cite their anger with, confusion over, or

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[48] Stackhouse, *Apologia*, p. 142. Stackhouse argues that many of the contextual models set forward (Bevans' perhaps being one of them) appropriately recognize the impact of society on religion but fail to recognize a reciprocal impact of religion on society.

abuse by the Church as contributing factors to their life on the street.

These differences in experience, even within the street-youth

community, sometimes means re-thinking our pastoral and theological

approach - not the least of which is asking whether or not these young

people have a theology themselves. For example, one young woman

who worked for us but who did not participate in the study, shared

with me one day about her experience growing up within the Brethren

Church. Long since disaffiliated from that community, she continued

to express many of the theological approaches typical of that

denomination. Even though she had not been a part of that church for

more than ten years, it continued to shape and influence her process of

"making-meaning". Part of the task in helping was not only to

determine what theological process I felt most comfortable with, but to

observe which model she seemed to be operating out of and minister

to her out of that context.

In this sense, the title of Robert Schreiter's book, *Constructing Local

Theologies*,[49] serves an important reminder: theology is hard work.

Nor is it ever entirely done; theology is always a constructive process.

It requires careful attention both to community context and to oneself:

what are the various factors contributing to this situation at this time

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[49] Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*

and in this place. One of the great challenges in ministry, whether the ministry takes place in Churches or communities outside the Church, is to make time for this. It is not enough to assume that one theology can be applied to all situations: one must be prepared to contextualize their theology in each ministry setting. Theory cannot be set over praxis, nor praxis over theory. As David Bosch writes: "Orthopraxis and orthodoxy need one another, and each is adversely affected when sight is lost of the other."[50] Or as Samuel Rayan puts it: "In our methodology, practice and theory, action and reflection, discussion and prayer, movement and silence, social analysis and religious hermeneutics, involvement and contemplation, constitute a single process."[51]

In summary, we see the relationship between Christ and culture as a many-sided debate: Christ against it, of it, above it, in paradox with it, and transforming it - translating, honouring, doing, dialoguing, and transcending. Each of the frameworks we have presented provides us with their advice on how best to proceed and their warnings on how best not to. As we seek to bring together the psychological, the social and theological components of our own particular contexts, one

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[50] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 425
[51] Samuel Rayan, quoted in David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 425

reminder that I have found helpful comes from Martin Buber. In his

landmark book, *I and Thou*, he writes:

> The life of the human being does not exist merely in the sphere of goal directed verbs. It does not consist merely of activities that have something for their object. I perceive something. I feel something. I imagine something. I want something. I sense something. I think something. The life of a human being does not consist of all this and its like. All this and its like is the basis of the realm of It. But the realm of You has another basis ... Whoever says You does not have something for his object. For wherever there is something there is also another something; every It borders on other Its; It is only by virtue of bordering on others. But where You is said there is no something. You has no borders. Whoever says You does not have something; he has nothing. But he stands in relation.[52]

Whatever model we choose, whatever framework we follow, it must

always be directed towards achieving the You in others, never the It;

moving us always towards the relationship by which we are

empowered and enabled to be, to assume, to envision our true self, our

true meaning and true purpose.

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[52] Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970) p. 54

CHAPTER 5

STRANGERS AND ALIENS
Dominant Theological Themes

I feel alien but my skin is still skin
I look out but you all float before me
Passing   Moving on
You act like you don't see me but really I know you just won't
(Sue Cohen)

In the mid 1990's, one of the most intriguing and popular shows to hit

television was the X-Files. Following the case files of FBI agents Scully and

Mulder, the show immersed its viewers in the age-old topic of aliens,

abductions and the paranormal.

Unfortunately, one need not be from another planet to feel like a stranger on

earth. Far from paranormal, it is an experience all too common for many, and

especially so for those who call the street their home. Marginalized from

society, alienated from their families, distanced by lack of education and

opportunity, they find themselves on the outside.

In Chapter Three, we considered some of the psycho/social aspects relating

to this experience. In Chapter Four, we considered the theological

frameworks that apply.   In this chapter, we turn from systems, frameworks

and processes to some of the dominant theological themes that emerge when we speak of at-risk and street-involved youth. The themes we will consider are: creation, the city, exodus and exile, the stranger and shalom.

5.1 Creation

In the opening words of the Jewish Testament, we read:

> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was brooding over the waters. [1]

With these words, the writer of Genesis introduces us to the first of the great stories of relationship between God and humanity. "In the beginning is the relation."[2] Martin Buber's great assertion affirms Fowler's belief that the fundamental structure of faith is relational. From the "beginning" of history, humanity has grappled with the question of who we are and where we have come from. This was Israel's answer. The Hebrews believed they were from God; they were God's people. The assertion takes its rightful place at the beginning of scripture, proclaiming to all who read it: this is who we are; this is where we find our purpose, value and meaning. Throughout scripture, the theme weaves together the people's story: the exodus; the exile; the glory of Jerusalem as well as its fall; the stories of Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Rebeccah, David and Deborah; the longing for a messiah; Christ's birth, his death and

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[1] Genesis 1:1
[2] Buber, *I and Thou,* p. 69

his resurrection - all hinge on the understanding that God created humanity and wants to be in relationship with them.

The theme of creation, and the assertion of its rootedness in relationship, stands as both Israel's and God's reminder that there is no segment of humanity that stands outside creation; no nation, no group, no minority who is set apart from God's desire to be in relationship. Whoever they are and whatever their circumstance, God made them and loves them. They are God's children.

In the second chapter of Genesis , we discover the record of another creation story. This time, however, the story is not so much about humanity's relationship with God, as it is humanity's "disrelationship" from God and from itself. Much of Christian thought concerning this passage emanates from the writings of Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD). Before becoming a Christian, Augustine belonged to the Manichean religion, which was based on a belief in dualism. They believed that that the forces of good and evil were locked in a battle with one another, with neither having ultimate power over the other.[3] When Augustine became a Christian, he rejected this dualistic belief and adopted the Christian understanding of a wholly good and loving God. He rejected the idea that evil could exist within God or that

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[3] John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (London:Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1966) p. 44

it existed as a separate force outside of God. Where, then, did evil come from?

According to Augustine, Genesis 3 depicts it for us. Evil was not introduced into humanity at the point of creation, but rather with humanity's "fall" from grace. God is not responsible for evil, but rather humanity itself, with its decision "ex nihilo" to turn from God.[4]

Iranaeus (130-202 AD) understood the problem in a different way. He did not believe that humanity "fell" from a state of perfection, or that it created evil out of its decision to turn from God. Instead, he believed that humans were created morally immature with the capacity to choose either good or evil. Humanity was not created perfect, [5] but neither was it created evil. It was created with the potential for both good and evil. It was not sin that created the possibility of evil, but the potential for sin that created the possibility of evil.[6]

What Augustine saw as a "falling away," Iranaeus saw as a "falling towards." He saw the story of Adam and Eve as the depiction of a moral immaturity

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[4] Jan Wood Daly, *Waiting for God: Companions of the Cross* (M. Div. Thesis, McMaster University, 1993) p. 15
[5] Perfect in the sense of "wholly righteous" or "good".
[6] Wood Daly, *Waiting for God*, p. 17

with which we are all born, the first stage of an ongoing process of "growing up into the image of God."[7]

This story that begins in a garden and ends in the wilderness[8] mirrors for us a sort of "collective memory"[9] - a movement from the time of "flowing milk, loving and understanding eyes, responsive care, and unconflicted cherishing"[10] of infancy towards "that time of misty memory in each of our lives when we began to encounter parental limits and directives, their prohibitions, and their expressions of disapproval and discipline."[11] If Genesis 1 declares Israel's understanding of God's love and their position of privilege, chapters 2 and 3 laments their sense of shame and separation. Where one story expresses the people's oneness with God, the seconded confesses its otherness.

When we apply this discussion to street-youth, this alter or anti theme of Genesis 2 and 3 takes on particular significance. It represents for us the universal experience of becoming divided selves. It highlights for us the tragic nature of our separation, not only from God, but from the best of ourselves. Once again it places relationship with God, ourselves and others

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[7] Fowler, *Faithful Change*, p. 139
[8] See Genesis 3:1-24
[9] Fowler, *Faithful Change*, p. 133
[10] Fowler, *Faithful Change*, p. 133
[11] Fowler, *Faithful Change*, p. 133

at the very centre of the community's values. It relates how shame calls us

back to our loss of something valuable, and forward toward its restoration in

a new and more complete way. Fowler describes it this way: [12]

> Shame is not the act of sin. Rather, it is the subjective amplification of
> the objective fact of the potential for separation or destruction of
> relation involved in the sinful act. Shame provisionally interrupts the
> pursuit of sin in order to provide a time for self-aware evaluation for
> the sake of avoiding a more serious breach. Shame, in its undistorted
> and discretionary mode, keeps us sensitive, modest, respectful, and
> properly attuned to the reactions and responses of others. It keeps us
> suitably aware of conditions in the relations between us and others.

This second creation story, then, is a story of coming to terms with the

expectations and limits imposed by others. It is an exploration in self-

awareness and self-evaluation. We are not alone. Our choices for "self" and

"other" matter. More than matter - they are of ultimate significance in our

growing up into faith.

Thomas Aquinas further emphasizes the significance of these creation stories

in his book, *Summa Contra Gentiles*.   In it, he writes: "Any error about

creation also leads to an error about God." [13] In other words, what we

understand about creation reveals the essence of our understanding about

God. Or as Steven Bouma-Prediger puts it: "We must get our doctrine of

creation right if we are to get our doctrine of God right."[14]

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[12] Fowler, *Faithful Change*, p. 136
[13] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (II.3)
[14] Steven Boma-Prediger, "Creation as the Home of God: The Doctrine of Creation in the Theology
of Jürgen Moltmannn, *Calvin Theological Journal* 32 (1997) pp. 72-90

Particularly helpful in our task here is the understanding of God and creation

put forward by Jürgen Moltmann. Writing in his book *God in Creation*,

Moltmann considers creation as "The home of God." According to

Moltmann, the appropriate understanding of God's relationship with the

world is one where: "God [is] in the world and the world is in God."[15] The

tension he describes is that of imminence and transcendence, the very tension

described earlier by Niebuhr and Bevans. For Moltmann, the response is not

"either/or" but "both/and." God is transcendent; the world is not "itself

divine."[16] God created it *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). God is not creation and

creation is not God. Still, God is all in all.[17] And so Moltmann encourages us

to speak of an "immanent-transcendence" and a "transcendent- immanence"

- a state of being, or relationship between God and humanity, in which both

find their home. Moltmann puts it best when he writes:

> The one-sided stress on God's transcendence in relation to the world
> led to deism, as with Newton. The one-sided stress on God's
> immanence in the world led to pantheism, as with Spinoza. The
> Trinitarian concept of creation integrates the elements of truth in
> monotheism and pantheism. In the pantheistic view, God, having
> created the world also dwells in it, and conversely the world which he
> [sic] created exists in him.[18]

For those on the streets – those who make their home where there is no home

– this understanding holds special significance. It is not enough for those

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[15] Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985) p. 17
[16] Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 72
[17] I Corinthians 15:28
[18] Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 98

who live on the street to know a God who is solely transcendent or immanent – one or the other. Like each of us, these youth require a God who is "both/and": one who is distant enough to call them out of, away from and beyond their experience (the transcendent God) and at the same time close enough to dwell and experience with them all that they currently call their "home".

It is in the stories of creation that we find this God. Here, we find the one who is all-powerful and all-knowing, as well as the humble, searching, longing and grieving one. In creation, we find the God who is at home and who is not at home – and discover meaning in both.

5.2   The City

Life began in a garden. In Eden, humanity learned to delight in each other and in all the other creatures placed there by God. In that garden, God planted two trees of ultimate importance. One was the Tree of Life. The other was the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. God said not to eat from that tree; but humanity did. And the garden was lost.

Since that time, the mythical Eden has been held up as humanity's Valhalla – its paradise lost - and longed for. In contrast, the city has often stood suspect. For many, it is seen as a place of violence and questionable motives - a

reminder to ourselves of humanity's "fall". It is little wonder when we

review the history of the Bible's first city, Enoch.[19] In Genesis 4, we read the

story of how Adam and Eve departed Eden and had two sons, Cain and Abel.

Cain kills Abel and is banished to the wilderness. Away from God's

presence, east of Eden, in the land of the Wandering, Cain marries a wife,

they start a family, and build a city. The city begins as a refuge from the

hostile world around them. It has walls; it is meant to protect and to keep

out. Humanity's first city grows out of turmoil.

Its second city, Babel, does not fare much better. Following the story of Noah

and the flood, Noah's descendants settle in the land of Shinar and decide to

build a city. "Come," they said, "let us build ourselves a city, with a tower

that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and

not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."[20] Again, the city becomes a

refuge from the insecurity of an open world, and the destiny willed for them

by God. The previous chapters have described the scattering of humanity as

part of God's calling to repopulate the world after the flood; but these people

resist that destiny. They want to stay in one place. They want to make a

name for themselves. They want to reach for heaven. Here the city

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[19] Genesis 4:17
[20] Genesis 11:4

represents human ambition, with all of its positive and negative attributes.

The city is a difficult, challenging and, some would say, evil, place to live.

But God also loves the city.   We see this first of all in Deuteronomy with

Moses' famous instructions to the children of Israel:

> When the Lord your God has brought you into the land he swore to
> your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you – a
> land with fine, large cities that you did not build, houses filled with
> all sorts of goods that you did not fill, hewn cisterns that you did not
> hew, vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant – and when
> you have eaten your fill, take care that you do not forget the Lord,
> who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
> [21]

The city is an integral part of the promised land's theological topography. It

comes as God's gift. The city becomes God's dwelling place – not in a

physical sense – but in a symbolic sense. In the city, God's name means

something. This is the place where God's laws rule. It is the place where

God's vision for peace and justice will reign.

Jerusalem, in particular, becomes identified as the City of God, the place in

which the values of shalom are most evident. Conceived as God's dwelling

place, Jerusalem is celebrated by the Psalmist: "There is a river whose

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[21] Deuteronomy 6:10-12

streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High

dwells. God is within her, she will not fall ."[22]

Over and against the inhospitable wilderness, the city is set forth as a place of

sustenance:

> Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where
> they could settle. They were hungry and thirsty and their lives ebbed
> away. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble and God
> delivered them from their distress. God led them by a straight way to
> a city where they could settle. Let them give thanks to God for
> unfailing love and God's wonderful deeds for humanity. For God
> satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. [23]

Instead of a place of oppression, violence and suffering, it is a place of

deliverance for those stranded in the desert; an oasis for those who are thirsty

and hungry and without a home. Jerusalem is God's bride.[24] God grieves for

it,[25] weeps for it,[26] and longs to wrap loving arms around it as a hen gathers

her chicks beneath her wings.[27] God loves the city like a mother, wanting the

best for it, aching for its well-being, longing for its future, working for its

peace.

And finally, even after the city of Jerusalem itself has fallen, God offers to

restore the city to the glory of Eden:

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[22] Psalm 46:4-5
[23] Psalm 107:4-9
[24] Ezekiel 16:1-14
[25] Jonah 4:10-11
[26] Luke 19:41-44
[27] Luke 13:34-35

For the Lord will comfort Zion: God will comfort her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of God; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.[28]

Once again it will be called the City of Truth, a place where:

Old men and old women will sit in the streets, each with a cane in hand because of their age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Even though it seems impossible to the remnant of people in these days, it is not impossible to me.'[29]

God loves the city. The harsh and challenging place is also the city of

righteousness and the garden of justice. It is the place that God inhabits

despite what it is and because of what it is. It is not what God wants it to be;

it is everything God wants it to be. The paradox of God's love is once again

made real. God loves the city.

This confession is particularly powerful for those who live on the street and

for those who work with them. The city is more than a place to be tolerated,

more than a problem to be dealt with, more than a challenge to be faced,

surmounted, or subdued. Despite all of the things that can make it a difficult

place to live, the city is a place of value. It deserves the attention of

government, business, educational institutions, service agencies and the

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[28] Isaiah 51:3
[29] Zechariah 8:4-6

Church. Financially, socially, culturally and spiritually it is a place worth

investing in. The city is a good place to be.

5.3 Exodus and Exile

One of the things the Bible does for us is to provide images that help us better

understand our own lives. For many, exodus and exile stand very near the

top.

The first of these themes begins in Egypt, and more precisely in one of

Pharaoh's brickyards.[30] The brickyard was a place of profit and coercion;

profit for the people who owned and sold the bricks, coercion for those who

made them. And because they were coerced, it was also a place of

unhappiness, oppression and even hostility. For Israel, the brickyard was a

place of despair, a place without hope. Not even in their wildest dreams

could the people of Israel imagine anything that would make life better.

There would never be enough bricks to meet the quota, never enough

earnings to satisfy the foremen, never enough power to get rid of the demand

they faced everyday in the brickyard. The only alternatives were to "make

bricks and suffer, or to refuse to make bricks and suffer even more."[31]

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[30] Walter Brueggemann, *Living Toward a Vision: Biblical Reflections on Shalom* (New York: United Church Press, 1982) p. 54
[31] Brueggemann, *Living Toward a Vision,* p. 55

In his book, *Living Toward a Vision*, Walter Brueggemann acknowledges the

commonality of it all:

> Not a single one of us is far removed from that set of realities. This image could be a powerful one for us precisely because it is like our experience. We are each of us in the brickyard. We all owe our souls to the company store. It does not matter if it is a fifth-grader with a demanding baseball coach or a third-grader with a teacher who shouts or a father who demands; it does not matter if it is a taxpayer who is always playing catch-up or an unappreciated mother and wife. It does not matter if it is a graduate student never satisfying his or her committee, or a junior executive under enormous pressure, or a doctor with too many patients, or a salesperson whose quota is always upped, or a social worker with a heavy load. We are all of us caught in a way of life that yields only frantic hostility and desperate effort, which cannot finally pay off.

All of us, at one time or another, find ourselves in the brickyard. We find

ourselves wanting to run, wanting to escape, wanting to exit the place of

oppression and control in which we find ourselves. Each of us finds

ourselves caught between Moses' "Let my people go" and Pharaoh's "Make

more bricks!"

Brueggemann identifies the issue clearly when he suggests that the drama of

the brickyard is the question: "Who is in charge?" It does not matter if we

are kids on the street or white middle-class pew-sitters: "If the gods of

coercion and oppression are in charge, then there is nothing to do but make

more bricks."[32] But if Yahweh is in charge, if freedom, hope, passion, and purpose are in charge, "Then it is time to sing and dance and be free."[33]

Who is in charge? Who are the authorities? And what are the values that shape and misshape our lives? The story of the Exodus is a story of values – and more specifically a choosing between values. There is no suggestion that the choice will be easy, or that the results of one's choice will be immediate. Israel wandered almost forty years in the wilderness before entering the promised land. It does say, however, that brickyards can change. It states that the values we follow, the authorities we trust, and the meaning we pursue can make the difference between life in the brickyards and a journey to the Promised Land.

When Brueggemann talks about choice, he is careful to point out that this is not merely a change in attitude or a change in perception, but an entire redistribution of power and one's allegiance to it. The brickyard is no longer a place of coercion, but freedom. Even when the promise is still a long way off, the brickyards can be transformed.

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[32] Brueggemann, *Living Toward a Vision,* p. 56
[33] Brueggemann, *Living Toward a Vision,* p. 56

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In the year 587 BC, the promised land that had been gained was lost.

Jerusalem had fallen. Experts disagree as to why this happened. Some argue

that the external pressures placed on them by Babylon were too great. Others

argue that Israel's leadership lacked strength. Or perhaps it was because

Israel had simply forgotten to be God's people – and therefore the City of

God could no longer be theirs. Whatever the reason, the people of the Exodus

had become people of the Exile. Defeated and despondent, the people of

Israel were deported to Babylon. "There," the Psalmist grieves, "we sat down

and wept."[34]

Israel is not alone. The experience of many today is also one of exile. We

weep for our loss of belonging and attachment. We grieve our loss of

connectedness to family, friends and community. We mourn for what was,

what should have been and what ought to be, but is not. Not even the church

itself is immune. Distanced from its once glorious past with waning

numbers, resources and influence, the church no longer stands at the centre of

society, but rather, outside of it, deported from its position of prestige to a far

and distant land.

To those in exile, the prophet whispers:

> Look to the rock from which you were hewn

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[34] Psalm 137:1

and to the quarry from which you were dug.
Look to Abraham your father and Sarah who bore you;
For he was but one when I called him,
But I blessed him and made him many. [35]

Remember who you are, where you came from and what you are made of.

Remember Abraham, the old man without hope. Remember Sarah, the

desperate, barren one. Remember his promise; remember her laugh.

Remember the miracles, the impossibilities, and the stories that gave rise to

who you were, who you are and who you might still become. Remember, so

that what is true might stand up; and what are lies might fall away.

Remember.

Even if our pasts are painful or our histories are marred by suffering and grief

(as they are for so many of the youth we work with), our remembering is

essential. When Jesus last ate with his disciples, just before his death, he

took the bread and the cup and said: "Do this in remembrance of me."[36] In

order to work through their grief, in order to maintain their mission, in order

to know who and whose they were – Jesus' disciples would need to

remember. Our memories can help re-member our identities. They can help

to restore broken aspects of our lives. They can help to secure the framework

or structure upon which our wholeness depends.

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[35] Isaiah 51:1b-2
[36] Luke 22:19b

So many of the youth we work with cannot remember. Either they either do not want to remember or what they do remember has been so clouded by grief and pain that they cannot see their true selves. They cannot remember their own goodness. They cannot remember their innocence, their hope or their dreams. When we remember, we draw together with them in our experience. We honour their pain, we acknowledge their grief and we encourage the difficult piecing together of lives and dreams long-forgotten.

When we feel lost, when we are alone, when find ourselves on the outside. Remember.

5.4 The Stranger

Another theme that requires our careful consideration is that of "the Stranger" and the closely associated idea of hospitality. The author of Hebrews illustrates for us the relationship between these two ideas: "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for in so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."[37]

For many of us, the word "hospitality" elicits thoughts of comfort, safety, nourishment and lodging. It suggests rest from work and a place to recover from long journeys: "A place that is not our home but nevertheless enables

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[37] Hebrews 13:2

us to feel at home."[38] John Koenig further recognizes this aspect of

hospitality when he writes:

> If we are caught in the grip of a cold spell, we may imagine ourselves
> as guests in a pleasant country inn, enjoying a cozy spot next to the
> fireplace. Or, if hot weather oppresses, we may conjure up a picture
> of ourselves on the porch or patio of a neighbours's house, sipping an
> iced drink in the cool of the evening. [39]

Arising out of this imagery we see that hospitality involves not only things

like arm chairs, fireplaces, inns, and patios, but people – families, friends, or

even strangers who extend to us their welcome. Hospitality takes place

within relationship. The unique nature of this relationship is illustrated in the

New Testament by the use of the Greek word, "ξενος". As Koenig notes,

"ξενος", which sometimes means "stranger", can also mean both host and

guest. This uses signifies that when one person welcomes another in the true

spirit of hospitality, the distinctive roles of host and guest often become

reversed and sometimes merge altogether.[40] The paradoxical nature of this

relationship continues when we consider that the verb "ξ ενιζειν" can mean

"to receive a guest", but also, "to surprise" or appear strange. This, too, is

evident in the European origins of words such as "host", "hospice" and

"hospital". The root of all of these words is "ghosti", which not surprisingly

is also the root of 'guest'. "Ghosti" was sometimes also used to refer to

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[38] John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) p. 1
[39] Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, p. 1
[40] Lambros Kamperidis, "Philoxenia and Hospitality" in *Parabola* 15 (1990) p. 6

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strangers, hence the word "ghost". These meanings also help us to understand the word "hostile," and a second meaning for "host" which is "a multitude" – often of enemies. This illustrates our usual fear of the unknown and its encouragement of suspicion and even hostility when we are presented with someone or something new.[41]

At the centre of this host-guest relationship lie certain prescribed rights and obligations. It is generally assumed that the host maintains the obligation to receive the guest into his or her home and to treat the guest with respect and generosity. As Harry Murray writes: "Hospitality is always done in a friendly, caring spirit – otherwise one is not 'hospitable'."[42]

Also implied in this relationship is the host's obligation to be open to hearing the guest's story. "The host," suggests Henri Nouwen, is obliged to create a "free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people but to offer them space where change can take place."[43]

In many cultures, this transformation is closely linked with a sacred, sometimes divine, bond between guest and host, therefore creating the

[41] Helen Luke, "The Stranger Within" in *Parabola* 15 (1990) p. 17
[42] Harry Murray, *Do Not Neglect Hospitality* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990) p. 18
[43] Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975) p. 51

opportunity for both blessing and challenge. In both Greek and Norse

mythology, the supreme god was associated with the stranger, and therefore

with the practice of hospitality. Odin "frequently appears as the one-eyed

stranger, arriving when least expected."[44] Zeus was the protector of the

stranger.[45] As Homer writes in *The Odyssey*:

> Stranger, if it were not right for me, even though one meaner than
> thou were to come, to slight a stranger, for from Zeus are all strangers
> and beggars, and a gift, though small, is welcome from such as we .[46]

Not only were the gods seen to be present with strangers; sometimes the

stranger came as god or as a representative of the divine.[47] John Koenig

writes:

> It is no accident ... that the three major festivals of the church –
> Christmas, Easter and Pentecost – all have to do with the advent of a
> divine stranger. In each case the newcomer offers blessings that
> cannot, at first, be comprehended. The child in the manger, the
> traveller on the road to Emmaus, and the mighty wind of the Spirit all
> meet us as mysterious visitors, challenging our belief systems even as
> they welcome us to new worlds. [48]

The first Biblical reference to this sacred relationship appears in Genesis 18:1-

8:

> The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while
> he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.
> Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he
> saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and
> bowed low to the ground. He said, "I have found favour in your
> eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. Let a little water be

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[44] H.R. Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe* (Baltimore: Pengiun Books, 1964) p. 141
[45] Murray, *Do Not Neglect Hospitality,* p. 25
[46] Homer, *Odyssey XIV.55* as quoted in Beverly Davison, "Hospitality: Welcoming the Stranger" in *American Baptist Quarterly* 11 (1992) p. 8
[47] A.M. Hocart. *The Life-Giving Myth and Other Essays* (London: Methuen and Co.. 1952) p. 78
[48] Koenig, *New Testament Hospitatlity,* p. 5

brought and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so that you can be refreshed and then go on your way – now that you have come to your servant. "Very well," they answered, "do as you say." So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of fine flour and knead it and bake some bread." Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared and set these before them. While they ate he stood near them under a tree.

Here, then, in an archetypal way we see how hospitality offered to strangers affords an encounter with the divine.

In Biblical literature, the motivation for receiving the stranger in this way is expressed most vividly in Deuteronomy:

> And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's decrees that I am giving you today for your own good ... for the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. God defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to loves those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt. [49]

It was out of their own experience as strangers in Egypt, travellers through the desert and later as people in captivity that the people of Israel were called to be hospitable. Because they had been strangers, and God had been hospitable to them, so now they were to welcome the stranger and offer justice toward those in need.

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[49] Deuteronomy 10:12-13, 17-19

In the Christian scriptures, we continue to see strangers as God's representatives who come either to challenge or to bless. In both the Gospels of Matthew and John we read: "Whoever receives you, receives me, and whoever receives me receives the One who sent me."[50] Later in Matthew, Jesus blesses the "righteous" for feeding him when he was hungry, giving him something to drink when he was thirsty, clothing him, watching over him when he was sick, visiting him in prison and welcoming him in when he came to them as a stranger.[51]

One final aspect of this theme that could hardly be avoided by those who operate a café is meals. As with our earlier example of Abraham and Sarah's three guests, meals play a prominent role in welcoming the stranger. Consider Jesus himself. With whom does Jesus eat? Sinners, tax-collectors, gentiles: all people, who according to the laws and boundaries set out by his system are strangers, people he should not have been eating with. There is the parable of the great banquet where anyone and everyone is invited to attend. At the Last Supper,[52] Jesus sits down with his disciples – an ordinary collection of people, fishers, tax-collectors, even the one who would ultimately be responsible for his death. Everyone, regardless of their

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[50] Matthew 10:40 and John 13:20
[51] Matthew 25:35-36
[52] Luke 22:7-22

background, is seen as being welcome at Jesus' table. Just as in the local home, it was at the table where solidarity was most clearly seen. Those who ate together shared the same values. They were seen as one. The table becomes a sign of God's community. It is around the table that people find "home". It is here that they find honour, solidarity, support, strength, encouragement, companionship and challenge.

And so it is that around the table we find some important things happening: there is confession of guilt (Luke 15:17-19; 17:3-4; Acts 2:3-7) and the forgiveness of sin (Luke 3:3; 17:3-4; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31). From repentance and forgiveness follows baptism (Luke 3:3, Acts 2:38; 13:24) and the reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 19:5-10). What we are witnessing is growth. What we observe is the journey of learning and maturing in faith. What we see is the recognition of self, the development of identity, the honouring of "other", participation in community and reflection upon and acceptance of a collection of shared values and meaning.

Not surprisingly, we see similar growth at the Ground Level Café. From the project's inception, we knew that hospitality would be a valuable component. Our goal was not just to run a training project or a business. Our goal was to create an environment in which employment-disadvantaged youth could enter into community with others as equals – as valued individuals in society.

Around our tables, across our counter, in the leather chairs and on the bench outside, coffee and food creates space for these relationships to grow and change to take place. Youth who are used to being strangers become hosts; customers who are strangers become friends. Artists, residents, antique dealers, letter carriers, mental health workers, psychiatric survivors, film producers, graphic designers and disenfranchised youth mingle, talk, share and listen. From morning bagels to Christmas turkey, the Ground Level has become a place where barriers are broken, community is built, and "faith" finds room to grow.

5.5   Shalom

So far, we have considered the Biblical themes of creation, the city, exodus and exile and the stranger. Through all of them, there is one other theme that weaves its way as an integrating, solidifying thought: shalom.

Throughout the Bible, the central vision of the world and humanity's experience of it is one of peace or shalom – a world characterized and shaped by qualities of love, loyalty, truth, grace, salvation, justice, blessing and righteousness. Writing to the people of Israel, the prophet Ezekiel describes it this way:

> I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety. I will bless them and the places surrounding my hill. I will

send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing. The trees of the field will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them. They will no longer be plundered by the nations, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid. I will provide for them a land known for its plentiful harvests, and they will no longer be victims of the land or bear the scorn of the nations.[53]

In the Biblical context, shalom was the experience of material well-being and prosperity. In Genesis 37:14, when Jacob asks Joseph to go and check on his brothers, he asks him to check on their "shalom". He wanted to know how they were. He wanted to know if they were alright. It has the sense of abundance and of safety from danger. It communicates not merely the *absence* of war, conflict or distress but the *presence* of well-being, hopefulness and peace.

Shalom was justice - the making of right relationships between people and communities. In Isaiah, the prophet writes:

> Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
> And righteousness abide in the fruitful field
> And the effect of righteousness will be peace,
> And the result or righteousness, quietness and trust for ever. [54]

When justice was done, shalom was the result.

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[53] Exodus 34:25-29
[54] Isaiah 32:16-17

Shalom was peace. It was justice. And finally, it was truth. It was to live

without deceit, without hypocrisy. It was to be straightforward, ethical, and

honest. It was to live with integrity and moral purpose. Shalom was truth.

In his book, *Living Toward a Vision,* Old Testament scholar Walter

Brueggemann reflects on the depth of this theme:

> Shalom can mean many things. But what we take it to mean is not
> accidental. The way we define it makes sense in the context of our
> life. We define the word and use it – as we do all words – as a bearer
> of peculiar meanings that match up with our needs, hopes, fears, and
> visions. And the context in which we set the word shalom will make
> a difference in how it comes through to us and what freight we assign
> to it.[55]

Brueggemann continues by suggesting two contrasting contexts in which

shalom and the Biblical concept of "faith" are most often articulated. First, he

speaks of shalom for the "have-nots". Brueggemann suggests that this is the

context we know best and that it is the context that we discern as most

normative for the Bible. This is the context of Israel, the people of exodus and

exile. This is the context of Jesus and the disciples, people of an emerging

faith under both Jewish and Roman authority. Theirs is the question of

survival – sometimes physical, sometimes historical. At the very least, they

are concerned with the survival of their faith and the meanings and values

embedded in it.

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[55] Brueggemann, *Living Toward A Vision,* p. 27

People who live in this context, both shape and have their faith shaped in a distinctive way. Words like, "cry out", "hear me", "deliver us" become illustrative of their faith. These are people desperate for something: desperate for saving, desperate for living, desperate for anything to lift them out of their experience.

The other distinct alternative in Biblical tradition is that of the "haves," an alternative that offers a very different way of doing theology and speaking of shalom. Brueggemann suggests that these traditions, centred around the stories of Noah, Abraham and David, are not so concerned with survival as they are with celebration and management. Brueggemann's point is a simple one. Those who are well-off have very different perceptions of life and very different theological agendas from those who worry more about survival. They have much. They value what they have, thank God for it and see it as God's blessing to them.

Both are real. Both are true experiences of God's relationship with humanity throughout the ages. The challenge for us, and particularly so for those of us who work with street youth, is to acknowledge the polarity of God's shalom. Clearly, we have a bias. We do what we do because of what we believe and have experienced. Our work is with the "have-nots". Most Canadian church-goers are not. By and large we are a blessed people. We are largely older,

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middle-class Canadians, which means that even though we have problems

and troubles and worries, our lives are not terribly precarious.

Shalom teaches us how to move forward. It informs us in the midst of

paradox. It challenges us in the midst of communities with differing values

and wide-ranging meaning to honour the experience of each other and learn

from the truth of our respective experiences. Shalom teaches us that

faithfulness includes both burden and blessing, hardship and comfort,

suffering and joy – and that the journey is made most faithfully when it is

shared together.

Throughout this chapter we have paid specific attention to the themes of

creation, city, exodus and exile, the stranger, hospitality, and shalom. In

doing so, we see the many ways in which street-youth share the experience of

God's people and their search for meaning throughout the ages. This is

particularly evident when we relate these particular themes to the seven

aspects of faith used by Fowler to assess faith maturity. As mentioned in

Chapter Three, they are as follows:

1. Form of logic
2. Social perspective taking
3. Form of moral judgement
4. Bounds of social awareness
5. Locus of authority
6. Form of world coherence
7. Role of symbols

When we take the stories of creation and apply these aspects to them, we begin to see something of the corporate faith maturity of the people at that time.

- ➤ Form of logic - How do we describe the fact that there are two creation stories present in Genesis and in particular, two stories that at times appear contradictory? In Fowler's terms, the answer lies in a corporate logic that is "basic" or "preoperational".

- ➤ Perspective Taking and Bounds of Social Awareness - Here again the story-teller's perspective seems basic or rudimentary. God's people saw themselves as having evolved from God's creative activity. At this point, there seems little recognition or awareness of anyone outside this community.

- ➤ Locus of Authority - Particularly in the second story of creation we see a locus of authority that clearly stands outside the characters of Adam and Eve. Their identity is defined almost entirely by their relationship to their Creator.

- ➤ Form of Moral Judgement - Our own perspectives on morality and judgement often influence our thoughts on this story. Nevertheless, we see many of the most basic aspects of moral judgement at play here, including: punishment, reward and reciprocal fairness. When we are born, we attach first to our mothers and then our fathers as providers. Later in our development, we begin to see them as

"judge/forgivers." In the first two stories of the Bible, we see a similar development in relationship between humankind and the Creator. In the first story, God is the Creator or Provider. All things come from God. In the second story, God maintains this sense of character. Added to it, however, is a God who now both judges and forgives the actions of God's children. Grace emerges as a central component of humanity's relationship with God.

➢ Form of World Coherence: In both of the creation accounts, the stories have an episodic as well as a narrative sense. The first story, although depicted in days, stands outside our normal sense of time. The second, seemingly more connected to us in time, introduces the tension and drama of relationship.

➢ Role of Symbol: With this aspect of faith we see several levels or stages come into play. On the one hand, there is a magical or numinous sense to the story; something is made out of nothing. On the other, they are literal; we witness a God who walks in the garden. Yet, we also see the apple and serpent used as symbol to convey several levels of meaning.

In the theme of the city, we find a challenge to reflect on our bounds of social awareness. In the exodus and exile, we are encouraged to ask questions about our sense of reliance on "other" and how suffering impacts our sense of belonging to ourselves and community. In the

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stranger, we see a powerful symbol of being unknown and welcomed in.

In shalom, we find a model for wholeness and integration.

Together, with the many other themes in scripture, each of these reveals important insights into the process of growing in faith. Each one encourages us to see the journey in faith as a dynamic, dialogic process. In our next chapter, we will begin to explore where this journey has led a group of twelve individuals connected with our agency and what insights this provides for our understanding of faith maturity in general.

CHAPTER SIX

PLEASE, SIR, CAN I HAVE SOME MORE?
The Research Project

> I AM strong.
> I lived, when I should have died,
> I grew when I should have
> Withered
> I speak when I should be silent,
> And you can't stop me anymore.
>
> (Maya Chacaby)

There is an old Campbell's soup commercial that is based largely on Charles Dickens' classic: *Oliver Twist*. In it, we see a large room filled with scruffily clad youth supervised by an imposing Fagan-like character. The room is filled with silence – save for the clanging of spoons against soup bowls. Finally, one youth musters the courage to approach the monitor, hold out his soup bowl and blurt, "Please sir, can I have some more?"

From the outset, this project was intended to test the hypothesis that at-risk and street-involved youth are people of faith, that they share a universal quest for meaning and purpose, and that their faith bears important implications for how the church community views its own faith and witness within the world. What is the "more" that these at-risk and street-involved

youth need? What is it that gives them meaning and purpose? What are

their voids? With what do they need to be filled?

6.1   Research Tools

To carry out this study, three potential tools were considered. First, we

considered the "Faith Development Interview Guide"[1] developed by James

Fowler and presented in his book, *Stages of Faith*. Having reviewed Fowler's

rationale, and accepting his more expansive definition of faith, we believed

that that this tool would provide a helpful pool of information as well as

important opportunities to further develop the building of relationships

between the interviewer (myself) and program participants.

Secondly, we proposed the use of Reginald Bibby's most recent *Project Teen

Canada Survey*.[2] We chose this tool for several reasons: 1) Bibby is widely

respected as one of Canada's foremost experts on the opinions and values of

Canadian youth; 2) use of this survey would provide important reference

points to youth throughout the country both now and since the study began

in 1984; and finally 3) while Bibby's work has made an important

contribution to the study of youth in Canada, his work has been limited

primarily to high school youth. In using the survey amongst our youth, we

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[1] See Appendix E
[2] See Appendix F

hoped to document any apparent differences between those in and outside

Canadian schools.

Finally, we considered the use of Michael Adams' on-line survey at

www.environics.ca.[3] This tool presented some intriguing aspects to our

study. First, it was quick and easy to use (the questionnaire takes less than 10

minutes to complete). Second, it provides immediate analysis and feedback,

including a concise and contemporary printout indicating the participants'

value orientation and how that orientation relates to the rest of Canadian

society. And third, because the survey appears on-line, we were able to

incorporate the survey into an internet training module and to employ one of

our project graduates to coordinate this aspect of our study.

In each case, the wide academic and public acceptance of each method

supported us in the assumption that each model would provide accurate and

appropriate insights into the lives and value structures of those with whom

we work.

6.2   Means of Implementation

In order to implement these tools, we invited 15 at-risk or street-involved

youth between the ages of 16-24 to participate in a focus group. These youth

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[3] See Appendix G

ranged from graduates of our program, to current participants, to youth who

frequent the café or who access our employment training and referral service.

Each of these 15 youth was invited to a supper-time meeting at the café with

the invitation: "We're interested ... In what you are!"[4] Our plan for the two-

hour event was:

1. Introduce the theme and purpose of our study
2. Provide supper
3. Provide time to complete Bibby's *Project Teen Canada Survey*
4. Invite participants to complete the Environics on-line survey within the following week, and
5. Select five names at random to participate in Fowler's *Faith Maturity Questionnaire*

Verbal response to this invitation was extremely positive. Comments

included: "Sounds great!" "Finally someone wants to [f'n] listen to us", and

"You've got pizza? I'm coming." Getting the youth there was a different

matter altogether. Subsequent feedback (from both participants and non-

participants) indicated an overarching suspicion of how the information

would be used and of what impact it would have. By the time most youth

reach our program they have already gone through several other service or

training programs, each with its own feedback and evaluation process. Many

of those who had expressed initial interest in our study did not come; they

identified their frustration with these other sessions as one of the primary

reasons for choosing not to attend.

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[4] See Appendix B

Based on this response, we decided to pursue a slightly different course.

Instead, individuals were approached casually on a one-to-one basis to see if

they would be interested in participating at their convenience. This produced

six participants who agreed to complete both the *Project Teen Canada Survey*

and the *Environics On-line Survey*. Second, as part of our vocation and life-

skills program, we conduct training in how to access the internet. As part of

this, a module was developed in which participants were asked to access the

Environics survey. Following their completion of the survey, participants

were asked to reflect on the findings of the survey, how accurate they thought

it was, and what implications their "tribal" orientation had for them with

respect to work and relationships with family, friends and within society.

This produced seven participants who were subsequently asked to complete

the *Project Teen Canada Survey*. Six agreed.

The result was a group of twelve at-risk and street-involved youth (5 males

and 7 females) who completed both the *Project Teen Canada Survey* and the

Environics On-line Survey. Finally, four of these youth (one 18-year old male

and three females aged 18-21) agreed to be interviewed using Fowler's *Faith*

Maturity Questionnaire. Three of these youth were of white, European

heritage – the other, First Nations and Metis heritage. Each interview was

conducted outside of the Ground Level Café and our offices in a place chosen

by the interviewee. In each instance, they were invited to choose a place where they would feel comfortable responding to questions of a personal nature. Each person chose a restaurant or café. Each interview lasted approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes, with the shortest being an hour and 45 minutes and the longest being 3 hours.

Following the model interview for "Mary"[5] as set out in Fowler's *Stages of Faith*, I attempted to assess each individual on the basis of what Fowler describes as the seven aspects of faith, all of which are present at each stage. They are:

1. Form of logic
2. Social perspective taking
3. Form of moral judgement
4. Bounds of social awareness
5. Locus of authority
6. Form of world coherence
7. Role of symbols

My impressions were tabulated according to each stage and are reported on later in this chapter (section 6.3.3)

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[5] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 313

6.3   Findings

6.3.1   Project Canada Survey

Starting with Bibby's *Project Canada Survey*, we found that Toronto's
street-youth are similar in many ways to Canadian youth in general.
Like the rest of their Canadian counterparts, those we surveyed valued
friendship and freedom above everything else. In fact, 11 out of the 12
youth (92% compared to 85% nationally) indicated a high level of
importance on being connected with friends, while at the same time
having the freedom to live life as they want to. Having choices scored
almost 16 points higher (92% to 76%), while our youth's responses to
being loved rated on par with the rest of Canadian youth.

Values of our Sample Group		
	At-risk	National
Friendship	92	85
Freedom	92	85
Having choices	92	76
Being loved	75	77
Success	75	71
Excitement	75	57
Concern for others	67	62
Family life	58	59
Your looks	50	39
A comfortable life	50	73
Having power	50	24
Recognition	42	32
Spirituality	42	29
Parent's opinion	42	44
Being popular	17	16
Religious involvement	8	10

In addition to these observations, there are several other aspects of note.
Despite often being accused of being disinterested or lazy, those involved in our
survey placed great importance on success. While this may be
attributed, in part, to their current association with an employment
program, it suggests higher significance on this value than

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communities outside this target group might otherwise suspect.

Another myth depicts this group as selfish. In fact, they indicate

higher levels of concern for others than Canadian youth in general.

Another surprising observation (or is it?) is the value these youth place

on family life. Fifty-eight per cent of our participants indicated a high

degree of value for family life – almost exactly the same as youth

throughout Canada. Discussions with youth following the survey

indicate two important influencing factors: 1) though often

disconnected or alienated from their families, many at-risk and street-

involved youth grieve their loss of that environment and continue to

value its ideal, and 2) several of the youth we asked this question of

interpreted the term "family life" very broadly. Some of them took it

to mean continued association with siblings (apart from their parents),

while some further extended the association to see friends as "family".

This final observation appeared particularly evident amongst several

young women who openly identify as being lesbian.

A related observation has to do with our youth's response regarding

their parents' opinion of them. The youth we asked ranked their

parents' opinion of them almost as highly as youth throughout

Canada. Initially, I found this surprising. But again, discussions

revealed two important factors influencing their response. Some said

they valued this in a somewhat negative sense: i.e. they wanted to

prove their parents wrong. Others suggested that when they

considered how or what their parents thought of them, they felt poorly

or guilty, and wanted to demonstrate something positive to their

parents.

Another significant variant is witnessed in our group's responses to

questions about spirituality. Whereas 29% of Canadian youth in

general indicated the significance of spirituality in their lives, the

response for our youth was 42% - and this despite a lower level of

religious involvement (only one of our twelve respondents indicated

that he or she had any regular religious involvement).

When we turn to "instrumental" values, those values we described as

internal, or which help to shape and govern *how* we get what we want

out of life, we see some other striking factors.

First, honesty continues to rank at the top of the list. Those who live

on the street are not necessarily the "lying cheats" they are often made

out to be. Even though they sometimes lie or cheat to survive on the

street, they continue to value honesty as a social norm. Forgiveness

also ranked quite highly. On the one hand, this indicates a generosity

of spirit that we have often observed in street-involved youth. On the other, it recognizes the

Instrumental Values of At-Risk Youth		
	At-Risk	National
Honesty	83	73
Forgiveness	75	58
Intelligence	75	69
Working hard	67	52
Generosity	67	42
Politeness	58	58
Creativity	58	42
Humour	58	73
Cleanliness	58	64

deep sense of grief and shame that many of these young people have

and their deep need for forgiveness from others because of it.

Once again, in response to the myth that street-youth are by lazy, the

responses of our youth suggest that they do value hard work.

Whether they are able to carry this out or not is another question. In

fact, much of the grief and shame these youth exhibit appears to be

associated with the tension that exists between their value of hard

work and their apparent failure to carry that out.

Another observation that bears note when it comes to instrumental

values exhibited by these youth is their generosity. While recognizing

the relatively small sampling of our population, our youth scored 25

points higher in this category than youth from across the country. We

observe this in things like: their willingness to tear their last cigarette

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in half and share it with a friend; or their openness to sharing living accommodations (as humble or run-down as they may be). Despite limited resources, these young people appear open and willing to share what they have with those who do not.

And finally, creativity. Here, our respondents scored 16 points higher than Canadian youth in general. Street-youth value their creativity, as demonstrated by the poems and pieces of writing, which appear in this paper. Creativity gives expression to their experience; it gives word to their voice. But let us also not mistake their creativity as merely "spice-for-life." It is also a tool for survival. In order to live on the streets, youth need to be creative. Though not always the healthiest or the safest with their decisions, their creativity allows them to survive in a largely harsh and difficult environment.

When we began to ask what brings these youth enjoyment and how they spend their time, we began to see that Bibby's survey is skewed towards a more affluent experience. While friends continue to rank highly on the list of sources of enjoyment (83%), things like "your own room", "sports", "television", "computer", "e-mail" and "accessing web-sites" were often not a part of our group's experience because of lack of income.

When asked what they thought Canada's most serious concerns were, our participants ranked poverty and violence the most serious as opposed to crime and the economy. When compared to youth across Canada, street-youth tend to be much more sexually active and much more likely to use drugs or alcohol.

And finally, in contrast to the comments of the 16-year-old from small-town Alberta we quoted earlier,[6] we offer the words of another young woman originally from downtown Vancouver: "It's almost impossible to get ahead when society decides to pierce more than your ear."

6.3.2 Environics On-line Survey

In addition to completing the *Project Canada Survey*, the 12 youth participating in our study also agreed to complete the on-line survey developed by Michael Adams' and posted on his Environics web-site. The results of their input was as follows:

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[6] Bibby, *Canada's Teens*, p. 136

Results of the Environics Survey

	At-Risk	National (Youth)	National (Total)
New Aquarians	50%	14%	5%
Social Hedonists	25	12	4
Aimless Dependents	17	24	8
Autonomous Post-Materialists	8	25	9
Thrill-Seeking Materialists	0	9	3
Security-Seeking Ascetics	0	16	8

Based on these results, we find some important additions to the

findings produced by Bibby's survey. Whereas Bibby's questions

revealed some important similarities *and* differences between Canada's

at-risk population and youth in general, here we see that the way these

values interact also have something important to say regarding their

personal sense of value and social orientation.

Exactly half of those we interviewed identified as being *New Aquarians,*

despite representing only 14% of Canadian youth in general and 5% of

all Canadians. Earlier, we described this group as being most closely

associated with the "new age" values of "egalitarianism, ecologism,

experience-seeking and hedonism."[7] Generally, they tend to be

younger and more affluent than the more numerous *Aimless*

Dependents or the less numerous *Thrill-Seeking Materialists.* But this

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[7] See page 32

group is also comprised of a large number in the lowest income category, largely because they have chosen to abandon family and other social institutions in order to live by their own set of rules. Once more, of all the Canadians, they are most likely to have rejected traditional religion. This tribe presents the highest proportion of individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bi and transgendered. They are also the ones, adds Michael Adams, who are, "most capable of taking society in new and interesting directions, for the simple reason that they are not afraid to blaze new trails."[8]

Considering this one tribe alone, we discover several points of learning as well as obstacles for anyone, let alone Christians, pursuing work amongst this population group. Fifty per cent of those we surveyed identified as New Aquarians. This stands in contrast to only 5% of the general population. The two largest Canadian tribes are the Disengaged Darwinists (17%) and the Rational Traditionalists (12%). They are also among the tribes most strongly motivated by stability, security and financial independence. At the risk of being criticized for inadequate investigation, we might also surmise that the percentage of Disengaged Darwinists and Rational Traditionalists attending church is significantly higher than for the general population.

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[8] Adams. *Sex in the Snow*, p. 117

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This polarity alone points sharply to our need to investigate the

underlying value behind our social orientation. For example, the New

Aquarians are characterized by contempt for traditional authorities.

This flies in the face of the Disengaged Darwinists and Rational

Traditionalists, who comprise many of our country's largest

institutions, governments and businesses. At the same time, the New

Aquarians respect education and are concerned for the environment -

the primary reason some of our strongest institutions were originally

established. They are concerned about justice and peace, their

counterparts about stability and security. Though illustrated and acted

upon in strikingly different ways, the values of these two groups often

appear as different sides to the same coin.

Is one more valuable than the other? More mature? More a sign of

one's psychological, emotional, or spiritual strength? The answer, I

suggest, is no. As we have already seen, the responses of at-risk and

street-involved youth betray the myth that they have too far to go, too

little substance to build on, or too little maturity to bother.

While many of them do struggle, while many have significant

obstacles to hurdle, our observation is that their faith is often well-

developed. Their choices are at times appropriate for their experience.

Even though they sometimes appear dirty, impoverished, and without

resource it is often because of their strong sense of value not

stubbornness, their pursuit of meaning not laziness, or their strict

commitment to things which they regard as good and purposeful as

opposed to aimlessness and despair.

6.3.3 Faith Maturity Interviews

Of the 12 individuals who completed the Project Canada Survey and

the On-line Environics survey, four agreed to participate in the

lengthier faith maturity interviews developed by Fowler.[9] Of the four,

one was an 18-year old male while the other three were females aged

19-22. Three of these youth were of white, European heritage, and the

other of First Nations and Metis background.   Three of these young

people had worked in our café training program. The other person

had not worked in our café program, but was a regular customer to the

café and participant in our referral and resumé program. Of the four

young people interviewed, one scored as a stage four-five, two as stage

three, and one as a stage two-three.[10] While our sampling is too small

to compare meaningfully with Fowler's findings, it may be helpful to

note that for those aged 13 – 30 his studies revealed:

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[9] See Appendix E

Distribution of Stages of Faith by Age		
Stages of Faith	13-20	21-30
6	0	0
5-6	0	0
5	0	0
4-5	0	3.3
4	5.4	40.0
3-4	28.6	33.3
3	50	17.8
2-3	12.5	4.4
2	3.6	1.1
1-2	0	0
1	0	0

(Adapted from Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p 318)

In Chapter 5, we related the story of C, the young woman from Northern Ontario who fled an abusive home and the author of the poem that appears at the beginning of Chapter Three. C was one of the young woman who agreed to be interviewed. She is a remarkable young woman. Our reflections on her poem reveal a young woman who has responded to the clash and contradiction of values brought on by abusive authorities (typical of stage three). She has both told the story and stepped outside of it to reflect on where she is and where she is going (illustrative of stage four), yet she has also opened herself up to the ambiguities and polarities in her life (stage five). She knows she lacks trust. She is also learning to trust again. Each stanza of her poem conveys the paradox she acknowledges: "From dark terror – I find", "Homeless – safest", "Tears – home".

One of the aspects of Fowler's Faith Maturity Interview is to ask the participant to name or describe the various chapters in her/his life. In counselling, I have often asked individuals carry out this exercise. Typically, this takes some time and although the chapters are evident,

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the lines between them are often hazily drawn. C's response, however, was very quick and precise: "From birth to five", she said: "Total dependence. From six to nine, discovering the exterior. From nine to thirteen, the suicide times. Thirteen to seventeen, running like hell. And seventeen to twenty-two, finding myself."

Reflecting on these life stages, C describes the first stage (total dependence) as a time where she depended on her parents to assume roles they never took up. "They gave birth to me" she says, "but they were never my parents." She remembers the next stage as an isolating time, experiencing little contact with children her own age. She describes this time as a period of severe sexual, emotional and psychological abuse. C tells of being deprived of food as punishment. Often this would mean that a full plate of food would be placed in front of her and she would be allowed to eat – but not everything. She had to leave something. "They were trying to break my will," she says. "During this period I died. I had to become like them to survive. The only comfort I got was from the trees and crows I saw when I walked to school. They nurtured me."

Around the age of nine, C entered a chapter she describes as "the suicide times." During this period C started to read extensively

(despite having only a grade 8 education she now reads works by Sartre and Dostoevsky). "I soon discovered the books on the top shelf were the cool ones. When I read I began to discover there was another world out there ... but then ... I wanted to die because I knew there was something better out there – something I couldn't get to."

At the age of thirteen, C ran away from home several times and finally for good. She prostituted herself on the streets of Thunder Bay, Winnipeg and Toronto. She lived for a while in a commune and was institutionalized for a time. Here, she said she felt, "free for the first time, because no one else could get in."

Around the age of seventeen, C entered a phase she describes as "finding herself." During this time she became active in a number of different programs for youth, quickly taking on leadership roles with youth as well as service providers to help shape the structure and nature of their programs. It was a period punctuated by many ups and downs, extensive therapy and the occasional need for institutional living again.

A critical moment during this period came when a friend told her: "'Life isn't just to survive ... it is to thrive.' And then she went out and

O.D'd and died." After that, C said she felt the need to, "honour her by honouring life. Life is sacred and I need to honour that." These comments helped illumine her earlier comments to me about, "What gives your life meaning?" "What do you mean: 'What gives life meaning?'" she had said. "I don't [f'n] know what you mean by that. Life is meaning. Symbols, events, relationships: those are just things that enhance life – not give it meaning."

C describes her current stage as "establishing myself". During this period, she has been employed regularly with our program, taken an active role in providing peer mentoring, found her own apartment, bought a piano, and pursued permanent employment as a martial arts instructor.

In the course of the interview, two responses stood out for me as being particularly significant indicators of C's level of faith maturity. In Section Three of Fowler's Interview, the final question asks: "Do you feel that human life on this planet will go on indefinitely, or do you think it is about to end?" To this she responded: "Human life dies all the time – it's just that sometimes our bodies outlive our souls!" And then in Section Four: "What do you think about when you think about God?" C responds: "God, that's your language. I don't really think of

God that way. For me, God is not a who. What we've been talking about all along – that is God. This, what's been happening here between you and me – that's God. God is an action word not a noun. God is a way of life."

In Fowler's terms, we see a young woman whose sense of logic is dichotic if not dialogic. Her moral judgement, while heavily rooted in interpersonal expectation, often peaks above societal norms. She is confident in herself; she is open to the critique of others. The world in which she lives is interactive and interdependent. Her symbols evoke power and meaning.

In working with and interviewing this young woman, I was cognizant that not many people reach this stage or above. Fowler's studies suggest perhaps fifteen percent. I also quickly recognized my bias. Despite expecting to find faith maturity in street-youth, I had not expected to find it to this degree. The fact that C was the first person I interviewed was instrumental for me, and our conversation encouraged me to keep an open mind in subsequent interviews.

Although none of the other interviews revealed such well-developed faith maturity, they clearly provided support for our thesis that street-

youth have "faith". In one of the other interviews, a young woman named S provided an interesting opportunity to reflect on the function of symbol. S is a 22 year-old woman. Like C, S had experienced a difficult adolescence. Living in an affluent part of Toronto, she had gone to the Jewish Children's Aid Society to request protection from an abusive father and negligent mother. She remembers being told that her claims, "couldn't be that bad," and to, "go home and obey her parents." What she had not told them (because she did not know at the time) was that her father had been a significant player in the Russian mafia and had been heavily involved in drug trafficking, money laundering and fraud. At age 14, S left home and travelled to Vancouver. After spending two years there, she spent six months traveling back across the prairies to Toronto. At age seventeen, she inherited a sum of more than $200,000 from her father who had died of cancer. By the time she was twenty the money had been spent on drugs, alcohol, parties and friends. Although this story was not part of the interview, S had attended a Christmas party at our home the year before. During the course of the evening, she asked my wife how much money someone might need for a down-payment on a house. After telling her, S sat silent for a moment and said wistfully, "I had that ... and its gone." Shortly before coming to work with us, S had also given birth to a daughter.

During the course of the interview, it became apparent that each of the major stages and aspects in her life were displayed on her body. S liked to wear hats. Each day she would show up at work with a different hat and a different story to go along with it. The day I interviewed her, she had on a Fedora with a feather. She explained that it was one of the few personal effects she had left from her father, who had, "given everything else to that tramp he lived with after he moved out on my mom." That day, the earrings she wore were shells from a beach on Vancouver Island, the place where she first made love with a woman. Her ring (with the face of a skull) was something she had picked off the ground down on Jarvis Street one night after getting out of jail. Almost every story seemed mythical in its proportions; each one bearing application to people and events beyond the story itself.

There was also G, a young man of twenty-one who had moved to Toronto from Sudbury at the age of seventeen. G stands about 6' 5" and weighs about 230 lbs; he reminded me of Paul Bunyan. Of particular interest in this interview was the story behind one of his tattoos: a fierce looking grizzly bear with the stuffing falling out of one of its arms. The bear represented himself and had depicted for him the

tension in his life of needing to feel strong, yet feeling scattered and broken. The most significant thing about this tattoo for me, however, was the bear's eyes. G had talked at great length about this tattoo, where he had got it, who he had been with when he got it, how sore it had been, and the infection he had developed because of it. But he said nothing about the eyes – which were closed. When I asked him about it, he looked at it and paused, probably for a minute or so. Finally, he said: "It's sleeping." "Sleeping?" I asked. And with that he began to pour out a litany of hurt and anger and grief. Included in it all were things he wished he had not seen, things he wished he could have seen, and things about himself that he had never wanted anyone to see, let alone look at in himself.

Of the four interviews I conducted, this one lasted the longest. While we eventually completed all of the questions, we spent much of our time after he shared his story trying to reframe or re-image[11] this bear with its eyes open instead of closed. Although he has not done so yet, G's plans are to have the eyes changed to appear open. No doubt, that decision will be intimately tied to a step forward in "faith".

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[11] For an excellent summary of this model of pastoral care see Donald Capps' book: *Reframing: A New Method in Pastoral Care* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990)

Finally, there was "M", a young woman who recently joined our café

program. M is an attractive, but overweight, nineteen year-old,

woman. She openly jokes about her weight, but confessed during the

interview that her eating patterns reflect a low capacity to deal with

stress. M's father died when she was five. She claims not to "blame"

anyone, yet openly wonders how doctors could not have known the

mass they were testing in her father's abdomen was full of poison; he

died of septicemia. At age seven, her mother remarried and for the

most part M remembers happy childhood and pre-teen years. In

describing her life chapters, she says that age thirteen ushered in her

rebellious years. When asked if she knew what was behind this

rebellion she exclaimed; "They wouldn't let me out." She described

her parents' religious affiliation as "Brethren" and complained that

their beliefs had made their parenting too strict. Later she described

an event that led to her being admitted to a group home. "I came

home one night past my curfew and the door was locked. I didn't

have my key so I knocked on the door but they wouldn't let me in. I

said, 'Open the [f'n] door, I'm your daughter.' They told me I could

come back when I started acting like one. So I went to the garage, got

a knife and started cutting the door, trying to get in." She paused.

"What happened then?" I asked. "The cops came and took me away."

I was struck between the contrast of these two images: angry at her

parents for not letting her out and angry at them for not letting her in.

When I asked her about this, she said: "I know – it always seems like

I'm on the wrong side of the box."

For many youth, and in particular those who live on the street, that

"box" is a big thing. Inside or out, it creates barriers to belonging. For

M, she was not sure what she wanted. She describes going to the

group home as one of the best things her parents have ever done for

her, although she did not think that at the time. Despite providing

opportunities to deal with her anger and depression (which see now

sees as being rooted in grief over her father's death), she continues to

struggle with issues of identity and belonging.

It was not surprising, then, that many of the issues involving support

and relationship centred around her new boyfriend. Instead of

separating from her parents and attaching to broader numbers of

people to help shape and solidify her sense of self, M has merely

replaced one figure upon whom she depends with another.   In those

questions relating to God, religion and spirituality, M portrayed a

loosely-defined concept of faith,[12] comprising aspects of her Brethren upbringing, Catholicism, various reincarnational faiths and new age thought. All to which she concludes:

M: "I'm sorry."

I: "Sorry?" I asked.

M: "I don't know," she said, "now that I've said all this it sounds pretty stupid doesn't it?"

I: "Stupid?"

M: "You know, I don't know what the hell I'm talking about."

I: "I'm not sure I know what you mean by that."

M: "All these things are just kind of things I've heard or read about and they kind've sounded good. I'm not sure where it comes from but there's a theory that says even if your body dies you get to come back until you've found your purpose."

I: "Your purpose?"

M: "Whatever it is you were meant to do."

I: "Do you know what that is for you?"

M: "No."

What I would have like to have asked her was how she perceives those things, those theories, those observations she takes in. How does she reflect on them, if at all? I wanted to say to her: "You are a searching soul." I wanted to say: "There's meaning in your searching – just on

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[12] Here, I am referring to faith in the traditional or "saving" sense as described by Brian Gerrish

its own." But I also know that meaning is never something imposed or discerned from the outside. And so the pursuit of that was left for another day.

The findings presented here are limited in their scope. The information gained from four interviews is not enough to quantitatively compare the relative faith maturity of street-involved youth with that of youth from across Canada or even Canadians in general. We need to ask why only four of the twelve who completed the other interviews agreed to be interviewed? Is there any correlation between the relatively high "faith" rankings of the four youth who did participate, and their willingness to do so? I suspect so. Youth who may have been more suspicious, less confident and less outgoing may have been less willing to be interviewed. Had they agreed to be interviewed, these factors may have revealed lower faith maturity scores. Was their willingness to be interviewed, itself a sign of their faith maturity? A larger interview sample would have helped address this ambiguity.

How much impact did my prior relationship with the participants have? My assumption is that this relationship encouraged their participation in the interview. Our experience is that youth often take six to eight weeks of involvement in our program before they are willing to open up with us regarding some of the difficult issues in their lives. On the other hand, some

youth may have been more willing to participate if a more neutral

interviewer had been involved.

A more foundational question (one which we will return to in our final

chapter) involves the relative roles of individuation versus intimacy[13] and

their respective impact on faith maturity as measured by Fowler's model. If

one sees individuation as taking the primary role in faith development, one

might anticipate that the separation from family and friends which often

characterizes street-youth's experience might promote the process of

individuation and therefore contribute to higher faith maturity scores as

compared to youth in general. Conversely, if intimacy plays a greater role

than Fowler assumes, then the breakdown of relationships often experienced

by these youth might contribute to lower scores.

These assumptions lead us to ask: What is the exact relationship between the

need for individuation and the need for intimacy in street-youth? Is

individuation, or intimacy, likely to play a more dominant role in the process

of their faith development? Will the answer to this previous question be

relatively consistent, or will it vary based on individual experience? In other

words: in order to encourage faith development, will some street-youth

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[13] This question was first raised in Chapter 3 citing Carol Gilligan's book, *In a Different Voice*. The essence of the question is this: Is Individuation a by-product of Intimacy? Or is Intimacy a by-product of Individuation?

require more emphasis in the area of individuation, and others more on developing intimacy? If so, does Fowler's interview format remain the most effective means of determining this need? Or is there a need to develop something new which helps to articulate this difference?

Qualitatively, however, our findings do support the premise that street-youth have "faith" and that this "faith" corresponds in a general sense to that of Canadian youth in general, faith defined here as a framework of core values. Supported by the comparative use of Bibby's *Project Canada 2000* and Adams' *On-line Environics Survey*, we see similar importance placed on values like belonging, freedom, concern for others, honesty, integrity, forgiveness and hard work. Our findings affirm that the middle and late teen years represent a time of competitive ferment between traditional values and the values young people assume for themselves as part of the development of "self."

With that said, these findings represent only a beginning. Since recording the initial four interviews, five other interviews have been conducted. Our hope is to continue these interviews and to gain a sample sufficient enough to compare more meaningfully with Fowler's findings. Part of Fowler's original data was obtained from surveys conducted at the University of Toronto by

Eugene Mischey.[14] Further study should include comparison with this data as well as subsequent contemporary Canadian studies.

With respect to Bibby and Adams, our studies reveal a significant need to broaden and test their findings amongst street-youth in Canada. In the words of Amanda Marshall: "Everybody's got a story."[15] Unfortunately, the story of at-risk and street-involved youth seems conspicuously absent from both of these studies. Bibby's data relating to youth and youth values has been gleaned solely from data obtained by interviews with high school youth across the country. While important, the study fails to recognize a significant number of Canadian youth outside of high school, and in particular, those living on the street or in shelters. Finding ways of including these youth in a subsequent study would further strengthen Bibby's claims regarding the values held by Canadian youth in general. On this scale, it would also provide an important means of comparing the values of street-youth and Canadian youth in general beyond what we have been able to achieve in our study.

I suspect that Adams' study also suffers from the absence of input from street-youth. Many of them are computer illiterate or simply do not have

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[14] Eugene Mischey. "Faith Development and Its Relationship to Moral Reasoning and Identity Status in Young Adults" (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Educational Theory, University of Toronto, 1976)

[15] Amanda Marshall, from the CD, "Everybody's Got A Story" (Sony Records, 2001)

access to computers. Just because street-youth belong to the *MuchMusic*[16] generation, does not mean they have as much access to computers as youth in general. One possible way of alleviating this shortcoming would be to solicit the involvement of youth-serving agencies across the country. Agencies such as ours often have computer and internet access available to "computer-disadvantaged" youth. The Environics survey's relatively easy access, as well as its direct and appealing means of reporting back to the participant, makes it a good candidate for inclusion as part of any agency's computer training programs for street-involved youth.

Finally, tools are just that – tools. They are a means of measuring some "thing." They are not the "thing" itself. The measure of one's faith, or that of any community, takes time. It takes patience. Most of all, it demands the willingness of the researcher to enter into relationship with the one being observed. If faith is a relational journey, then that journey cannot be examined outside of relationship.

Whatever else this information provides, it has at the very least offered me a greater opportunity to enter into relationship with young people who are at risk – a segment of our population that is often maligned, mistreated and misunderstood. It has provided me with an opportunity to share in their

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[16] Adams, *Sex in the Snow*, p. 101

experience and to witness their challenges – and in the process to reflect on some of my own.

In our final chapter, we turn to summarize what these findings teach us. What do they tell us about the faith maturity of street-involved youth? What implications do they have for our work as a community-based ministry and as Christian communities?

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER
Learning and Conclusions

So far in this thesis we have avoided the term "mission." But, in fact, that is exactly what this thesis is about. For more than two centuries, the Church in North America has seen itself as taking its mission to the world. That is no longer the case. Now the "nations" are coming to us. Guess who's coming to dinner!

In the 1967 movie of the same name, the surprise was that the new dinner guest was an African American, Sidney Poitier. In 2002, the surprise is that the new guests are not only Africans – but Afrikaners, Asians, Latinos, and Middle Easterners. The United Nations now considers the City of Toronto as the world's most culturally diverse city. People from every country on the planet inhabit our city. And, as some might say, "From a few other planets as well."

In our particular work, the dinner guests have been the oft "alien"ated at-risk and street-involved youth of Toronto. For those in other agencies, churches and communities the guests may be someone else. Whoever they are, the

assumption that Canadian society is still woven from a single thread and therefore that its Church has only a single mission is no longer valid.

For years now this new paradigm has been emerging. But like most new paradigms, this one is taking some time to take hold. It is taking a long time for us to accept the "otherness" of those around us and of our own "otherness" in their midst. This is especially so in the Church. Not only are we wondering who's coming to dinner – but how even to set the table. For years the Church has been setting it with largely the same dishes, cutlery and menu. Is it time for a change? And if so, what? Are we called only to be hosts? What does it mean for us in a post-modern Canada to be guests at the table ourselves? What will the experience mean for our own journeys in faith and our call to guide others on that road as well?

Several years ago, my wife and I travelled to Europe for a vacation - an opportunity to visit and explore some of our own roots in the countries of England and Holland. Upon our arrival at Heathrow, we collected our bags, boarded the Tube, and headed off for our Bed & Breakfast near Victoria Station. Ascending the steps and stepping out on to the street, we were promptly greeted by the words staring up at us from the pavement: "LOOK RIGHT". Of course, look right. In Britain, traffic travels in the opposite direction to traffic in North America. Britain appears so similar. As

Canadians, the British experience is so much a part of our history and culture. We travel there and we think we know what it is all about. Yet, how many times did I forget to "look right"? How many times did I step into the street at my own peril despite the reminders staring me in the face?

When I think of the Church and its relationship to society, I am often reminded of that trip. We are so accustomed to looking left,[1] when what we need to do is look right. We think we know what to expect from society and from those who comprise it, when in reality it is hurdling towards us like a car from the opposite direction. Even more perilous, perhaps, are those times when we jump behind the wheel of our own programs and ministries, only to forget what side of the road it is we should be driving on. Then, the situation involves not just one moving object, but two. The impending collision is inevitable. And we anticipate far more damage than a few scraped bumpers.

As we conclude this paper, then, let me attempt to paint a few traffic signs which are reminders of theory and practice intended to stare up at us from the pavement of our own journeys. They are words of caution and advice about the task of building faith. Our signs, of course, are painted with street-

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[1] In preparing this thesis, one of my readers reminded me of the political charge that churchgoers and theophytes often attach to the terms "left" and "right", using them as descriptors of liberal and conservative theologies. No such association is intended here. By urging us to look right, I am not suggesting we adopt a more conservative theology, rather that we simply attempt to view our theology from a new perspective.

youth in mind, but their application is not limited to them alone. We might

be watching for Volkswagens - you may be looking for Hondas or Fords.

Whatever your point of contact with society and the marginalized people

within it, these signs are your reminders to look beyond the ordinary, delve

beneath the surface, take lightly your first impressions and resist fear of

things and people unknown. They are our caution and advice. Look Right!

There are three signs I would like to paint. They are:

- Belonging to ourselves
- Belonging to another
- Belonging in community.

7.1   <u>Belonging to Ourselves</u>

Earlier in Chapter 3, we introduced the idea that individuation and intimacy

both play an integral role in the development of "self" and the journey

towards faith maturity. While Fowler emphasizes individuation and Gilligan

intimacy, clearly these two factors rely closely on one another. It may be, in

fact, that in some people individuation plays a greater role, while in others

intimacy proves to be more significant. Whatever their respective roles, it is

clear that one's sense of belonging factors significantly in the faith

development of human beings.

This was the case in each of the three study methods we reported on in Chapter 6. In fact, when our findings were compared with those of Bibby, our findings suggested that street-youth value belonging as much or more highly than Canadian youth in general. Street-youth need to belong. Typically, this means, "to belong to another" or to a "group of others." But what we have found in our work is that before either of these things can happen, in order for street-youth to begin the journey towards faith maturity, they first need to belong to themselves.

Many of them do not. They do not belong to themselves because they do not know who they are. Many of our youth grew up in environments where parents, friends and other family members did not value them. As a result, they have not pursued their beliefs, their values or their dreams. Many have suppressed, denied or forgotten them. They do not know how to belong to "self", because they do not see much "self" to belong to. In Fowler's terms, they remain trapped in the "Tyranny of the They."[2]

When this is the case, the process of individuation may appear to be arrested or stalled. Despite being physically separated from family, the young person's locus of authority remains dependent on the roles and relationships

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[2] Fowler. *Faithful Change*, p. 62

of other people (especially family) to determine "self".[3] For those who do not belong to themselves, our first task is to encourage this process of separation by helping them articulate whatever pain, grief, guilt or shame may be associated with that. One of the primary factors in our social, psychological and spiritual journeys is the capacity to dream. Pain stifles dreams. Grief and shame stunt their growth. Hurt, rejection and alienation build up walls that box them in. Recovering "self" means helping people acknowledge the walls that box in these dreams, and the histories and experience that gave rise to them.

This belonging to "self" is particularly evident in some of the Biblical themes discussed earlier. In the stories of creation, Israel sought to grapple with the questions of who they were and where they had come from. In the stories of the exodus, the Hebrew people leave behind their life of slavery in Egypt, but grumble at their experience in the wilderness. So Moses reminds them: "Do you not remember what it was like? Do you not remember who you are and who brought you here?" The Hebrew people had not been able to separate from the "security" and "stability" of Egypt. Later in exile a similar "forgetfulness" occurs. So once more, God speaks to them through the prophets:

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[3] Fowler, *Faithful Change*, p. 62

> Look to the rock from which you were hewn
> and to the quarry from which you were dug.
> Look to Abraham your father and Sarah who bore you;
> For he was but one when I called him,
> But I blessed him and made him many. [4]

In each of these stories the message is clear: remember who you are,

remember where you came from, remember your "self".

We also saw this dynamic expressed earlier in the interview with M, where

she tells about her experience of trying to get into her family's house. During

the interview, I had been struck by the contrast of two images: first, that she

was angry with her parents for not letting her out and later, angry with them

for not letting her in. When I asked her about this she said: "I know – it

always seems like I'm on the wrong side of the box." Later in the interview,

however, she came back to that exchange and said: "You know, I just

realized something. I had that knife out bangin' on the door and it wasn't my

step-dad I wanted to let me in: it was my birth dad." M. had not been able to

separate from her birth father. Her attachment to him as an authority figure

had continued to condition how she thought about her self and how she

related to others.

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[4] Isaiah 51:1b-2

Individuation, however, is not the only process this forced physical separation can affect; the healthy development of intimacy may also be disturbed. While this effect may be evident in the individual's relationship with others, what I am speaking about here is not so much intimacy with others as it is with oneself. The concept of intimacy suggests another way for us to talk about belonging. Often, young people cannot belong to themselves because they do not love themselves. They look in the mirror and they do not like what they see. And what they do not like, they cannot love. Helping at-risk youth belong to themselves means helping them learn to love themselves.

Freud argued that self-love was narcissistic. Calvin described it as "a pest."[5] Plato spoke of it as a kind of divine madness.[6] Erich Fromm, however, in his book *The Art of Loving*, argues that love of self is integral to loving another and therefore, we would add, to the process of growing in faith. He writes:

> Before we start the discussion of the psychological aspect of selfishness and self-love, the logical fallacy in the notion that love for others and love for oneself are mutually exclusive should be stressed. If it is a virtue to love my neighbour as a human being, it must be a virtue – and not a vice – to love myself, since I am a human being too. There is no concept of man [sic] in which I myself am not included. A doctrine that proclaims such an exclusion, proves it to be intrinsically contradictory. The idea expressed in the Biblical "Love thy neighbour as thyself!" implies that respect for one's own integrity and uniqueness, love for and understanding of one's own self, cannot be

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[5] John Calvin. Quoted in Erich Fromm. *The Art of Loving* (New York: Harper & Row. 1956) p. 48
[6] Plato, quoted in Thomas Moore *The Care of the Soul* (New York: Harper Collins Publishing. 1992) p. 77

separated from respect and love and understanding for another individual. The love for my own self is inseparably connected with the love for any other being.[7]

Thomas Moore helps us further when he recounts for us the Greek myth of Narcissus. The ancient story, as told in the *Metamorpheses* of Ovid, is not just the simple story of a boy falling in love with himself. Towards the end of the story, the handsome Narcissus approaches a pool of water, so still and smooth that it has never been disturbed. As Narcissus leans over to get a drink, he sees his image in the water and his attention is frozen. Ovid tells us that Narcissus is fascinated by the image that appears in the water. To him it appears perfect. And like the young people before who had admired Narcissus' own beauty, Narcissus reaches out to take hold of it as well. But he cannot. "What you are looking for is nowhere," says Ovid. "Turn your head away and what you love will be lost."[8] The mirror-like image reveals not that Narcissus loves himself too much but rather not enough. This story is not about love but "un-love."[9]

This is the key to the story. Narcissus falls in love with a person in a watery mirror whom he thinks is someone else, even though it is himself. He gets stuck on certain familiar images of self. Moore expands:

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[7] Fromm, *The Art of Loving,* p. 49
[8] Moore, *Care of the Soul,* p. 58-60
[9] Moore, *Care of the Soul,* p. 62

> We love the surface image we identify as ourselves, but Narcissus discovers by accident that there are other images just as lovable ... Narcissus becomes able to love himself only when he learns to love that self as an object. He now has a view of himself as someone else. This is not ego loving ego; this is ego loving the soul, loving a face the soul presents. We might say that the cure for narcissism is to move from love of self, which always has a hint of narcissism in it, to love of one's deep soul. Or to put it another way, narcissism breaking up invites us to expand the boundaries of who we think we are. [10]

Discovering that the face in the pool is his own, Narcissus cries out, "What I long for I have." Love of a new image of "self" leads to a new knowledge about one's "self" and one's potential.

In this realization, we might also see some explanation for the Church's struggle to minister effectively to people and communities around them. At-risk and street-involved youth are not the only ones who struggle to love and find belonging to "self". So do we, particularly, when the Church's modern experience is so closely identified with the experience of exile. On the one hand, we have those within the Church who are so completely consumed by their image of the Church as a place of love, beauty, acceptance and forgiveness that they see nothing but themselves. They so completely deny their experience of exile that they cannot see those around who share it.

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[10] Moore, *Care of the Soul*, p. 63

On the other hand, we have those so grieved by having lost what once was, by living in a "strange and foreign land", that they no longer know how to be the Church. They know they "ought" to love others but cannot – or at least have a hard time doing so – because they do not love themselves. They do not value their experience. They do not believe they are worthy. They do not believe they can have any significant impact on society for good. They are not mature in faith themselves.

Ministry begins not only in the holding up of mirrors to others but to ourselves. It begins when we pause by the pool in order to see our true selves. If we are intent on loving others, and helping others love themselves, we must also learn to love what Moore describes as the "deep soul" within ourselves. If we desire to embrace others, to encourage their maturity in faith, then attention to our own journey is essential. To help others grow, we must grow. We must grow up together in faith.

7.2   Belonging to Another

In his book, *Stages of Faith,* James Fowler emphasizes the significance that recognizing and belonging to another plays in the development of self and the journey towards faith. He writes: "Central among the qualities that make

and keep humans human is the capacity for trust and fidelity."[11] In order to

belong to another, we must be able to trust and be trusted.

For most at-risk and street-involved youth trust is something new. When we

call them "at-risk" we do so for a reason. These Josephs and Josephines we

referred to in Chapter 2 have been deeply and profoundly hurt. They have

been rejected, alienated and maligned. And unless the circumstances in their

lives change dramatically, it is more than likely to happen again. Fear and

mistrust pervades their relationships, their thoughts, their actions and their

words. They do not know how to belong to another because they cannot

trust the other.

It is an image, of course, that we have already seen.   The Bible's first cities:

Eden and Babel had both been founded on mistrust. Walls were built, gates

were set in place - all to provide protection against those the city-dwellers

could not trust. How can we help those who cannot trust or belong to

another?   In his book, *The Art of Loving*, renowned psychoanalyst Erich

Fromm offers a four-storied framework based on the following themes: 1)

care; 2) responsibility; 3) respect; and 4) knowledge.

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[11] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 292

7.2.1 **Care** – This Fromm likens to the love a mother has for her child. He uses this to remind us that love is not love unless it responds to the most basic needs of another. "If a woman told us that she loved flowers, but forgot to water them, we would not believe in her 'love' for the flowers."[12] To help one belong to another, we must care for them.

7.2.2 **Responsibility** – Fromm reminds us that in contemporary society this word generally carries with it a sense of duty, something placed upon us from the outside. Fromm argues, however, that responsibility comes not from the outside, but from the inside. It asks, "Am I ready? Am I willing? Am I able to respond because I see in this person a brother – a sister? Am I willing to respond because I see this person as my equal?" To help someone belong to another, we must demonstrate responsibility.

7.2.3 **Respect** – Sometimes our sense of responsibility for others leads us to impose our wants, desires and agendas on them and their journeys. Because of this, we also need respect. Respect means giving the other space to grow as *they* should. Respect means abandoning our own need to influence, manipulate or control. Respect means valuing the freedom of another to learn, choose, and discern as they see fit for

themselves. To encourage someone's sense of belonging to another, we must offer them respect.

7.2.4 **Knowledge** – As a white, middle-class, well-educated, ordained male minister who grew up in the suburbs, what do I *really know* about being young and living on the street? Helping someone belong to another also involves getting to know them. In Chapter 3, we learned that one of the essential components in anyone's faith journey is the capacity to tell stories. We also learned that maturing in faith takes place in relationship. It follows, then, that getting to know them involves not only encouraging them to tell their stories, but offering to listen to them – to value, respect, integrate and retell them – even if the stories are not our own.

Young people who have lived at length on the street grieve many things. They grieve what was and what is. They also grieve what could have and should have been. Often, they find these things to be the most painful, because they are the kinds of things they will never get back and the kinds of things they will never be able to let go of. To listen to their story is to listen to that grief.

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[12] Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, p. 22

Sometimes this overwhelms us and so we try not to listen. We shut the

stories out – or worse – we try to shut out those who tell them. Why? Because

we are also afraid, because we also find it difficult to trust, because the stories

of pain and tragedy and grief which lay behind them often remind us of our

own pain, grief and tragedy. And so we try to suppress the stories; we try to

push or pull these young people to a place where they are not yet ready to go.

We want them to be happy and whole and well. So we suggest, prescribe

and guide, when what they need is to grieve and for us to hear their grief.

Building faith in street-youth begins when we make space for them to tell

their stories – and we listen.

What we do with these stories afterwards is also important. If we use these

stories to learn from and build relationships with these young people, then

likely they will grow in faith. But if it is to judge, or to mock, or to put on

display, they will not. Usually, this is not our intention. But as the public

face for these projects and ministries, we need to be careful. When we speak

in public about our programs, or write about them in our newsletters, we

need to ask: "What is the appropriate balance of "sharing" these stories as

opposed to "using" these stories in order to increase awareness or raise funds

for our cause?" At an even deeper level: "What do we get out of it?" Do we

perform our work and tell the stories of our work because it makes us feel

good, or because it is a way of empowering those we work with? These are

hard questions, ones to which we will not always have answers. But if we are

serious about building faith in at-risk youth, we will be careful not to stop

asking.

To illustrate one practical implication of the illusiveness of these answers,

consider once more the setting of this project: The Ground Level Café. Our

mandate is to provide jobs and job-training for at-risk and employment-

disadvantaged youth. We also want to create the most hospitable, attractive,

and financially viable café that we can. How do we present ourselves? At

times, it is imperative for us to focus on our need to assist youth. This is

borne out in our fundraising, our partnership with other service agencies and

businesses, and our connection with local churches and denominational

offices. But in terms of how we present ourselves to our customers, we are a

cafe.

At the café, it is not difficult to see our focus on youth employment. We have

pamphlets, posters, brochures - all of which highlight our programs and the

programs of other employment and service-related agencies throughout the

city. Nor are we afraid to talk about our counselling and referral work if

people ask. But it is not something we push. As far as the café is concerned,

our task is to provide good coffee, great food, and comfortable space. We just

happen to employ street-youth.

Our decision to promote business over youth employment schemes and bagels over brokenness is more than just good business sense. It is rooted in our understanding of the Biblical theme of hospitality and it is integral to our goal of building faith in the lives of at-risk and street-involved youth. By presenting ourselves first and foremost as a café, we remind ourselves and others that the homelessness, poverty, brokenness and hurt that is evident in so many of these young people's lives is only part of who they are. They do not want our pity; they want our respect. They are not interested in our tolerance; they want our acceptance. By focusing on these young people's skills instead of on their obstacles, we create space for trust to grow. And when trust grows, we can belong to another.

7.3   Belonging in Community

When I first read Fowler's work, I wanted to find a quick, concise summary of his theory. After all, I wanted to write a thesis based in large part on his work. No sense doing more work than I needed to. I did not find it. Only after I sat with it for many months did it become clear to me that in very simple terms what Fowler is describing is a movement from *self to other to others*.

This last stage of the movement I describe as "belonging in community". To belong in community, we first need to belong to ourselves. Secondly, we must know how to belong to another. Finally, our journey towards maturity also means belonging to many others – to community.

One of the most insightful writers on this topic is the Catholic theologian, Jean Vanier. As the son of a Governor-General and founder of the L'arche communities for mentally disabled adults, Vanier is uniquely qualified to speak on the subject of people from all walks of life coming together. In his book, *Community and Growth*, he writes:

> I love that passage from the Bible: "And I will say ... 'You are my people' and he shall say 'Thou art my God.'" (Hosea 2:23) I will always remember one of Martin Luther King's disciples saying to a gathering of many thousands of blacks in Chicago, in the early seventies: 'My people are humiliated.' Mother Teresa of Calcutta says: 'My people are hungry.' 'My people' are my community ...'my people' are those who are written in my flesh as I am in theirs. Whether we are near each other or far away, my brothers and sisters remain written within me. I carry them, and they, me ... To call them 'my people' does not mean that I feel superior to them, or that I am their shepherd or that I look after them. It means that they are mine as I am theirs. There is a solidarity between us. What touches them, touches me. And when I say 'my people' I don't imply that there are others I reject. My people is my community, made up of those who know me and carry me. They are a springboard towards all humanity. I cannot be a universal brother or sister, unless I love 'my people'.[13]

Some people come together because they want to be the same – and think that is community. But it is not. Community is not about people with similarities

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[13] Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth* (London: Aarton, Longman and Todd) p. 16-17

coming together, but about people with differences coming together.

Community is about caring and openness; it is about co-operation and

growth. Community is a place where the one who does not have is as much a

member as the one who does. It is a place of forgiveness, of healing, of

patience. Community is not a thing, but a living body.

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes:

> Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot
> should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the
> body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.
> And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not
> belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part
> of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the
> sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would
> the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in
> the body, every one of them, just as God wanted them to be. If
> they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there
> are many parts, but one body.[14]

Helping others belong to community is not about assimilation; it is not about

making them "more like us." Rather it is about them and us coming together

to create "my people", a new and growing community.

It is this new and growing community that comes closest to the "shalom" we

talked about earlier. Walter Brueggeman reminds us:

> Shalom can mean many things. But what we take it to mean is not
> accidental. The way we define it makes sense in the context of our
> life. We define the word and use it – as we do all words – as a bearer
> of peculiar meanings that match up with our needs, hopes, fears, and

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[14] I Corinthians 12:14-20

visions. And the context in which we set the word shalom will make a difference in how it comes through to us and what freight we assign to it.[15]

When we belong in community, shalom is present. It is the faith maturity of which Fowler speaks. It is the stage, the circumstance, and the environment in which our deepest values and meaning mingle with that of others to bring about something deeper, broader and more meaningful among us.

That is not to say, "Anything goes." Fowler's model helps us listen. It helps us accept others as they are. It helps us avoid expecting too much too soon. But it also warns us against being seduced by what Kenneth Keniston calls the "modal developmental level" or what might be referred to in less politically sensitive terms as "the lowest common denominator." In communities, the modal level acts as a kind of magnet. Those who grow up within the community tend to grow up to the modal level – but not beyond it. The task of those who live and work within well-defined communities (like the street-youth community) is to coax its members towards a higher by setting a "climate of developmental expectation."[16]

Fowler describes it this way:

> I do not mean by this that such a community will become a hothouse garden, seeking to rush persons from one stage of faith to the next. Rather, in ways that take the full development of faith

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[15] Brueggemann, *Living Toward A Vision,* p. 27
[16] Fowler, *Stages of Faith,* p. 296

at each stage seriously, it will provide rites of passage and opportunities for vocational engagement that call forth the gifts and emergent strengths of each stage of faith. And it will provide help for people in naming the shape of their callings and challenges, in the community and the wider world, at each stage of their faith growth.[17]

For most of our youth, expectation has usually been absent or negative. The little expectation that has been placed on them has focused more on negative, self-abasing and soul-defeating images. To hold up this developmental expectation is to hold up something new, positive, realistic and attainable; the kind of expectation that only comes only from having listened, heard, and learned to know them in the context of community.

How does this happen apart from what we have already suggested? How is this movement from self to other to others encouraged? Theory is not enough. One of the most effective means I have found of accomplishing this with street-youth is a method of pastoral counselling known as reframing. Reframing is a method that helps the individual see things from another point of view by taking new factors into consideration. To illustrate this method, Donald Capps, in his book, *Reframing*, offers the following ancient Chinese story:

> There once was a farmer in a poor country village. He was considered very well-to-do because he owned a horse that he used for plowing and transportation. One day his horse ran away. His neighbours all exclaimed how terrible this was, but the farmer simply replied, "Maybe."

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[17] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p. 296

A few days later the horse returned and brought two wild horses with it. The neighbours all rejoiced at his good fortune, but the farmer simply replied, "Maybe."

The next day the farmer's son tried to ride one of the wild horses, but the horse threw him and broke the son's leg. The neighbours all offered their sympathy for his misfortune, but the farmer replied again, "Maybe."

The next week conscription officers came to the village to take young men for the army. They rejected the farmer's son because of his broken leg. When the neighbours told him how lucky he was, the farmer replied, "Maybe."[18]

The story reminds us that the meaning of any event depends on the *frame* in which we perceive it. When we change the frame, sometimes we are able to change the meaning. Having two wild horses is a good thing – until the son's leg gets broken. Having a broken leg is not a good thing – until it keeps the son from going off to war. This is called reframing.

Reframing is what we saw in many of the Biblical themes we considered earlier. It provides an opportunity to view life from an alternative perspective and grow in faith because of it. This was particularly so in the stories of hospitality, where the stranger becomes host and the host becomes guest. The stories of exodus and exile are also presented as opportunities to reframe the story of relationship between God and God's people. Brueggemann, too, in his description of the "haves" and the "have-nots,"

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[18] Capps. *Reframing*, p. 10

helps to reframe our understanding of shalom. Faith, he reminds, us does not

belong to one group or the other. Each of these groups shares potential to

find meaning and purpose in their own experience.

Reframing is what we saw taking place in G, the young man with the tattoo

of the bear. The bear's eyes were closed; the bear was sleeping. Reframing or

re-imaging the bear with eyes open helped G to see not only his world, but

his own "self" from a different perspective. He was beginning to see himself

in a new way.

One of the reasons this method may be so helpful with youth, and

particularly with those who live on the street, is the powerful role that symbol

already plays in their lives at this stage. In Stage Two, symbols are largely

one-dimensional and literal in their function. But in Stage Three, the role of

symbols tends to broaden considerably as they become multi-dimensional

and begin to provide meaning for more conceptual frameworks. Reframing

takes advantage of this pivotal point in these youth's lives. At a stage where

they are naturally beginning to translate meaning from symbols to more

developed frameworks of meaning, reframing helps them do so in a way that

provides them with alternative images to the negative self-abasing ones they

may have grown up with.

Finally, if we are faithful to the task of creating developmental expectation in youth-at-risk, my hope is that we, too, will experience some reframing of our own images of faith and community. Street-involved youth not only stand out – they stand outside. They know that. They know that they are not part of society's mainstream. And to a degree, they like that. They value that. Their standing out gives them a sense of meaning and purpose. They like the conformity that comes from being with people who think, talk and act like themselves. It helps define who they are as a people. It offers protection. It gives them community.[19]

But while they value this, there is also evidence that some of them are looking for something more than their own "community" – something more of community itself. These are youth who in Fowler's model have moved beyond Stage Three to Stage Four or perhaps even Stage Five. We saw this with C, the young woman whose story we told in Chapter 5. There are some youth who would simply like to transform society by imposing their values upon it. But the youth I am speaking of are those who have effectively stepped back to look critically at themselves and their community. They are able to call its convention into question. They are beginning to open up to the ambiguities and polarities of life. They are experimenting with the creative tension of life's opposites. They value the community they have, but are also

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[19] We might see this as typical of Fowler's Stage 3

searching for a new one - one that is different, deeper, wider, better. One that they can both shape and be shaped by.

Does this sound familiar? For many of us in the Christian community, this sounds like the "already and not yet" of God's kingdom or community – that which is and that which will be. The task of our ministry is to meet these youth here. For here, we are not so much teachers, sponsors or leaders – but peers. If this is the faith stage we find ourselves in, (and for some of us this may be in doubt) then our task is to co-discover new images and conventions based on our respective experiences. It is to remember Brian Wren's advice, that the definition our community awaits the description of its own "open-endedness". In other words, it is a "work in progress", just as community always is. There are youth on the street longing to move towards us – and to have us move towards them. They long for community - not just their own, and not just ours, but a new one.

Finally, for those of us whose faith is framed by belief in God, it is here that we have to take an enormous step back. Or perhaps it is an enormous step forward. For as Fowler writes: "There is a limit to how much one can talk about faith and development in faith without acknowledging that the

question of whether their will be faith on earth is finally God's business."[20]

When we accept the open-endedness of our community with street-youth, we

also accept that God will move, shape, mould and watch over whatever the

outcome of that process is. We accept that the destination is unknown,

marked only by our mutual desire and capacity to seek meaning. We accept

that the journey towards faith maturity is not always about what we do; it is

also about what God does. The journey requires hard work and reflection; it

also requires God's grace. Fowler writes: "The issue is finally not whether

we and our companions on this globe become Muslims, Jews, Buddhists,

Taoists, Confucianists or Christians, as important as that issue is. The real

question is whether there will be *faith* on earth and whether that faith will be

good faith."[21]

Good faith not only changes others; it changes us. In his book, *Here and Now*,

Henri Nouwen describes this dynamic as "reverse mission:"

> While living for a few months in one of the "young towns"
> surrounding Lima, Peru, I first heard the term "reverse mission." I
> had come from the North to the South to help the poor, but the longer
> I was among the poor the more I became aware that there was
> another mission, the mission from the South to the North. When I
> returned to the North, I was deeply convinced that the main task
> would be to the help the poor of Latin America convert their wealthy
> brothers and sisters in the United States and Canada.
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> Ever since that time, I have become aware that wherever God's Spirit
> is present there is a reverse mission ... The poor have a mission to the

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[20] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*   p. 302   Fowler begins his final chapter in *Stages of Faith* quoting from the Gospel of Luke: "But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

[21] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*,   p. 293

rich, the blacks have a mission to the whites, the handicapped have a mission to the "normal", the gay people have a mission to the straight, the dying have a mission to the living. Those whom the world has made into victims God has chosen to be bearers of Good News.[22]

Like Nouwen, my association over the last five years with street- involved youth has convinced me not only that they have faith, but that we have something to learn from street-youth and from their faith. Does it surprise us that the values espoused by street-youth, values like belonging, honesty, integrity and forgiveness, might also describe the core values of church communities? Earlier in this paper we stated: "Words matter." How we talk about faith – our own and that of those outside the Church – matters. It is not just a matter of theological curiosity or religious pursuit. How we talk about street-youth and about what they believe is crucial for our understanding of God, others and ourselves.

Earlier, we used the example of how our use of predominantly "masculine" language tends to place God in a box - a box in which God does not belong. Similarly, when we speak of street-youth only as runaways, squeegee kids, beggars or bums, when we describe them only as lazy or unmotivated, we also place them in boxes. Street-youth do not belong in boxes; it violates both them and their experience. When we relate to a person only through a single

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[22] Henri Nouwen, *Here and Now*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing. 1994)

name, concept or idea, we treat that person with contempt; we assume a power over them that is not ours to have.

The question of whether or not street-youth have faith is not just an attempt to be more inclusive. If, as Karl Barth reminds us, the task of doing theology is ultimately, "to let God be God"[23] then the task of theology must also be to let others be themselves. Our mission is not so much to "take" God to others as it is to meet the God who reveals Godself in and through them.

CONCLUSION

In this project, we have explored the subject of faith maturity and its implications for ministry with street-involved youth. We have reviewed the pertinent Canadian data, including the work of Bibby and Adams. We have reviewed the related psychological, social and theological frameworks that relate to these discussions. In particular, we examined the work of James Fowler, the roles he ascribes to individuation and intimacy in the process of faith development, and the need to modify this theory in a way that brings greater integration for these two aspects of faith. We have considered the Biblical themes of creation, city, exodus, exile, the stranger and shalom and explored their particular contributions to the study. Through our own surveys and interviews involving street-involved youth, we have determined

that more research must be carried out in order to include at-risk and street-involved youth in studies of Canadian values. In particular, we identified the need to broaden and modify Bibby's *Project Canada Survey* as well as Michael Adams' *Environics On-Line Survey*. We spoke of belonging and the movement from self to other to others. And finally, we considered the important role that "reframing" as a method of counselling can play in encouraging this movement towards greater wholeness.

My thesis is that street-youth have "faith." If we are prepared to define "faith" as a commitment to or trust in that which gives us meaning and purpose then, clearly, this is so. Street-youth have faith. Along with those of us in religious communities who seem to have co-opted the term "faith" for our own frameworks of meaning and purpose, these young people do "believe." Like us, they share the values of belonging, honesty and integrity. They are concerned for others, they value family, and they want to be loved. They, too, seek meaning and purpose.

To bear witness to this journey, let me conclude with the following poem, entitled: *River*. Written by Lisa McMahon, one of our recent graduates, it helps not only to describe the journey we share with street-youth but to

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[23] Karl Barth, quoted in Frederick Sontag, "Barth, Romans and Feminist Theology: The Problem of God's Freedom", in *Encounter* 52 no. 4 (1991) p. 389

reframe it – helping those of us who are not a part of this community to see

our own lives re-storied in new and life-giving ways.

River

The placid water is not soothing
To baby toe anticipating
Jaded rock
The pain and grieving
And rush of wave to soon relieving

Tired flesh and eyes deceiving
empty thoughts
and yet retrieving
secrets from the waters
bleeding through the surface
Hoping, pleading

Open fingertips receiving
some small comfort and believing
as it whispers, "we shall heal."

(Lisa McMahon)

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APPENDIX A – McMaster Approval to Conduct Research

APR 0 2 2001

McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB)
c/o Office of Research Services, MREB Secretariate, CNH 111, x 24519, e-mail address

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS CLEARANCE TO INVOLVE HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

Application Status: New ✓   Addendum ____   Renewal ____   REB #

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Faith Maturity in Street-Involved Youth

	DEPARTMENT	ADDRESS	# EXT	E - MAIL
Faculty Investigator[1]				
Faculty Co-Investigator(s)				
Faculty Supervisor(s)[2]	Dr. A. Irvine Divinity College	D.C. 233	24095	irvinea
Student Investigator(s)	Mike Wood Daly	1067 Queen St W. Toronto ON. M6J 1H3	416- 531-8268	youthworks @on.aibn.com

The application in support of the above research project has been reviewed by the MREB. The research protocol complies with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the McMaster University Policies and Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects. The following ethics certification is approved by the MREB:

✓ The application protocol is approved as presented without questions or requests for modification.

☐ The application protocol is approved subject to receipt of clarification and/or modifications as identified below.

☐ The decision is deferred, pending receipt of additional information or major revisions as identified below

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

☐ Copy of final interview/survey/questionnaire is required.

☐ Consent form/statement is incomplete or missing   (Refer to Guidelines)

☐ Copy of cover letter explaining the study is required

☐ Required revisions have been outlined in a transmitted e-mail (copy attached).

☐ Required revisions are outlined under the Comments & Conditions section.

COMMENTS & CONDITIONS:

— see attached e-mail.

Reporting Frequency:	Annual Date:		Other:
DATE : ~~October 17, 1999~~ March 28, 2001	Dr. C. Riach, Chair, REB.		Q:\ethics\forms\certify.wpd

Subject: RE: research project ethics approval
   Date: Mon, 19 Mar 2001 20:37:29 -0500
   From: "Mike Wood Daly" <youthworks@on.aibn.com>
     To: "Cindy Riach" <riachc@mcmaster.ca>
     CC: "Andrew Irvine" <irvinea@mcmaster.ca>

Dear Cindy:

Hope you find these response helpful.

1.   Project Teen Canada has been used by Reg Bibby our of Lethbridge. I plan
to forward the findings   of this survey to Reg and hope that it may become
the impetus for a larger study of the values of   street youth in Canada.

2.   The invitation to participate will be an open invitation made not only
through our program but   through affiliated agencies. Invitation will be
made by a variety of directors, outreach workers, etc.   It is intended -
and - will be made very clear that participation is voluntary and that no
privileges will   be lost.

        Food is already an important part of our program with free food available
at a variety of different   times. In this case it is not being used as
"bonus marks" but rather an acknowledgement that   gathering around meals is
often an effective tool for meeting with this particular group.

3.   a) Yes the on-line survey will be annonymous
        b) Standard means of preserving annonymity, including gender, location etc
will be ensured.
        c) "shared findings" refers to the general findings as opposed to specific
statements.
        d) Use of any personal stories must be referred back to the individual for
their approval and care   taker to ensure annonymity if so desired.

-----Original Message-----
From: Cindy Riach [mailto:riachc@mcmaster.ca]
Sent: Thursday, March 01, 2001 4:07 PM
To: irvinea@mcmaster.ca; youthworks@on.aibn.com; Michael J. Wilson
Subject: research project ethics approval

Mike Wood Daly and Andrew Irvine,

The MREB has reviewed your project "Faith Maturity in Street-Involved
Youth". While we believe this is an important study we have some
concerns:

        1. Is the large survey "Project Teen Canada" only for your research or
will it be sent to the original researcher?

        2. pressure to participate (coercion or perceived coercion). Since the
researcher is involved in running the Ground Level cafe the adolescents
may feel pressure to participate in the research. The youth may rely on
the cafe for gathering and socializing with friends, as a source of
food, and they may feel indebted for previous training programs or
employment or fear losing future privileges. When the researcher is in a
position of power related to the potential subjects, e.g. doctor -
patient, teacher - students, the principle of free consent is in
jeopardy. One way of reducing this concern is to have someone else ask
for volunteer participants and make it very clear that participation is
voluntary and no privileges will be lost.

        Also for this population free food may be an excessive inducement (just

as bonus marks can be for failing students). You can be the judge of
that, but it would be better if those who do not volunteer also have
access to supper to ensure the free voluntary nature.

      3. confidentiality of responses obtained in the survey and interviews.
          a) will the on-line survey be anonymous?
          b) interviews - names will be erased but will identifying
information
be kept   confidential? how? (For example, identifying
someone as
"a young man   from Kenora" may reveal to his peers who that is.)
          c) 4 hour group session - You used the phrases "to share findings"
and
"stories   .. to go along with survey findings"
         - will you be careful not to reveal confidential information
gained   from surveys and interviews to youths' peers during
the group
session   (and after).
          d) confidentiality of families - you are asking questions and
gaining
sensitive,   confidential information about other
people besides those
who   volunteer. How will you handle this
information?
          e) publication of research. How will you deal with identifying
information and   personal "stories"?

If you can comment on these concerns, (by return email is fine,) I will
get back to you.
Thank you for your patience.

Sincerely,
Cindy Riach, Ph.D.
Chair, MREB

We're interested … In what you are!

Hey!

Street youth have values too! Many people in society make the assumption that street-youth don't have values. But they do. Everyone has values. Everyone has things that are important to them; principles, morals, and ethics which help shape and influence the way we live our lives. And we'd like to know what they are.

This letter is your invitation to participate in a study designed to catch a glimpse of what at-risk and street-involved youth find important. It's an opportunity for you to express the kinds of things that give you meaning and purpose in life. When we're finished, the findings will be used to help educate people in service agencies and church communities to better understand and respond to your specific needs. Instead of telling you what you need – hopefully it will help us listen to what it is you think you need to live a happier more productive life.

The project will involve 15 young people between the ages of 16-24 who have lived on or close to the street. For most of you, it will involve completing two surveys. We'll do the first one together. We'll plan to meet at 4:00 pm on Monday September   in the GROUND LEVEL CAFÉ. It'll take just a couple of hours to introduce and have you complete it. And supper will be provided. The second survey will be completed on-line at one of our computers in the Ground Level office. You'll be free to drop by any time between 9 am and 5 pm during that initial week following our meeting to complete it. Someone will be available at all times to help you if needed. Finally, five of you (selected at random) will be asked to participate in a confidential interview, which will help provide some stories and greater detail to go along with the survey findings.

Some of these questions may be hard or painful to answer. It's important for you to know that all of your answers will be kept confidential. And if the questions are making you feel too uncomfortable, you're free to pull out at any time. My hope, however, is that your involvement in the process will help those of us who work in

the youth service field be better equipped to address some of these difficult issues.

At the end of the process, we'll get together for another couple of hours (we'll have a free supper for you again) and talk about our findings with you. At that time, you'll have the opportunity to comment on these findings and to say what you'd like people in service agencies and churches to know about as a result.

If you have any questions about the surveys, interviews or the study in general, please feel free to contact me at 416-531-8268. Or you can contact:

Dr. Andrew Irvine   McMaster Ethics Board
McMaster Divinity College   McMaster University
Hamilton ON, L8S 4K1   Hamilton ON, L8S 4K1
Tel: 905-525-9140 (ext. 24095)   Tel: 905-525-9140 (ext. 24765)

Thanks for taking the time to think about your involvement with this project. If you are willing to be involved, please complete the following tear-off sheet and drop it in to me at THE GROUND LEVEL CAFÉ, 1087 Queen Street West (in the Great Hall) or call me at 416-531-8268.

Thanks for all your help!

Mike Wood Daly

---✂--

Name: _____

Age: _____

Where we can get a hold of you: _____

    ☐   I'd be happy to be involved in the study
    ☐   I'd prefer not to be involved in the study

All meetings will be held in THE GROUND LEVEL CAFÉ
1087 Queen Street West (corner of Queen West and Dovercourt)

Your Support

The Ground Level is a not-for-profit charitable organization. If you'd like to "get in" on the Ground Level by contributing to our project, receiving our newsletter, or by finding out other ways you can help, please fill out this form and mail it or fax it to us at:

ground level café   1087 queen street west   Toronto, ON, M6J1H3
tel: 416-531-8268   fax: 416-531-7037   e-mail: info@groundlevelcafe.ca
on the web at: www.groundlevelcafe.ca

Ground Level Youth Ventures is a Registered Charity and all donations will receive a tax receipt.

Thank you for your support!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Enclosed is my donation of:

☐ $100
☐ $50
☐ $25
☐ $10
☐ Other
☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Yearly
☐ One time donation
☐ Please add me to the mailing list

Monthly showings by local artists

Our choices make a difference...support Fair Trade!

Saturday Brunch 9am-4pm

Monday-Friday 7am-5pm

16-24? Out of School? Out of Work? Out of Pocket?

We Can Help!

Ground Level Youth Ventures
Ground Level Café
1087 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario, M6J 1H3
Tel: 416-531-8268 · fax: 416-531-7037
www.groundlevelcafe.ca
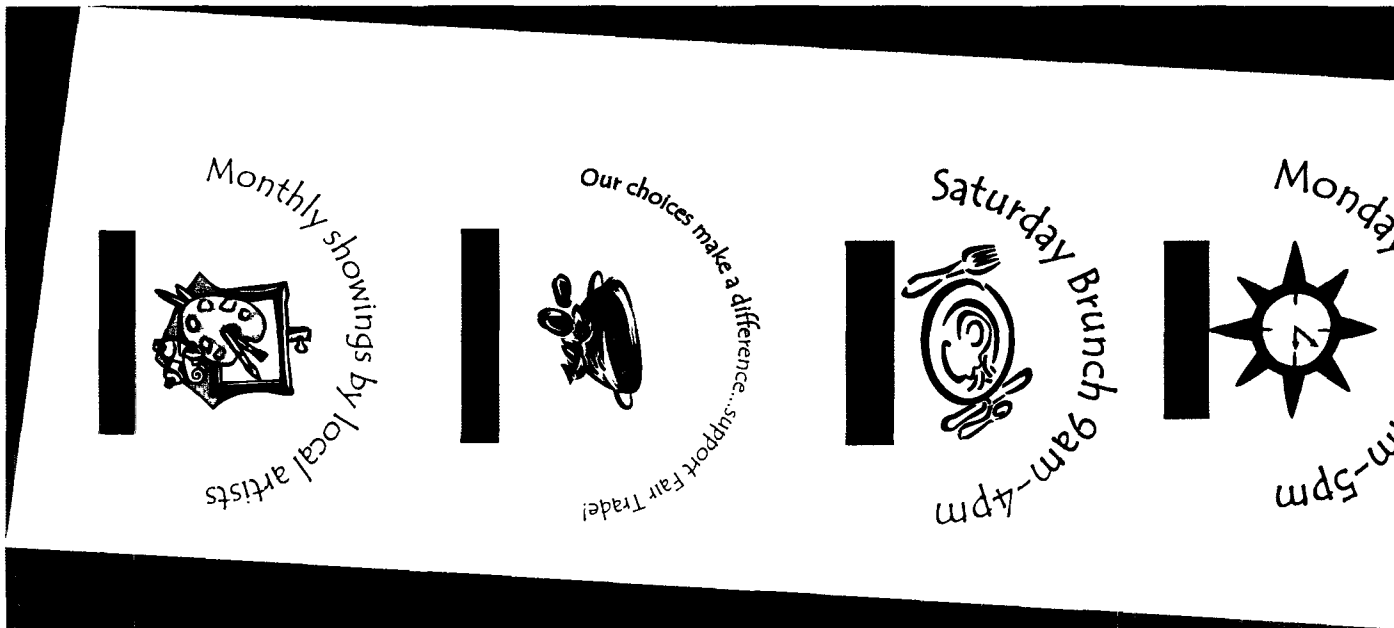
Ground Level
Youth Ventures
• developing skills for youth •

A great Great
Hall on the
second floor!

Distinctive
architectural
detail.

Lots of
artists
in the
attic

The church
offices.
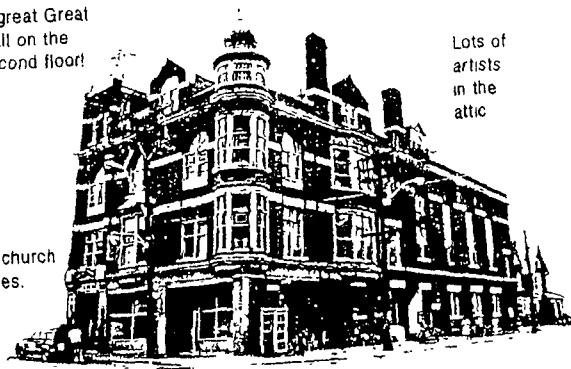
Enter here

The art gallery-
on the corner.

Our funky old building.

You'll love our wonderful old
building on Queen Street West.

Built as the YMCA in 1889, it
features a magnificent Great Hall
(where we meet Sunday morning),
plus an art gallery and artists'
studios. The church operates the
building as a business that provides
a resource to the neighbourhood
and to the artistic community. Film
shoots, concerts, fundraisers and
weddings make it a lively place all
through the week.

We're committed to a long-term
program of restoring this historical
facility as part of the healthy
renewal of our neighbourhood.

Church In The Great Hall

Programs and Services

- Morning worship Sundays at 11:00
- Counselling
- Small groups
- Activities for children and youth
- College and Career group

For more information, call
R E V .   P H I L   E D W A R D S
at 533-3241.

The Great Hall is available for rentals:
- Weddings
- Parties and special events
- Concerts
- Receptions
- Rehearsals

For more information, call
The Great Hall Centre 537-0803.

Church In The Great Hall

SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF QUEEN & DOVERCOURT

1087 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario M6J 1H3
Phone 416-533-3241 Fax 416-533-0953

Funny.
Single
Lonely
sometimes

Loves
cats,
some
people

Been
there
Done
that

THE COME-AS-YOU-ARE CHURCH.

Church In The Great Hall

SUNDAYS AT 11:00 A.M.

Fowler's Faith Development Interview Guide

Part I: Life Review

1. Factual Data: Date and place of birth? Number and ages of siblings? Occupation of providing parent or parents? Ethnic, racial and religious identifications? Characterization of social class – family of origin and now.
2. Divide life into chapters: (major) segments created by changes or experiences – "turning points" or general circumstances.
3. In order for me to understand the flow or movement of your life and your way of feeling and thinking about it, what other persons and experiences would be important for me to know about?
4. Thinking about yourself at present: What gives your life meaning? What makes life worth living for you?

Part II: Life-shaping Experiences and Relationships

1. At present, what relationships seem most important for your life?
2. You did/did not mention your father / mother as part of your significant relationships.
   When you think of your father / mother as he was during the time you were a child, what stands out? What was his work? What were his special interests? Was he a religious person? Explain.
   Have your perceptions of your parents changed since you were a child? How?
3. Are there other persons who at earlier times or in the present have been significant in the shaping of your outlook on life?
4. Have you experienced losses, crises or suffering that have changed or 'coloured' your life in special ways?
5. Have you had moments of joy, ecstasy, peak experience or breakthrough that have shaped or changed your life?
6. What were the taboos in your early life? How have you lived with or out of those taboos? Can you indicate how the taboos in your life have changed? What are the taboos now?
7. What experiences have affirmed your sense of meaning in life? What experiences have shaken or disturbed your sense of meaning?

Part III: Present Values and Commitments

1. Can you describe the beliefs and values or attitudes that are most important in guiding your life?
2. What is the purpose of human life?
3. Do you feel that some approaches to life are more "true" or right than others? Are there some beliefs or values that all or most people *ought* to hold and act on?
4. Are there symbols or images or rituals that are important to you?

5. What relationships or groups are most important as support for you values and beliefs?
6. You have described some beliefs and values that have become important to you. How important are they? In what ways do these beliefs and values find expression in your life? Can you give some specific examples of how and when they have had effect?
7. When you have an important decision or choice to make regarding your life, how do you go about deciding? Explain.
8. Is there a 'plan' for human lives? Are we – individually or as a species – determined or affected in our lives by a power beyond human control?
9. When life seems most discouraging and hopeless, what holds you up and renews your hope? Example?
10. When you think about the future, what makes you feel most anxious or uneasy (for yourself and for those you love; for society or institutions; for the world)?
11. What does death mean to you? What becomes of us when we die?
12. Why do some person and groups suffer more than others?
13. Some people believe that we will always have poor people among us, and that in general life rewards people according to their efforts? What are your feelings about this?
14. Do you feel that human life on this planet will go on indefinitely, or do you think it is about to end?

Part IV: Religion

1. Do you have or have you had important religious experiences?
2. What feelings do you have when you think about God?
3. Do you consider yourself a religious person?
4. If you pray, what do you feel is going on when you pray?
5. Do you feel that your religious outlook is "true"? In what sense? Are religious traditions other than your own "true"?
6. What is sin (sins)? How have your feelings about this changed? How did you feel or think about sin as a child, an adolescent and so on?
7. Some people believe that without religion morality breaks down. What do you feel about this?
8. Where do you feel that you are changing, growing, struggling or wrestling with doubt in your life at the present time? Where is your growing edge?
9. What is your image (or idea) of mature faith?

PROJECT TEEN CANADA
2000

SOME NOTES ABOUT
PR●JECT TEEN CANADA 2000

◆ This survey is the third in a series of national, bilingual research projects examining the values, attitudes, beliefs, behaviour, and expectations of Canadian teenagers, once again involving approximately 200 randomly selected classes and 4,000 15 to 19-year-olds across the country.

◆ *The first survey* was carried out in *1984*, and resulted in pioneering information on young people, published in the bestselling book, *The Emerging Generation: An Inside Look At Canada's Teenagers* (Toronto: Irwin, 1985). The book was also published in French as *La Nouvelle Generation* (Montreal: Fides, 1986). Close to 30,000 copies are being read by Canadians with an interest in young people.

◆ *The second survey* was completed in *1992*, and provided the country with unique trend information concerning changes and continuities characterizing Canada's youth through the 80s and 90s. The findings were summarized in the book, *Teen Trends: A Nation in Motion* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1992). Some 20,000 copies are being read by people across Canada. In addition, a summary of the key research findings was produced in French.

◆ *This third survey*, being completed in early *2000*, will make it possible to compare Canadian youth at the beginning of the new century with those of the early 1980s and 1990s.

◆ A new book presenting and interpreting the findings of the surveys will be published in early 2001 by Stoddart Publishing Company (Toronto).

  • Copies of the book will be given to the libraries of all participating schools.

  • Canada's youth will once more be heard as we reflect on the kind of society we want in the new century.

  • Findings will again be made available to television and radio outlets, leading newspapers and magazines, and a wide range of government departments, groups, and individuals.

  • PROJECT TEEN CANADA personnel will continue to present the project's findings and implications to educators, youth workers, organizations, parents, and teenagers across the country.

Total confidentiality is guaranteed: the names of teenage participants are unknown.
Further, the names of participating schools will not be disclosed.

We would like to begin by asking about the things you enjoy.

1. How much ENJOYMENT do you receive from these areas of life?

	A Great Deal	Quite A Bit	Some	Little or None	Doesn't Apply	
Music	1	2	3	4	5	[9]
Television	1	2	3	4	5	
E-mail	1	2	3	4	5	
The Internet more generally	1	2	3	4	5	
Friends	1	2	3	4	5	
Dating	1	2	3	4	5	
Being by yourself	1	2	3	4	5	
Your boyfriend or girlfriend	1	2	3	4	5	
Brother(s) or sister(s)	1	2	3	4	5	
Your mother	1	2	3	4	5	
Your father	1	2	3	4	5	
Your grandparent(s)	1	2	3	4	5	
Youth groups generally	1	2	3	4	5	
School	1	2	3	4	5	
Sports	1	2	3	4	5	
Your religious group specifically	1	2	3	4	5	
Your job	1	2	3	4	5	
Your car	1	2	3	4	5	
Your pet(s)	1	2	3	4	5	
Video/computer games	1	2	3	4	5	
Your VCR	1	2	3	4	5	
Your computer	1	2	3	4	5	
Your own room	1	2	3	4	5	

2. How closely do you follow:

	Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not Very Closely	Not Closely At All
the National Hockey League	1	2	3	4
the Canadian Football League	1	2	3	4
Major League Baseball	1	2	3	4
Professional Wrestling	1	2	3	4
the National Football League	1	2	3	4
Figure Skating	1	2	3	4
the National Basketball Association	1	2	3	4

3. Are you a part of any of the following groups? *[Please circle if you are.]*

1 school club   1 hobby-related club   1 Internet discussion group   1 cultural/ethnic organization

1 sports team/club   1 religious youth group   1 Internet chat group   1 any other?_____

4. About how many HOURS A DAY do you watch television? _____ hours   [46-47]

5. **WHAT or WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE...**   [Please list ONLY ONE.]

In some cases, you may not have any--just skip them and move on.

Kind of music   _____

TV program   _____

Movie   _____

Website topic   _____

Athlete   _____

Singer or group   _____

TV news person   _____

Politician   _____

Author   _____   [76]

World leader   _____   [2 1-4]

6. **Have you ever visited or lived in...**   **Yes**   **No**

Another Canadian province   1   2
The United States   1   2
Outside North America   1   2

7. **How many CLOSE friends would you say you have?**   0   1   2   3   4 or more

8. **About how often do you:**

	Daily	Several Times A Week	About Once A Week	2-3 Times Month	About Once A Month	Hardly Ever	Never
Listen to music	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Go to a movie	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Follow sports	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Keep up with the news	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Read books you *want* to read	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Read the Bible/other Scriptures . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Read your horoscope	1	2	3	4	5	6.	7
Do homework	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Play video/computer games	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Watch videos at home	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attend a music concert	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attend a sports event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Use a cell phone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Use a computer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Use E-Mail	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Access Websites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do something to stay in shape . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Jam or work on music	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Go to a rave	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gamble with money	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Engage in sex	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spend time with friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Argue with parent (s)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attend a religious service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Say table grace	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pray privately	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sit and think	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

[35]

9. Do YOU have access to a computer at home?   1 Yes   2 No   [36]

IF YES:
About how many HOURS A DAY do you spend on your computer? _____ hours

10. How important are the following to YOU PERSONALLY?

[Skip any that are unclear.]	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important At All
A comfortable life	1	2	3	4
Friendship	1	2	3	4
Freedom	1	2	3	4
Excitement	1	2	3	4
Recognition	1	2	3	4
Family life	1	2	3	4
Spirituality	1	2	3	4
Being loved	1	2	3	4
Honesty	·1	2	3	4
Creativity	1	2	3	4
Forgiveness	1	2	3	4
Intelligence	1	2	3	4
Humour	1	2	3	4
Concern for others	1	2	3	4
Cleanliness	1	2	3	4
Your looks	1	2	3	4
Working hard	1	2	3	4
Having choices	1	2	3	4
Politeness	1	2	3	4
Being popular	1	2	3	4
Religious group involvement	1	2	3	4
Generosity	1	2	3	4
What your parents think of you	1	2	3	4
Your cultural group heritage	1	2	3	4
Having power	1	2	3	4
Success in what you do	1	2	3	4
Being a Canadian	1	2	3	4

[64]

11. Overall, to what extent do you think your life is influenced by:

	A Great Deal	Quite A Bit	Some	Little or None
The characteristics you were born with . . .	1	2	3	4
The way you were brought up	1	2	3	4
Your mother specifically	1	2	3	4
Your father specifically	1	2	3	4
Your friend(s)	1	2	3	4
Your teacher(s)	1	2	3	4
Another adult(s) who you respect	1	2	3	4
The Internet	1	2	3	4
Television	1	2	3	4
Music	1	2	3	4
What you read	1	2	3	4
God or some other supernatural force	1	2	3	4
Luck	1	2	3	4
What people in power decide	1	2	3	4
Your own willpower	1	2	3	4

[79]

12. How serious do YOU think the following problems are in Canada today?

	Very Serious	Fairly Serious	Not Very Serious	Not Serious At All	
The economy	1	2	3	4	[3 1]
Crime	1	2	3	4	
Violence against women	1	2	3	4	
Lack of Canadian unity	1	2	3	4	
Child abuse	1	2	3	4	
French-English relations	1	2	3	4	
Unequal treatment of women	1	2	3	4	
Racial discrimination	1	2	3	4	
Drugs	1	2	3	4	
The environment	1	2	3	4	
The threat of nuclear war	1	2	3	4	
AIDS	1	2	3	4	
Teenage suicide	1	2	3	4	
Violence in schools	1	2	3	4	
Poverty	1	2	3	4	
American influence	1	2	3	4	
Youth gangs	1	2	3	4	
Native-White relations	1	2	3	4	

I think the country's most serious problem is _____. [19-20]

13. Do you feel that any racial or cultural groups in your community are discriminated against?

1 Yes, and it's getting worse
2 Yes, but it's getting better
3 Yes, but it's no better or worse

4 No, although it used to be a problem
5 No, and such a problem has never been very serious

14. How much CONFIDENCE do you have in the people in charge of:

	A Great Deal	Quite A bit	Some	Little or None
Television	1	2	3	4
Radio	1	2	3	4
The Music Industry	1	2	3	4
Newspapers	1	2	3	4
The Movie Industry	1	2	3	4
Major Business	1	2	3	4
Schools	1	2	3	4
The Computer Industry	1	2	3	4
Religious Organizations	1	2	3	4
The Police	1	2	3	4
The Court System	1	2	3	4
Your Provincial Government	1	2	3	4
The Federal Government	1	2	3	4

15. WHO, in your opinion, is the greatest *Canadian* of all time?

1 _____   2 No one comes to mind   [36]

16. Please indicate the extent to which you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Canada should have TWO official languages—English and French	1	2	3	4
Law enforcement is applied evenly to all those who break the law	1	2	3	4
Women in this country now encounter very little discrimination	1	2	3	4
Most of my school courses are fairly interesting	1	2	3	4
Clinton is doing a pretty good job as U.S. President	1	2	3	4
Discipline in most homes today is not strict enough	1	2	3	4
A stranger who shows a person attention is probably up to something	1	2	3	4
The use of marijuana should be legalized	1	2	3	4
The average Canadian does not have any influence in what the government does	1	2	3	4
I feel safe at school	1	2	3	4
People who cannot afford it have a right to medical care	1	2	3	4
In general, values in Canada have been changing for the worse	1	2	3	4
The CBC is important to Canada	1	2	3	4
Anyone who works hard will rise to the top	1	2	3	4
Generally speaking, adults respect young people's opinions	1	2	3	4
The death penalty should sometimes be used to punish criminals	1	2	3	4
War is justified when other ways of settling international disputes fail	1	2	3	4
People who break the law are almost always caught	1	2	3	4
Canada should be a "melting pot" where people coming here from other countries give up their cultural differences and become Canadians	1	2	3	4
All in all, my teachers are genuinely interested in me	1	2	3	4
Jean Chrétien is doing a pretty good job as Prime Minister	1	2	3	4
It would be a good idea to have a curfew in this community for young people under the age of 16, unless they are out with their parents	1	2	3	4
Religion's influence is increasing in Canadian life	1	2	3	4
What's right or wrong is a matter of personal opinion	1	2	3	4
I feel safe at home	1	2	3	4
There are some circumstances in which a doctor would be justified in helping end a patient's life	1	2	3	4
Birth control information should be available to teens who want it	1	2	3	4
We need to worry about our own country and let the rest of the world take care of itself	1	2	3	4
Homosexuals are entitled to the same rights as other Canadians	1	2	3	4
A person should retire at 65, regardless of health	1	2	3	4
Everything's relative	1	2	3	4
The Young Offenders Act needs to be toughened	1	2	3	4
I want a home like the one I grew up in	1	2	3	4
Canada's uncertain future makes it hard to plan for the future	1	2	3	4

[70]

17. **Which of the following best describes how you feel about politics?**

1 I am interested in politics and take an active part   3 Politics doesn't interest me very much
2 I am interested in politics, but do not take an active part   4 Politics doesn't really interest me at all

18. **HOW IMPORTANT do you think the following are to CANADIANS in general?**

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important
Honesty	1	2	3	4
Family life	1	2	3	4
Concern for others	1	2	3	4
A comfortable life	1	2	3	4
Spirituality	1	2	3	4
Being a Canadian	1	2	3	4

[77]

19. **WHO, in your opinion, is the greatest *American* of all time?**

1 _____   2 No one comes to mind   [4 1-2]

20. **There's always been controversy about how parents should treat their teenagers when, in their mind, their sons and *daughters* have done something wrong.**

What kind of response do *you yourself* think is generally the most appropriate and effective?

1 Taking away privileges   4 Physical discipline
2 Being grounded   5 A discussion without discipline
3 Being "given a good talking to"   6 _____

21. **Concerning drugs in Canada:**

How often do you yourself...	Weekly or More	Once or Twice A Month	Less Than Once A Month	Never
Smoke cigarettes	1	2	3	4
Drink beer, wine or other alcohol	1	2	3	4
Smoke marijuana or hashish	1	2	3	4
Use other illegal drugs	1	2	3	4

22. **If you wanted to use drugs, how difficult would you say it would be for you to obtain them?**

1 Extremely difficult   3 Not very difficult   5 I don't really know
2 Fairly difficult   4 Not difficult at all

23. **What drug would you say is the most popular around here?**

1 _____   2 I don't really know   [9-10]

There has been a lot of talk about changes in morals and attitudes.

---

24. A person gives you change for something you have bought. As you walk away, you realize he/she has given you $10 more than you were supposed to receive. *Do you think you would be inclined to:*

1 Keep the $10 and keep walking
2 Go back and return the extra $10

3 It would depend on factors such as the size of the store, whether you expected to shop there again, and whether or not you knew the sales person involved

25. Do you tend to APPROVE or DISAPPROVE of people who...

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't Care Either Way
Say "sorry" when they accidentally bump into someone	1	2	3
Come to a four-way stop and proceed out of turn	1	2	3
Say "please" when they order food at a restaurant drive-through	1	2	3
Walk on a red light and make traffic wait	1	2	3
Go through a door and hold it for the person behind them	1	2	3
Park in a handicapped stall when they are not handicapped	1	2	3

26. To what extent do you APPROVE or DISAPPROVE of the following?

	Strongly Approve	Approve	Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove
Sex before marriage when people LOVE each other	1	2	3	4
Sex before marriage when people LIKE each other	1	2	3	4
It being possible to obtain a legal abortion when a female has been raped	1	2	3	4
It being possible to obtain a legal abortion for any reason	1	2	3	4
A couple, who are not married, living together	1	2	3	4
A couple having children without being married	1	2	3	4
Sexual relations between two people of the same sex	1	2	3	4
A married person having sex with someone other than their marriage partner	1	2	3	4
Consenting adults doing whatever they want sexually	1	2	3	4
Consenting teens 15 to 17 doing whatever they want sexually	1	2	3	4

27. If two people on a date like each other, do you think it is alright for them to:

	Yes, On the First Date	Yes, After A Few Dates	No
Hold hands	1	2	3
Kiss	1	2	3
Neck and pet.............................	1	2	3
Have sex.................................	1	2	3

28. Has the existence of AIDS influenced your own personal sexual habits?

1 Yes   2 No   3 No — I'm not currently sexually involved   4 No — I've never been sexually involved

29. Generally speaking, *on what do you base* your views of what is right and wrong?

_____ [33-34]

Next, we would like to ask you about some of your personal concerns.

30. How often do these common problems bother you?
[Skip those that don't apply.]

	A Great Deal	Quite A Bit	Some	Little or None
Loneliness	1	2	3	4
Pressure to do well at school	1	2	3	4
Lack of money	1	2	3	4
Boredom	1	2	3	4
So many things changing	1	2	3	4
Sex	1	2	3	4
Depression	1	2	3	4
Your height	1	2	3	4
Losing friends	1	2	3	4
Your parents' marriage	1	2	3	4
Your looks	1	2	3	4
Never seem to have enough time	1	2	3	4
Feeling you are not as good as others	1	2	3	4
Not having a girlfriend/boyfriend	1	2	3	4
Your weight	1	2	3	4
Wondering about the purpose of life	1	2	3	4
Not being understood by your parents	1	2	3	4
What you are going to do when you finish school	1	2	3	4

31. How accurately would you say the following statements describe you?

	Very Well	Fairly Well	Not Very Well	Not Well At All
I have a number of good qualities	1	2	3	4
I am well-liked	1	2	3	4
I am good-looking	1	2	3	4
I can do most things very well	1	2	3	4
I have lots of confidence	1	2	3	4
I am a good person	1	2	3	4

32. To the extent that you have disagreements with your parent(s) or guardian(s), how often do they involve the following?

	Very Often	Fairly Often	Not Very Often	Never
Money	1	2	3	4
School	1	2	3	4
Your choice of friends	1	2	3	4
Your appearance (e.g., clothes, hair)	1	2	3	4
Who you are dating	1	2	3	4
The time you come in at night	1	2	3	4
Jobs around the house	1	2	3	4
Concern about drinking	1	2	3	4
Concern about drugs	1	2	3	4
Concern about sex	1	2	3	4
Concern that you stay out of trouble	1	2	3	4
Concern about your safety (e.g., driving, violence)	1	2	3	4
Their reaction to the way you talk to them	1	2	3	4
Your questioning their authority	1	2	3	4	(72)

33. On a very personal note, much publicity has been given to a number of serious problems affecting some teens. Do you have _a close friend_ who...

	Yes	No	
Has been physically attacked at school	1	2	(5 1)
Has been a victim of gang violence	1	2	
Has been physically abused at home	1	2	
Has a severe alcohol or drug problem	1	2	
Has been sexually abused	1	2	
Has been severely depressed	1	2	
Has attempted suicide	1	2	

34. When I face a serious problem, I turn to _____ (8-9)

35. To what extent do you think about these questions?

	Often	Sometimes	No Longer	Never Have	
How did the world come into being?	1	2	3	4	[10]
What is the purpose of life?	1	2	3	4	
How can I experience happiness?	1	2	3	4	
Why is there suffering in the world?	1	2	3	4	
What happens after death?	1	2	3	4	
Is there a God or Supreme Being?	1	2	3	4	

36. Do you believe:

	Yes, I Definitely Do	Yes, I Think So	No, I Don't Think So	No, I Definitely Do Not	
In ESP (extrasensory perception)	1	2	3	4	
In astrology	1	2	3	4	
In life after death	1	2	3	4	
In heaven	1	2	3	4	
In hell	1	2	3	4	
In angels	1	2	3	4	
In near-death experiences	1	2	3	4	
God exists	1	2	3	4	
That Jesus was the Divine Son of God	1	2	3	4	
Some people have psychic powers enabling them to predict future events	1	2	3	4	
You personally have experienced an event before it happened (precognition)	1	2	3	4	
Some things seem more than just coincidence	1	2	3	4	
You have experienced God's presence	1	2	3	4	
We can have contact with the spirit world	1	2	3	4	
Miraculous healing sometimes occurs	1	2	3	4	
God or a higher power cares about you	1	2	3	4	[31]

37. Please complete this sentence: *"In my mind, a spiritual person is someone who...*_____

[Skip if you have no particular view] _____*"*

38. Do you see yourself as having spiritual needs?   1 Yes   2 No   [34]

> **IF YES:**
>
> Which of the following best describes you?
> 1 I see little connection between my spirituality and what goes on in other religious groups
> 2 I prefer to share my spirituality with people close to me
> 3 Actually, I keep my spirituality pretty much to myself

39. To what extent do you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Doesn't Apply
Life has meaning beyond what we ourselves give to it	1	2	3	4	5
How we live will influence what happens to us after we die ...	1	2	3	4	5
Somehow, some day injustices will be made right	1	2	3	4	5
My closest friends are interested in spirituality	1	2	3	4	5
I myself am committed to Christianity or to another world faith	1	2	3	4	5
I'd be open to more involvement with religious groups if I found it to be worthwhile	1	2	3	4	5

40. In the future, do you anticipate having any of the following carried out for you by a minister, priest, rabbi, or some other religious figure?

	Yes	No	
A wedding ceremony	1	2	
A funeral	1	2	
A birth-related ceremony (e.g., baptism, christening)	1	2	[44]

Finally, we would like to ask some questions about your background.

This information will help us to understand how responses fit into teenage lives.

---

41. In what country were you born? _____ [45-46]

    IF OUTSIDE CANADA:

        In what year did you come to Canada? _____

42. Were your parents born outside of Canada?　　*Mother:* 1 Yes　2 No　　*Father:* 1 Yes　2 No

43. Where are you presently living ?

    1 on a farm   3 in a town or city of under 30,000 people   5 in a city of 100,000-400,000
    2 rural non-farm area   4 in a city of 30,000-99,000   6 in a city of over 400,000

44. How many times have you changed residences in the past 5 years?　　0　　1　　2　　3 or more

45. Do you fluently speak: 1 English and French   3 French only
                         2 English only   4 Other _____

46. How old were you on your last birthday?   _____

47. What grade/year of your program are you in?   _____

48. Have you ever dropped out of school?   1 Yes   2 No

49. How many brothers and sisters do you have?   _____

    IF ONE OR MORE: How many are YOUNGER than you? _____

50. Are you: 1 Male   2 Female

51. What is your cultural heritage (e.g., French, English, Chinese)?

_____ [62-65]

52. What race are you? _____

53. Do you have a job during the school year?   1 Yes   2 No

    IF YES:

    Approximately how many HOURS A WEEK do you work?
        1 Less than 5   3 11-15   5 19-30   7 over 40
        2 5-10   4 16-18   6 31-40

[68]

54. Are your biological father and mother currently:

1 Married to each other
2 No longer married to each other (divorced or separated)
3 Other *(please indicate)* _____

55. Who are you presently living with?

1 Mother and father
2 Mother and stepfather
3 Father and stepmother
4 Mother and her male partner
5 Father and his female partner
6 Mother only
7 Father only
8 Other *(please specify)* _____

_____

56. What kind of work does your father (or male guardian) normally do?

_____   [71-74]

57. What kind of work does your mother (or female guardian) normally do?

_____   [75-78]

58. What is the highest level of education that your PARENTS (or guardians) have COMPLETED?

	Your Mother	Your Father	
Less than high school	1	2	[6.1]
High school	1	2	
Trade school or business school.	1	2	
A university degree	1	2	
A graduate university degree	1	2	
(such as a master's or doctorate)			

59. What is YOUR general religious preference, along with that of your PARENTS (or guardians)?

	You	Your Mother	Your Father
Protestantism	1	1	1
Roman Catholicism	2	2	2
Judaism	3	3	3
Buddhism	4	4	4
Hinduism	5	5	5
Islam	6	6	6
Sikhism	7	7	7
Native Religion	8	8	8
None	9	9	9
OTHER	0	0	0
(please specify)	_____	_____	_____

IF YOUR PREFERENCE IS PROTESTANTISM:

What specific denomination? _____   [10]

60. How would you describe your HEALTH?   1 Excellent   2 Good   3 Fair   4 Poor

61. Are you currently on a diet to reduce weight?   1 Yes   2 No

62. Do you have...

a permanent tattoo ....   1 Yes   2 No

a body piercing (other than ear) ....   1 Yes   2 No

63. All in all, would you say you are:

1 Very happy   3 Not too happy
2 Pretty happy   4 Not happy at all   [15]

As you look to the future...

64. How much education, in total, do you expect you will eventually get?

1 High school
2 Some vocation/commercial college/CEGEP (Quebec)
3 Complete vocational/commercial college/CEGEP

4 Some university
5 Graduate from university
6 I don't expect to finish high school

65. Do you expect to:

	Yes	No
Get the job you want when you graduate	1	2
Pursue a career	1	2
Get married	1	2
Eventually stay home and raise your children	1	2
Own your own home	1	2
Be involved in your community	1	2
Have to work overtime in order to get ahead	1	2
Travel extensively outside of Canada	1	2
Be more financially comfortable than your parents	1	2
Stay with the same partner for life	1	2
Stay with the same career for life	1	2
See the national debt paid off in your lifetime	1	2

[28]

66. When you think of "a good job," how important do you view the following features?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important At All
It pays well	1	2	3	4
Gives me a feeling of accomplishment	1	2	3	4
It allows me to make most of the decisions myself	1	2	3	4
Other people are friendly and helpful	1	2	3	4
There is little chance of being laid off	1	2	3	4
The work is interesting	1	2	3	4
There is a chance for advancement	1	2	3	4
It adds something to other people's lives	1	2	3	4

67. How many children, if any, would you like to have?   0   1   2   3   4   5   6 or more

68. Please complete the following:

"If I could live in any COUNTRY, I would live in _____."

"If I could live in any PROVINCE, I would live in _____."

69. What ONE WORD would you use to describe your feelings about the future?

_____

70. What ONE THING would you like to accomplish in your lifetime?

_____

[44-45]

Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in Project Teen Canada 2000.

**You have played an important part
in helping us to understand Canadian youth.**

Please use this space for any additional comments you would like to make.

APPENDIX G – Environic's On-Line Social Values Survey

Environics 3SC Survey

Please answer the questions below to the best of your ability before
moving on to the social values survey.

Demographics

Are you:

[Male ▼]

Enter age in years:

[ ]

What is the highest level of education you have attained?

[Some Elementary ▼]

Present employment status?

[Working full-time ▼]

As a rule, what is your main occupation when you are working?

[Professional ▼]

Do you operate a business from your home?

[Yes ▼]

Are you:

[Married ▼]

Which of the following categories best describes the situation of the people living in your
household (by couple, we mean husband and wife, or common-law)?

[A couple without any children at home ▼]

And which amount best corresponds to your household annual income, before taxes?

[Under $10,000 ▼]

Which language do you most often personally speak at home?

[English ▼]

In what region of Canada do you live (you may report living outside Canada, if this is true
for you, at the end of the list of choices)?

[Atlantic Provinces ▼]

What is the approximate size of the community in which you live?

[Less than 5,000 people ▼]

What is your Canadian postal code?

[ ]

How did you hear about this survey?

[Read one of Michael Adam's books that directed me here ▼]

Environics 3SC Survey

For each of the following statements, indicate whether you **totally agree,
agree somewhat, disagree somewhat** or **totally disagree** by clicking on
the circle under the heading corresponding **to your opinion**.

Page 1 of 5

Questions:	Totally Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Totally Disagree
I definitely have contact with people who come from all kinds of social classes and backgrounds.	◉	O	O	O
Young people today have too much freedom and not enough discipline.	◉	O	O	O
An unmarried girl of 18 should not have sexual relations.	◉	O	O	O
I hate new, unforeseen situations.	◉	O	O	O
I am prepared to pay more for products that are a bit different from those one sees all over.	◉	O	O	O

Questions:	Totally Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Totally Disagree
I like showing foreigners that, in many ways, we are stronger and smarter than they are.	◉	O	O	O
I like to put myself in another person's shoes and to imagine how I would have felt in his/her place.	◉	O	O	O
I like to touch and feel things. For me, it's not enough just	O	O	O	O

The triumph of mankind is to be able to organize everything, to plan, to anticipate all.
○   ○   ○   ○

I would never buy products or services from a company if I knew that they did business in countries that violate human rights.
○   ○   ○   ○

To spend, to buy myself something new, is for me one of the greatest pleasures in life.
○   ○   ○   ○

Questions:	Totally Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Totally Disagree
My province or my region are very important to me.	○	○	○	○
Even on vacation, I like to maintain regular contact with my duties or obligations back home.	○	○	○	○
I wish I could slow down the pace of my life.	○	○	○	○
It is important to me that people admire the things I own.	○	○	○	○
My religious beliefs are very important to me.	○	○	○	○
Taking care of the home and kids is as much man's work as woman's work.	○	○	○	○

Questions:	Totally Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Totally Disagree
I get a great deal of pleasure from doing simple things like looking after plants or taking care of my home.	○	○	○	○
In fact, I don't really need a lot of money to live the kind of	○	○	○	○

money, that's nice,
but I can manage
without it.

next page

Environics 3SC Survey

Please respond to each of the following questions twice.

First, indicate whether the idea or activity stated is very important, fairly important, or not particularly important, **as far as you are concerned.**

Second, indicate whether that same idea or activity is becoming more and more important to you, is becoming less and less important to you, or whether its importance to you has not changed."

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	1st response As far as I am concerned this is...			2nd response As far as I am concerned this is...		
Ideas/Activities	very important	fairly important	not particularly important	becoming more and more important	becoming less and less important	importance has not changed
To have a home as well-equipped and furnished as that of certain people I know.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
To try new products, new places for vacation, or new foods, just for the pleasure of the novelty.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
For me to look good.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
To experience emotions and feelings as intensely as possible.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○

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Please choose between each pair of statements presented below.

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Questions:	I prefer
If I put money aside, it would be mainly:	
To buy myself something I want.	◉
or	
To safeguard my future.	○
Which of these two opinions about money do you hold?	
Money is for making and saving.	◉
or	
Money is for spending and circulating.	○
I think:	
That young people should be taught to obey authority.	◉
or	
That young people should be taught to question authority.	○
On government funding for health care:	
It is good that the government uses tax dollers to provide health care insurance for everyone.	○
or	
It is sensible for the government to use tax dollars to provide health care insurance for lower income people only. Higher income people should buy their insurance privately.	◉

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Here are a number of statements that describe different types of people.
For each statement indicate whether you feel **very close**, **fairly close**,
fairly remote or **very remote** from this type of person.

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Questions:	Very Close	Fairly Close	Fairly Remote	Very Remote
Creative, imaginative people.	◉	○	○	○
People who are not affected by the reactions of others and who never show their emotions.	◉	○	○	○
People who put their family above everything else.	◉	○	○	○

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For each of the following statements, indicate whether you **totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat** or **totally disagree** by clicking on the circle under the heading corresponding **to your opinion**.

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Questions:	Totally Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Totally Disagree
I may change my opinion completely, even on things that are very important to me.	O	O	O	O
I get pleasure out of letting myself go along with an impulse or passing emotions.	O	O	O	O

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