

JAMES FOWLER: PATHWAY TO THE MATURING OF THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW BY REV. DR GEOFFREY CHEONG PHD

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Pathway to the Maturing of the Spiritual Journey, by James Fowler:
An Analytical Review by Dr Geoffrey Cheong PhD

Introduction

This book is essentially an exploration into spirituality, but it is arranged as an examination of developmental psychology for that is the story of humanity. Spirituality must be seen through the eyes as this story from birth to death.

I have outlined the story as spoken of by Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg, but the primary story is about James Fowler and his story of Faith Development. He sets the scene for spirituality.

Whereas the stages of development are the story of humanity, they grow through the stages of life, maturing as they progress. The story of spirituality is the combining of states of consciousness with every progressive moment of the journey of development. This display of energy from the states of consciousness is what motivates the movement. The states of consciousness I have outlined are trust, love, faith, the arts, the unconscious, the dream world, and the divine mystery.

It is the combined interaction of stages of development with the states of consciousness which is the story of spirituality. But first some basic questions about life and the question of revelation.

Chapter 1 - Creation

To what degree does the story of evolution and the human life story carry insights for the purpose of enlightening us to the way to live? Put another way, is the knowledge of creation and human life so random and meaningless that it is irrelevant when humans search for an understanding of the better ways of living? On the other hand, is it possible that creation itself is so formed that it can be understood as part of the myriad forms of divine language created by a revelatory God committed to embracing his creatures so lovingly that they will be drawn toward him into a sacred unity by the journey of living? Traditionally this would come under the umbrella of Natural theology.

Through the years, humans have determined different responses to these questions. The following are some postulated conclusions.

1. Creation is a hologram creating the illusion of life with nothing real other than a dream-like state emanating from a great distant mind.
2. Creation is a divinely self-revealing display of the being of all that is. The sublime language of the Logos (word) Pneuma (Spirit) in creative form.

As the human mind continues its research into deeper understanding of the intricate complexities of the self-perpetuating planet, we learn of a continuously creative drama ever unfolding with expanding clarity. The great body of knowledge describing the evolving history of the planet can be seen to carry similar traits observed in the developing life cycle of humans.

This paper will explore such questions I have raised and paint a picture that supports the second option of the listed above. Creation is a divinely self-revealing display of the being of all that is speaking the sublime language of the Logos (word) and Pneuma (Spirit) in creative form. St. John established the philosophical foundation for the approach that sees all is the divine language of the Almighty, whether it speaks of the formation of creation or the 'story of Jesus of Nazareth'

In the beginning was the word (Logos), and the word (Logos) was with God, and the word was God. (Jn 1:1)

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. (Jn 1:3)

In him was life, (pneuma) and the life was the light of men.....

The word (Logos) became flesh and made his dwelling amongst us.

We have seen his glory, glory as of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (Jn 1:14)

The creative force of being is the language of the ultimate reality. The word or logos and spirit speaks of the rational intelligence and ordering wisdom, both central to the creative gestations of being. The story of both creation and the human Jesus speak the language of the same source of being, the logos. All that is, is a unity, creation and human life are of the one creative gestation of being.

I will seek to explain an understanding of life that illustrates how creation is intended to enlighten us with its' purposes so affording us the opportunity to grow and mature toward the fulfillment of being. It is a journey of love created by a loving divine being who extends self in a myriad of creative expressions for the purpose of sharing the experience of God-ness with all creation and its creatures. Its self-revelatory expressions in creative form are of such a nature, the experience of life makes knowledge available to those eager to pursue the journey to its intended fulfilment.

My method is to reflect upon the insights outlined by those involved in the field of developmental psychology. While I am not personally qualified as a psychologist, I read of their work with great interest from the perspective of the theologian. I believe their insights into human experience are of enormous importance to shaping the spiritual way in the twenty-first century.

Time

History and the life cycle are the outcome of time. Throughout the process of time, life progresses in a dynamic display of interactive relationality.

In recent times the notion of planet Earth as an integrated living organism was made popular by [James Lovelock](#), in *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*;

The hypothesis proposes that living organisms and inorganic material are part of a [dynamical system](#) that shapes the [Earth's biosphere](#), and maintains the Earth as a fit environment for life. In some Gaia theory approaches, the Earth itself is viewed as an organism with self-regulatory functions. Further books by Lovelock and others popularized the [Gaia Hypothesis](#), which was embraced to some extent by [New Age](#) environmentalists as part of the heightened awareness of environmental concerns of the 1990s.¹

¹ Wikipedia (accessed).

Scientific theory through its Quantum insights has provided the integrity to such a concept and made this understanding particularly clear for the enquiring mind.

Time is an essential reality for the dynamically unfolding story of planetary history and the human life cycle process. Creation never stops being creative and continuously so for it to fulfil its historically shaped journey. Time ensures that life is never the same. At some levels slow and imperceptibly changing to the human mind, such as a glacier, while at other levels it is at a furious speed, such as that displayed by the approximate 80,000 airplanes criss-crossing the skies per day. We live within these extreme examples. The new is always arriving. In the life cycle the aging process ensures that we are never exactly the same as yesterday while living in a context which is similarly new with each passing day. Hence, the reality of time suggests creation has a purpose of keeping us daily challenged, lest we settle to remain stagnant and the same for ever, year after year, decade after decade and generation after generation. It is as if we are like sailing ships on the 'sea of life' with responsibility for managing the continuously changing environmental surrounds caught in the frantic variability of life shaped by time. Yet the experienced sailor may discover the peace of inner stillness which speaks of the eternal unity when discovering the harmony with all that is.

A Process

Twentieth century theologian and scientist Teilhard de Chardin captured the essence of the creative and purposeful process of creation when he described that all is moving in an apparent trajectory. Louise M. Savoury describes de Chardin's one essential law as 'attraction, connection, complexity, and consciousness',² to illustrate this process

Rupert Sheldrake speaks of the orderly and unified operation of reality with an emphasis upon the prime direction of the unfolding story of creation which he calls a holarchy. The basic understanding of holarchy is built upon the orderly joining of any entity with another. The entity is that which he calls a holon. The nature of a holon is that it is complete in itself but attracted to other like holons which by joining together, forms a new advanced holon. The newly formed advanced holon still includes the reality of the former less complex holon even though this newer holon is greater than the sum of the prior holons. This process of the formation of ever more complex holons is the holarchy which Sheldrake refers to as the

² Savary. L M., Teilhard de Chardin *The Divine Milieu Explained* ((New York, NJ, : Paulist Press)Savary. Louis M., *Teilhard De Chardin the Divine Milieu Explained* (New York Mahwah, NJ.: Paulist Press, 2007), 29.

structure of creation. It is comprehensively described by the extensive writing of Ken Wilber and reflects in different detail the process of de Chardin.

In his writings Wilber outlines the implications of this process in historical language. Creation itself is the outcome of an ‘involutionary’ process describing the expression of ‘origin’ (to use Jean Gebser’s term)³ producing ever more complex and dense outcomes, having come from the causal, to the subtle and eventually the gross state of matter. At this point of ‘Big Bang’ the cycle begins its evolutionary return to the causal origin, Wilber continues describing the trajectory process of evolution through the eras of physio-sphere, bio-sphere and noos-sphere. The latter being the era of human life which in its turn witnesses to its own evolutionary story of the mind. Physically the emergence of the three domains of the brain, the reptilian the limbic and neo-cortex ground human life in the gross domain of existence. Upon this gross level of complex brain formation, the story of the mind’s consciousness develops through successive stages. Beginning with the archaic or primitive mind, we see in time the dominance of perception well described by magic consciousness, which in its time gives way to the dominance of mythic consciousness before the emergence of the dominant mental-rational era of the past two millennia. Of great importance to correlating this story with the work of developmental psychologists is to note that the mind’s consciousness is spoken of by a range of scholars as entering a new era of integral consciousness through the current centuries. The mutational like shift from one evolutionary stage to the next is prompted by a time of ‘crisis’ for existing societies where the known system of order and meaning no longer meet the conditions of the new challenges emerging across the evolving story of history. A new era emerges via the awakening to a new vision of life that better enables the future orderliness and meaning for society. It is important to note that each successive evolutionary development of the brain always enfolds the older in the ever complexifying development of the mind’s consciousness.

It is the observation of scholars such as Ken Wilber who identify the developing story of humans through the life cycle while noting how its trajectory bears a similarity to the evolving stages of the human story down through the cosmic history. The stories are compatible. Emerging from the waters of earth, earliest life forms learnt the way to walk and stand, to speak and relate, analyse, review, imagine and create as life necessitated or provided opportunity. With the progressive development an understanding of life broadens to the point

³ Jean Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, trans. Noel Barstad with Algis Mickunas (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985).

of the universal or cosmic for those who travel the extensive journey of the mind accessible to humans.

Both these streams of the historical and the human stories attest to a revelatory nature of the creation. In its subtle ways it is ultimately providing a friendly relationship between the cosmic and the particular. By self-revealing its myriad truths through its natural processes across creation and specifically within the human story all will accomplish the prime purpose of growing into the fullness of being truly at one with the sublime display of a wonderful context, 'Being' itself. Creation's subtle revelatory language is both friendly and respectful of the human role within its place within creation for it knows the totality of human potentiality and what is necessary for it to fulfil its purpose.

The story of history and that of the life cycle have a compatible story. In the theory of de Chardin the process of attraction, connection, complexity, concludes with consciousness. From its original awakening in individual knowing it journeys to the completion of collective consciousness, which he speaks of as 'Omega'. The collective fulfilment of the human story arrives at its' Christic completion. The story of the life cycle begins with the awakening of babe to its initial consciousness and traverses the years and stages of development toward its fulfilment in a universal awareness. The story of creation's history and the individuals lifetime journey mirror the theme of individual consciousness. Creation's journey has godly intent,

At the heart of this understanding is the importance of understanding that to fulfil the divine purposes innate within the story of creation and humanity that human 'free-will' is maintained. Free will is necessary to achieve the ultimate goal of existence. God-ness must always be freely chosen. This explains the apparent random nature of creation, but it is in fact a "random ordillessness".

Chapter 2 - Developmental theory

Development theory has flourished in the past century with the increased belief in the importance of understanding human experience. From the deep exploration of the mind through analytical psychology the science of the mind expanded its field of exploration to include the patterns of development though the life span. Way before this popularisation of psychology of the past century the notion of a developing mind was of interest to some even

if from a different perspective. Notable examples came from those involved in spiritual direction, whether from either the Eastern or Western world. As far back as the sixteenth century well known examples from the western world include the paradigm of spirituality presented in the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* by St. John of the Cross and the works of St. Teresa of Avila in *The Interior Castle*. The flourishing of this field of psychological knowledge in recent times has been prolific. Contemporary work has generally focused on specific fields, generally spoken of as a stream of development⁴. In his book, *Integral Psychology*, Ken Wilber⁵ has constructed a series of charts examining over one hundred such streams one can detect in the functioning of the mind over the course of life, a number of them developed from his own extensive work.

Some developmental scholars of particular prominence in the western world include Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, Robert Selman, Lawrence Kohlberg and James Fowler. Piaget explored cognitive development, Erikson a stream referred to as the psychosocial, Selman social perspective taking, Kohlberg moral judgement and Fowler specialising in faith development. Fowler's work is the focus of this paper but not without significant contributions from the others for in developmental psychology all streams are inter-related. In his book *Stages of Faith*, James Fowler builds his work on faith around the context of the other researchers listed in this paragraph. Faith will be inadequately understood if without reference to a fundamental understanding of other primary realms of life, such as cognitive, social or moral development. These are commonly recognised by people as central to fundamental human endeavour.

Fowler examines the work of Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erickson by constructing an imagined panel discussion between the three of which he is the convener to establish the conditions that give rise to the formation of stages. He is looking for a foundational understanding of what is the primary structure of our developing experience that creates a new level of cognitive operation. He speaks of finding the "structures of the whole"⁶ that give rise to the

⁴ A stream of development refers to a specific field of human experience or capacity traced through the life journey. Examples in this paper will reference in particular Jean Piaget's cognitive development, Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development, Erik Erikson's psychosocial development, Robert Selman's social perspective taking and most specifically James Fowler's Faith development.

⁵ Wilber, Ken, *Integral Psychology Consciousness, Spirit, Psychology, Therapy*. (Boston, Massachusetts.: Shambhala Publication, Inc. , 2000), 197.

⁶ J Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995), 44.

development of each new stage. With reference to epigenetics, he delves into the biological contribution to the emergence of stages. He writes,

I have found the biological notion of epigenetic stages helpful in trying to convey how I want to build on and extend Freud's introduction of the psychosexual stage concept. Epigenesis combines an understanding of development as the unfolding or emergence, on schedule, of new organ modes or capacities with an additional dimension.⁷

He groups the cognitive development of Piaget with the moral development of Kohlberg as both building their stage development upon such a biological foundation. This biological base for development means that they are formed of the structures of thought and reasoning.

Fowler writes.

I think it is clear from what each of you has said that Professors Piaget and Kohlberg focus their stage analyses on the structures of thought and reasoning in their respective domains. Let us designate this approach as the "structural-development" school.⁸

He contrasts this with the psychoanalytic approach of Erikson.

Professor Erikson, on the other hand, attends more broadly to the development of personality as a whole, in interaction with the persons, institutions and cultural meanings at hand.⁹

Fowler speaks of Erikson standing in the psychoanalytic tradition of Freud and Jung. It would seem that an understanding of stages draws upon both sources, sometimes most influenced by the one then at other times the other.

Fowler explains further,

Professor Erikson's "eight ages" of the life cycle, as he has pointed out, correlate closely with biological maturation and chronological age – particularly in the first five stages. The structural developmentalists, on the other hand, have affirmed in other writings that their stages, while dependent upon maturation and time are not tied to them. Movement from one structural-developmental stage to another is not automatic or inevitable.¹⁰

What becomes the very point of this study is that some streams of development are progressive through life and each person must deal with the challenges that subsequently arise. However, as Fowler notes, while equally as appropriate for Piaget, Kohlberg

⁷ Ibid., 47.

⁸ Ibid., 50.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

emphasises that for moral development most people stay at the conventional realm and fail to grow to fulfil the potential of human life.

...many American adults do not attain Piaget's formal operational stages of reasoning. Kohlberg's research has consistently shown that a majority of persons in this society are best described by the conventional stages of moral judgement. One can "arrest" or equilibrate in one of Piaget or Kohlberg's intermediate stages. Yet the person who so arrests, in cognitive or moral developmental terms, still must meet the life challenges or crises described in Erikson's stages. We might say that the psychosocial crises comes, ready or not."¹¹

The stages that each of these researchers has outline bear considerable compatibility with one another and Fowler has outlined a comparative chart of the stages as each describes.¹² This chart works on generally acknowledged stages recognised by the population in general, Infancy (0 – 1 ½), Early Childhood (2 – 6), Childhood (7 – 12), Adolescence (13 -21), Young Adulthood (25 – 40), Adulthood (35 – 60), Maturity (60 -). Closer examination draws out the unique qualities of each theorist. By stepping back and observing the full span of stages a major theme emerges. Up to the adult stage the journey is primarily about establishing basic skills, identity, and place in life. For each theory the arrival of the adult experience generally places the person in the stage regarded as the conventional, that is, the commonly held behaviour and beliefs of their society. Fowler makes the point that conventional ways may reflect the smaller socio-grouping of a person's greatest sense of identity. A truckie may embrace the general conventional life and belief of other truckies with whom they mix. Farmers, footballers, movie stars, business executives may settle for the conventions of their peers. Beyond such local examples, generally the primary identity may reflect the overall National cultural conventions or their religious conventional beliefs. From this time of life for those who move forward they will begin the journey toward broader human perceptions and ultimately the universal and integral consciousness within which each developmental researcher seeks to describe the ultimate for that stream of human endeavour. This second stage of growth with its interior reflection is outlined by Fr William Barry and Fr William Connolly in their book *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, literally as the Second Journey. Carol Gilligan in her book, *In a Different Voice*, captures the essence of the developing notion of care unfolding over the course of life, from "selfish" (egocentric), "care" (movement from self to groups – ethnocentric), "universal care" (concern for all peoples,

¹¹ Ibid., 51.

¹² Ibid., 52.

regardless of race, colour, sex, or creed – world centric), and “integrated” (where both men and women integrate the contra sexual mode – our Integral).¹³

The divide between the first two of Gilligan’s stages and the third and fourth stages highlights the shift from the self-concern and arrival at the conventional state of mind and the awakening to the second journey, the development toward the universal community.

The following summaries of stages are compiled from Fowlers descriptions. A significant amount consists of direct quotes from his work.

Infancy

To move from the general overall picture created by developmentalists, to the examination of the detail of human experience reveals important information about the rich strains of experience humans may come to know.

The neonate (newborn) life commences with a challenging separation from the relative security of the internality of pregnancy into the broader external world. Mortality rates for both mother and child indicate that it can be a time of trauma associated with the transition to independent status. Even in early months of life some speak of signs of anxiety that become part of the growing life. The initial challenge of early months is the discovery of necessary physical functions for survival. This time is often referred to as the sensorimotor stage characterised by the innate reflex reaction of limited activity such as sucking, gag reflux and finger closing and random limb movement. So begins the simple task of re-establishing trust in the prime carer and familiarising oneself with the new environment. Two psychosocial developments take place in the narcissistic infant for it to discover its ability to survive and function. The awareness of one’s dependence on the environment led by mother for meeting ones need shapes the experience of trust or mistrust as described by Erikson. The behaviour of parent in their attentiveness to baby needs, significantly influences this balance between trust and mistrust. The simplicity of a gentle and caring touch creates its own message of affection and contributes greatly to the bonding relationship. The hint of memory of what to expect emerges as baby returns to simple objects that they have valued in the past. The fluffy cat or cuddly teddy are welcomed back into their surrounds. The mind is recording and beginning to develop. Physical changes lead to further development. Teething forces different behaviour if not already appearing. The painful feelings in the mouth of arriving teeth can test

¹³ K Wilber, *The Religion of Tomorrow. A Vision for the Future of the Great Religions* (Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, Inc, 2017), Book, 205.

both mother and child as affection is tested and the relationship grows. Body, mind and relationships are all beginning their life time journey and the initial shaping of infant's experience. If all is generally positive, the seed of self-value and hope is being sown and ready to develop,

Pre-childhood

As the child approaches the age of two, newer skills develop that leads to the pre-childhood stage. This is referred to as the pre-operational or intuitive thinking experience. Language is beginning to connect with the early thought process. There is an initial awareness of the self, identified with internal feelings and emotions as mine. Language, thinking and feeling enable the beginning of socialisation yet its limit is observed in the notion of parallel play, for one cannot yet move beyond self-perception. Such play is significantly shaped by imagination as the child imitates life he or she has been witnessing.

Morality requires comparisons and this ability has not really arrived. Any suggestion of it could really only be identified as a pre-moral stage. Rightness or wrongness is dependent upon external sources, notably the parents, or bigger people and the likelihood of punishment or reward. From the perspective of the whole developing personality, two crises are developing with the emerging physical and cognitive capacities. Erikson describes these as the developing sense of autonomy verses an emerging sense of shame and doubt. The conflict is perceived as a crisis. By the ages of four to six when motor and rational skills have further developed the crisis will be shaped as initiative verses guilt. Through this period the freer movement creates the possibility of going too far, or sometimes not far enough. Toilet training has created the notion of holding on or letting go. This is replicated with the holding of drink or food in the mouth to digest or spit. Knowing one's name fits well with the concept of 'I' 'my' and 'mine' and so well expressed in the frequent proclamations of 'no'. Yet the young child is still small and often overwhelmed in comparison to the size of others, whether older sibling or adult. The new freedom does not remove the parental authority or larger persons stronger will. Shame and doubt can be magnified to often when corrected by over-zealous larger people. The place of parents to create a positive and encouraging environment for the young child's growth is so important. Their strengthening ego is important for developing a positive self and the budding of 'will' which is vital for moral reasoning. All in all, their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social dimension is fostering their sense of autonomy. This perception of self is vital for growth with initiative so vital for future positive development whereas guilt is such an inhibitor for ongoing initiative. Erikson identifies this

tension as the crisis he refers to as initiative versus guilt. One area so susceptible to a bad experience at this time comes with the recognition of genitalia. Boys and girls have differences and 'I' have my own. It introduces a new challenging component into the social relationship perspective.

If right and wrong are the indicators of the use of 'will' they also impact on the ability to take one's developing initiative to explore, sometimes encouraging yet sometimes beyond the bounds that are acceptable to parents. The only determinant of direction is the memory of a parental voice resounding in the child's mind and the consequent reward or punishment. This stage certainly needs the appropriate guidance from wise, caring and understanding parents to both know the way to encourage or restrict the developing young child who is just beginning to live in the wider world.

Childhood

Young children keep growing physically and their motor skills develop and even expand with significant dexterity. Along with this development from the approximate age of seven there is significant transformation in the nature of thought patterns. Previously dominated by egocentrism thinking gives way to the first signs of truly logical operations of thought. The past magical explanations and restricted capacity for sustaining processes which can also be reversed are starting to be overcome. The new stage is referred to as concrete operational thinking. It is well grounded in the notion of a reality observed by the senses. A new system of stable and internally integrated schemata of mental transformation has to emerge.

Patterned acts of transformation can be understood across a broad range of possible objects to be applied in generalised circumstances. Operational logic can display order, predictable or temporary processes. Arithmetic is now learnt, understood, and applied. The notion of size is comprehended, such as with the example of reshaping a plasticine ball. A clearer understanding of a larger universe means that the child more clearly differentiates the self from others. Operational structures of space, time and causality shape their perception of the world. The notion of a story makes more realistic sense while not dependent upon magical operations. An adequate array of mental tools is now preparing the way for an early display of social perspective and morality as the child has a stronger grasp of right and wrong.

This stage that runs across the elementary education years from approximately 7 to 12 continues to bear witness to the development of the child's operational logic. While it remains concrete it does become increasingly sure and sophisticated. It continues to deal with

objects that it can see or engage with face to face so to speak. However, it does not reflect upon the recalled perception as much as it will in the future. This will change significantly in the next stage.

Moral and social development do require logical operation. However, it does require more, hence, the child of this age continues at the pre-conventional level although within the second stage referred to as *Instrumental Exchange*. Opportunities for taking the perspective of others, for facing and conversing about situations of moral conflict and hearing of others' opinions are some of the capacities necessary for new structures of moral judgement and social perspective taking. These develop in the conventional stage of the adolescent. In stage two the child is still as egocentric as the earlier stage one, pre-conventional level called heteronomous morality. It could be argued that at stage two egocentricity is stronger than stage one as the child is more aware of the social context they live within. He or she knows to get others to cooperate in fulfilling one's goals, one must be prepared to cooperate. Morality is a reflection of fairness and can be characterised as an eye for an eye proposition. Cognitively the mind still deals with face-to-face situations but has not developed to generalise for broader generalised situations. At this age the child relies very much on rules, guidelines, and directives for their level of moral judgement. While the 7 to 12 year old has not developed the cognitive capacities to truly display a genuine morality, but as in other domains of life they have certainly been discovering the earliest skills that will be necessary for their life of adulthood. Erikson sees the industrious attitude of the young school age child and summarises this period as typified by the crisis of 'industry versus inferiority'. The development is witnessed across the growth of personality, socially learning the disciplines of group life and psychologically the expression and integration of emotions. The danger is the potential of failure and if not handled well by the supporting adult community can negatively impact upon the attempts of the industrious child with the negative consequence of leading to the deeply embedded experience of inferiority.

Adolescence

The emergence of adolescence for the teenager is grounded in the very obvious epigenetic signs of body development. The teenager encounters body change that has all the hallmarks of adulthood. If through the earlier years of growth, the child was developing tools and skills in preparation for the adult life, the teenager is now able to enter adulthood with adult responsibilities and capacity to reproduce. Female menstruation and masculine ejaculation of sperm enables a young teenage couple to physically bring new life into the world. In a

broader sense the body displays numerous associated changes. Body shape and muscular development, breasts, and pubic hair. Hormones abound. Major life cycle changes are taking place. Significant body change is accompanied by a good deal of emotional disequilibrium and disruption.

The emerging new cognitive structures provide markedly increased capacity, flexibility, and stability. What stands out cognitively is the capacity for reflective personal engagement which arises with the structural thought pattern referred to as 'formal operational thinking'. The development of each particular former stage becomes the object of each succeeding stage as it follows on. Initially the sensorimotor stage passing to the next preoperational thinking stage, before moving on to the stage of concrete operational thought, with ensuing development eventually leading to the stage identified as formal operational thought. This latter development is highly significant for the earlier mental tools gradually readies the child to enter the initial stages of adulthood. This is now arriving with formal operational thought. It could be described as thinking about thinking. It can manipulate not just objects but the far more complex mental notion of concepts. Given a task the formal operational capacity enables the young adolescent to formulate processes that both separate and link activity to reach a verifiable conclusion. This is referred to as 'hypothetico-deductive'¹⁴ thinking. 'These processes will further develop with the capacity for making implications, disjunctions, and exclusions, which belong to propositional operations, and which presuppose a combinatorial system and co-ordinations of inversion and reciprocity.'¹⁵ Thus the adolescent is significantly transformed from childhood concrete operations to the formal operations characteristic of adulthood. Now able to conceive of the possibility of an infinity of perspectives on a problem, the adolescent shows both a marked improvement in taking the perspectives of others even though they can also be distorted.

If childhood had learnt to reflect on their world just from within their own experience the adult can step outside of their own immediate experience and review their circumstance from a more dispassionate perspective. Formal operations enable the adolescent to construct an understanding of their personal past and to anticipate their personal future. With such development the adolescent will be developing their own sense of unique life story and personality.

¹⁴ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 71.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

This contribution by Piaget lays the foundation for the development we are likely to witness within the fields of Robert Selman's social perspective taking as also with the moral judgement contribution of Lawrence Kohlberg. Such social development is significantly shaped by way of three major steps. As early as eleven one may develop a proficiency for constructing the perspective of another or others upon a third person. With the formal operational thinking developing, social perspective can develop considerably further, illustrated by the statement, "I see you seeing me, I construct the me I think you see." We may call this step, interpersonal perspective taking. If this process becomes mutual its impact upon social relations is highly significant. Even further this "third person" perspective means social interaction can become a more dispassionate perspective, inclusive of the perspectives of both the self and the other(s) but not identical with or under the control of either.

Erikson reflects upon the cognitive development described by Piaget as highly significant for the formation of identity amongst adolescent teenagers. With the ability for entering into "mutual interpersonal perspective taking" the boy or girl commonly becomes "self-conscious" in new and potentially confusing ways. In the context of a highly changing body and emergence of strong physical and emotional needs the addition of other significant relations with peers, parents, teachers, and others, means one's developing identity may find its formation tenuous. This would be especially so if the group of significant others is constructed of other insecure members and generating sometimes distorting reflections of oneself. The personality struggles of other developing adolescents can distort one's peer group influence so resulting in a closed clique grouping. The resulting outcome could mean one is on the 'in group' with other insecure personalities. On the other hand, it could mean one being locked out of another clique of which one would like to be a part of but is not welcomed. When one's own development is taking place from within highly significant internal personal developmental experiences, yet when also taking place in the significant surrounding community there are naturally numerous tensions shaping our journey.

Within the moral domain described by Kohlberg, we can now imagine how the developing formal operational development in both cognitive and social perspective domains will lead to a far higher level of moral judgement. It will mark stage three level which is described as the conventional level, most common for the general society of this stage. More precisely it is called mutual interpersonal expectations, relationships, and interpersonal conformity. In this stage three, actions are regarded as right if they conform to the expectations of one's significant others. Pleasing one's significant others is a strong motive for moral action. Such

motive is explained further by noting the expectation one has of oneself fulfilling the role one sees oneself in. 'I must be a good father; therefore, I will act accordingly,' could be described as one example. In summary, stage three moral behaviour represents a conformist mode of moral decision making. This illustrates that stage three moral judgement is still not a true societal perspective for it is shaped by face-to-face social groupings.

As previously noted for Piaget the cognitive development of formal operations expands the mind to construct a past history and imagined future. This developing sense of history is to be placed into the context of the changing body, mind, and social setting. This for Erikson is the theatre for the current developmental crisis life calls each and every human to work through. Either one has a strong enough ego to shape a positive sense of identity or is left struggling with a sense of role confusion. Strong significant peer relationships and mentoring adults are highly important for the success of the adolescent journey. If the journey proves successful Erikson sees the formation of the virtue he speaks of as fidelity. Fidelity prepares one for the necessary commitments one will be challenged to embrace in the further developed adult stage to come.

Adulthood

According to Piaget, the movement from adolescence to adulthood is related more to maturity of the existing cognitive skills rather than further cognitive development. All structures are virtually in place. He determines that the future will be serviced well by this adolescent foundation upon which experience, opportunities and maturity will build.

While different developmentalists will fine tune their categories according to their area of expertise, generally there can be described two main categories to cover the period of adulthood. Each of these categories can then be spoken of in two ways. The beginning of adulthood is identified as the conventional or stage 3 with the essential adult capacities established during the adolescent years. This stage is the initial and most common level of adult behaviour and remains so for most people throughout their life. It covers the basic behaviour of one's primary local grouping within their society. The second stage of this conventional stage is virtually a broadening of the initial stage 3. We can speak of this as stage 4. Its' degree of development emerges when adults eventually question the initial conventions or values of the way of life they had been living. They can begin to reflect upon other ways of living that they might have witnessed elsewhere. Their mind begins to reflect upon their own inner personal domain and recognise that they have other preferred ideas and

values. They shift to a way of life that they believe is more representative of who they are. It remains coupled with stage 3, for it still conforms to a way of life their new chosen group represents, it's just that their new group collectively embraces a different set of values, perceptions and behaviours. What significantly differentiates their experience from stage 3 is that they are open to acknowledging that there are other tribal groups which are valued by their people. One can conclude, 'Mine is not the only valid way of life even though it suits me and my tribe best.'

The second adult stage can be spoken of as stages 5 and 6. It is the journey toward a universal perception. The development into these categories emerges from within the previous expansion of mind we noted in stage four. If one can recognise that there are other valid ways of living, in fact that there are many ways and one can recognise some universal norms across other groups a movement toward stage 5 has begun. The maturation of the person with a developing universal perspective continues as they become more deeply drawn toward interaction with and understanding of other peoples and cultures. A stage five universal person will believe that they are enhanced by engaging others of different perspectives.

The fulfillment of the universal stage 6 is witnessed amongst those who have matured to live for the good of all people irrespective of their background or way of life. Their commitment to universal justice, rites, and freedom to the point of ultimate sacrifice characterises the highest development of human life.

This is a general pattern upon which each of the different developmentalists build their description of the growing journey apparent through adulthood. For the purposes of this paper, I continue recording the contribution particularly of Erikson and Kohlberg who describe the intricate features of their own stream of development, for the progress of development in the streams of morality and psychosocial experience can proceed beyond the cognitive structure of adulthood and may do so over the ongoing life span of many. However, once again it's worth noting that the large majority of the population remain at the conventional stage three level with little more than the basic capacity of formal operations.

Kohlberg speaks of the conventional level as when the way of life is taken as a whole for a group of people making what could be called a tribe. The whole may consist of family, group, nation or some particular interest. Combined with this perspective is the sense of loyalty to maintaining civility and cohesion within the group. Erikson would see that forming as early as adolescence the attachment to such groupings would consolidate one's identity.

This can be understood when reflecting upon the two levels of operation that was outlined in the previous paragraphs. Firstly, stage three consisting first and foremost of mutual interpersonal relations. Secondly, movement to stage four places greater emphasis upon an awareness and respect for other groupings but still connects with the importance of groupings regarded as a whole. That whole consists of a network of rules, laws and of roles and relationships constituted by them. Law and order stand out as the determinant of that which is right and wrong. It is prepared to override personal arguments if they do not honour the goal of upholding the necessary components of law and order. Kohlberg sees the challenge in determining moral action within conflict, one must move beyond one's own personal involvement and consider the impact on the society as a whole. Although civil disobedience for pursuing an even higher justice such as seeking better treatment of people or correcting laws, or societal conventions is not yet understood at level three or four but significantly advanced and meaningful at stages five and six.

With consolidation of the adolescent's search for identity, Erikson's focus upon the psychosocial development moves into a description of his understanding of adulthood. Understanding the personality identity to be well-formed the person is drawn to the next stage that seeks the experience of intimacy. Physically the sexual drive has been seeking expression for some years. Although in the earlier stage it has to be understood as part of the identity consolidation. In the truly intimate stage, it is clearly an expression of a desire to commit to the other. The most common experience is the intimacy of genitalia, although prior to such commitment this is not always the suitable outcome of an intended life commitment. Intimacy can also be reflected through ones' association with a group or cause. Commitment would also assume one having discovered the personal resources to remain loyal to ones chosen course, either individual or action.

While many set out on this journey of commitment to intimacy there is no guarantee that it will be successfully completed. Pursuit of the many rich experiences it offers is easily thwarted if not considered well. It can reveal challenges unanticipated and drive participants apart, where the one chooses to return to isolation. It is particularly sad if the resistance to deepening intimacy turns to aggression and sometimes in extreme cases destruction of what one formally pursued with desire and affection. However, should the developing relationship be a positive intermingling of emotion and physicality, then Erikson describes that the relationship will be characterised by the virtue of love.

Morality is less age dependent, and signs of high ideals can be noted coming from teenage adolescents, yet ideology of the very young is typically inconsistent. Kohlberg distinguishes such early declarations of the young from those who have experienced a great deal in life and had truly resolved and consolidated their personal identity issues outlined by Erikson. Hence the post conventional stages of four and five are open to those Erikson believes will have seen a person leave home and establish their own living circumstance. They will have physically experienced and responded well to situations of conflicting values in a context of moratorium. Further still, for truly genuine post conventional moral orientation a person must have experienced sustained care for the welfare of others and the experience of making a living with irreversible moral choices. In such cases, it can be considered that the moral judgement has been built upon a stable and consistent foundation to genuinely display the qualities of stage four or five. Kohlberg refers to stage four as the 'Social System and Conscience' it being the upper bracket of the conventional stage awaiting further development into the Post Conventional Principled Level of Stage five. This he terms as 'Social Contract, Individual Rights'. At this level persons make a clear effort to define guiding moral principles that have validity and applicability apart from the authority of the groups or people holding them and apart from the individual's own identification with these groups. Here we find the moral action oriented to human rights that exist prior to social contracts, law, or society, which under certain circumstances, justify civil disobedience or principled efforts to alter or overthrow unjust laws and social policies. Stage five would believe some values and rights are not relative and must be upheld in any society regardless of majority opinion. These include life, liberty, and freedom from personal or class oppression. In summary, stage five is oriented to overall principles of utility, committed to 'the greatest good for the greatest number'.

The moral development journey for Kohlberg culminates with stage six, 'the universal ethical principal orientation'. Adding to all before, stage six adds an operational commitment to principles of justice that can claim universal validity. Principles are the abstract, generalisable guidelines and tests by which particular actions, laws or social policies may be made or evaluated. It requires a moral imagination informed enough and detached enough from one's own interests to accurately take the perspective of every person or group affected by a policy or action being considered. Two notable examples would be Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King jnr. who facing oppression acted on universal principles of radical love and nonviolent action in the service of justice.

Erikson emphasises that development can truly only be fully understood with the theoretical synthesis of all streams to understand the interrelatedness of reason and emotion, of moral judgement and identity and of individual and society. He speaks of the final two stages of his psychosocial development. The crisis of middle adulthood he speaks of as ‘generativity verses stagnation’. He describes that the growth in intimacy can lead to an expansion of ego interests and the investment of life-energies in that which is being generated. Generativity is the readiness to care for and nurture the next generation and the life conditions and resources of all kinds that they will need to generate in their generation. The danger in this stage is stagnation. The adult who fails to find ways to contribute beyond self-interest stagnates in his or her own world and fails to make any meaningful contribution to the future. The composite virtue or ego strength that emerges in generative adults is that of care.

The crisis of old age confronts people with their life story and the attitude with which they review it. Can they respect the triumphs and disappointments as contributing to the development of the whole person? Erikson speaks of this as leading to the experience of integrity. The failure to view life in this way he refers to as the experience of despair. One fails to grasp the value of the one chance of fulfilling one’s life. The virtue that he speaks of as arising from the attitude of integrity is wisdom.

The ultimate question might be whether one has remained at the initial conventional stage for the entirety of their life or continued their pilgrimage to grow to a far greater sense of fulfilment.

Chapter 3 - The Question of Faith

When James Fowler raises the subject of faith development, he is raising a subject which does not have a uniform or agreed upon understanding. His approach is to address the subject as a human universal. He speaks of humans being ‘endowed at birth with nascent capacities for faith.’

How these capacities are activated and grow depends to large extent on how we are welcomed into the world and what kinds of environments we grow in. Faith is interactive and social; it requires community language, ritual, and nurture. Faith is also shaped by initiatives from beyond us and other people, initiatives of spirit or

grace. How these latter initiatives are recognized and imaged, or unperceived and ignored, powerfully affects the shape of faith in our lives.¹⁶

He continues, ‘In these pages I am offering a theory of growth in faith.’¹⁷ In keeping with the developmental psychologists, Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erikson, widely regarded as researchers of renown in their study of fundamental streams of human experience, he develops his own research into the universal human attitude he speaks of as faith development. In support of his description of faith as a universal human attitude he turns to the work of theologian Paul Tillich who in his book *Dynamics of Faith* of 1950 speaks of faith as a universal response to life. Fowler quotes,

Tillich challenges his readers to ask themselves what values have centering power in their lives. The “god values” in our lives are those things that concern us ultimately. Our real worship, our true devotion directs itself toward the objects of our ultimate concern. That concern may centre finally in our own ego or its extensions - work, prestige and recognition, power, and influence (or) wealth. One’s ultimate concern may be invested in family, university, nation, or church. Love, sex and a loved partner might be the passionate center of one’s ultimate concern.’¹⁸

He concludes, ‘Ultimate concern is a much more powerful matter than claimed belief in a creed or a set of doctrinal propositions.’¹⁹

Fowler finds a similar perspective in the writings of the same period by fellow theologian, Richard Niebuhr. Fowler writes;

He sees faith taking form in our earliest relationships with those who provide care for us in infancy. He sees faith growing through our experience of trust and fidelity – of mistrust and betrayal – with those closest to us. He sees faith in the shared visions and values that hold human groups together. And he sees faith at all these levels, in the search for an overarching, integrating and grounding trust in a center of value and power sufficiently worthy to give our lives unity and meaning.²⁰

He continues,

Faith, so Niebuhr and Tillich tell us, is a universal human concern... Whether we become nonbelievers, agnostics or atheists, we are concerned with how to put our lives together and with what will make life worth living.²¹

¹⁶ Ibid., xiii.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 4.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 5.

²¹ Ibid.

Fowler has had opposition to his approach from two extremes, yet both, unlike Fowler want to separate faith from general living. On the one hand, Christians had seen faith as synonymous with their faith, a special gift granted to Christians to form a relationship with the gracious love of God through Jesus Christ. Faith was not a quality to be found outside the Christian faith. On the other hand, Fowler found that many outside the religious traditions did not see that the developmental theories that he embraced were part of the general knowledge available to all people and therefore not applicable to the religious that had their own language. Fowler found such people suggesting that he should call his work something like ‘world developmental theory’. Fowler did not agree and along with other developmentalists saw all streams of developmental as inter-independent.

In my own case I likewise believe in the inter-independence of all things, which is spoken broadly of by integral scholars such as Ken Wilber who wrote prolifically of developmental theory as part of his new universal paradigm. I am writing this paper to enhance a Christian integral understanding of faithfulness. Faith has both its’ expressive manifestation as well as its root nature. For this root I describe it grounded in ego attitude. Over the life journey the ego is faced with continual challenges and opportunities which will contribute to its shape. I am arguing that there is purpose in this journey notably the re-orientation of the ego from self-centred toward total trust in the ultimate. Christians naturally speak of the ultimate as God. The universalists speak of God as the totality of all that is, so the openness that the faithful attitude seeks is to the totality of all experience. Integral theorists speak of spherical awareness mindful that faith is comprehensive in all situations. Focusing on the importance of the full journey of life the developmentalists will seek to highlight the prime opportunities at each stage encouraging faith on its pathway to full maturity. Names of people such as Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Ghandi, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jnr are typical examples of who we might think about when we consider what a person who has matured in faith might look like.

What follows is a review of the stages of development as discussed in the work of scholars mentioned in the previous section with a particular purpose of looking for the opportunities for faith development at the particular stage of life.

Infancy and Undifferential Faith. Stage 1.

Erikson speaks of the initial infancy months as the foundation for trust. As previously noted, it is well to remember the context in which this trust or seed of faith is born. It must deal with

two significantly traumatic changes and the possibility of a negative response is very real. Erikson suggests such failure would be the experience of mistrust. From the security of pregnancy, the infant must venture into the external world. In the birth event the mortality rate for both mother and child is significant to remind us of just how challenging this transition is. For the infant, to discover that one arrives safely in a world where all one's needs are still being responded to is so reassuring. The deeply imbedded memory of this first challenge of life successfully negotiated is the ideal start to a trusting faithful life. The early months of life are shaped by the sensorimotor response related to adjustment and survival. Through these months the parental devotion and faithfulness toward the baby helps consolidate the faithful attitude, albeit primarily unconscious. Through this subsequent period a second separation is gradually emerging. From breast to bottle, from female to partner, from milk to solids the world never seems to be the same, yet the new life must trust the faithfulness of the carer. How blessed to discover that life is still reliable and reassuring. Ideally the young family will negotiate this second time of change despite its potential for possible trauma. Inexperience, tiredness, and parental personality disposition will play a part of early parenting. The journey thus far is one that keeps changing. The babe must adjust. Trust has been challenged and faith is developing in this new world with its carers. Erikson speaks of the crisis of these early months of life as the challenge of trust verses mistrust. The navigation of this journey will lay a vital foundation for the newborn's propensity for faith throughout life. Fowler has asked how is faith given birth? In answer it is given freely as birth itself. Not by some action of accomplishment, but by enduring a natural journey. Faith is triggered by experience.

Intuitive-Projective Faith. Stage 2.

Fowler proceeds to describe faith development with the arrival of stage one that now arrives. If faith is given as a gift via the experience of birth and weaning itself, then it grows by the search for ego development. Specifically, he refers to it as the Intuitive-Projective Faith. This is the development that takes place through the years of 2 to 6 or 7. The emergence of sounds and verbal interaction take place in these years. On the one hand, simple sounds indicate the child's intuitive desire to express oneself. Interior emotions acquire the simplest of worldly response. Hunger converted to crying will result in the arrival of food. Inner comfort expressed with smiles and gurgles elicit a response of parental pleasure. Communication has begun. On the other hand, the interior experience can be converted into sounds which in turn

foster relationship. As time proceeds, memory develops to aid identification of sounds with meaning ultimately leading to the emergence of specific words. The mind is discovering an orderliness and meaning with the development of speech and symbolic representation. Communication with prime carers has become fundamental to the child's environment.

Erikson identifies the challenge of these years as the growth in autonomy and industry, both of which take a primary role in the child's growth. The child's discovery that he or she is increasingly an autonomous life with developing personal experience and with a developing desire to accomplish even more of what one is able to do is uppermost. He or she can be industrious. These goals are never fulfilled automatically. They are challenged by the failure to accomplish such purposes satisfactorily. The young child may be frustrated and too easily shame and doubt or guilt can be the outcome. The seeds of these negative attitudes can be developing even as early as the preschool stage of childhood. These goals of autonomy and initiative are measured in terms of both one's interior experience and the feedback by the response from their immediate environment. The faithful attitude of the child is being both affirmed or challenged depending upon the quality of their progress in that environment.

It is often noted the enormous development that takes place in these earliest years of life. And while the skills are nicely developing it should not be overlooked as to just how mammoth and significant the challenge can be. Yet these issues are vital for assisting the child's faith perspective. For the child there is still only one perspective, and it is their own. The child's thinking is fluid and magical. There is no deductive or inductive logic that enables them to understand how life might fit together, but their autonomous self must continue to grow positively. Their own images develop a rich range of symbols that stand side by side. Their strength and confidence lie in the power of identification. Naming is a rich means of developing the perception of a solid reality of their world. The loss of a favourite teddy can be traumatic. To know their own name or that of 'teddy' is a powerful experience of affirmation.

Sensory contact with the environment is not the only world they live within. Parents begin the gentle teaching of their own world. The reading of well-known books, the telling of fairy tales and biblical stories all assist in bringing a wider cultural world into the child's purview of life. The mention of God and Jesus might be included and the child's propensity for archetypal influence or the arousal of images in reading or times of sleep and its related dream world can be strong. Sometimes positive and sometimes overwhelming. The strength

of these experiences at this time of a child's life must not be underestimated. Death of a pet or family member, tragic accident or abuse are of the most traumatic. For a child to be confronted with archetypal images of fear and destruction can be terrifying. On a positive side the excitement of celebrations like birthdays or Christmas are hard to wait for the anticipated pleasure. A close and caring parent is needed to assure the child that the world is still a positive environment in which to grow. Faith in one's experience and the surrounding world has been challenged, but it is a challenge necessary for a growing ego to maintain an attitude of faith in preparation for the future. Relatively, a great deal has been accomplished and overall, the positive experience of affirmation is recorded within the psyche. Deep roots for faith in the experience of life are both challenged and consolidated even in these tender years.

Mythic-Literal Faith. Stage 2.

By the age of 6 or 7 the earlier developmental progress has laid a significant foundation for a stage of growth. For Piaget it is the time of concrete operations, the development of the mind that sees the child accumulate a wonderful array of knowledge. Facts and figures accumulate enormously as the school age child builds a wonderful bank of information. Driven by what Erikson speaks of as an industrious appetite for an even greater understanding of the world, the years through to age 12 prepare the young student toward the earliest signs of the basic adult mind. There are always those that excel causing the observing adults to marvel that people so young can advance and behave so exceptionally. The span of achievement is broad for some while for others they can lag far behind. Such challenge for the child of this age impacts greatly upon the individual. The successful grow enormously in confidence while the less able are likely to all away with a sense of inferiority.

While this cognitive development impacts greatly on a child's progress, Fowler's interest in faith development is aided by additional capacities of the mind. The ability to construct a more orderly, temporally linear, and dependable world with what is spoken of as reversibility or the ability to deduce processes to explain the connection of one fact to another paving the way for increased story telling. Memory enables the child to link events together to form a narrative for both their own life and the life of the community they live within. This makes sense with the emerging ability of the child to grasp an understanding that others have their own story and therefore different perspectives and experiences of life. The connection of people in the one story creates the plot of the story. The personal stories, family stories,

broader community stories all provide an enhanced picture of the ever- expanding world in which the child lives. Still within the oversight of the parental and teacher domain of supervision the child takes such information as reliable and meaningful. Narrative is an important conveyor of meaning. Religious traditions wrap their message in story. The great interest in concrete facts may dominate a school age child's life but this does not mean that the imagination has been lost. Rather the child has learnt to differentiate between fact and fantasy. Characters can portray archetypical meaning in their account. The good and the bad, the successful achiever or the unfortunate loser, the hero and the villain, all play important roles in their understanding of life. More than enjoying a story a child may delight in generating their own story. With such a growing fascination of stories for those who are brought up in a religious environment respond favourably to the biblical stories and welcome its message. Fowler emphasises that their appetite for fact and story means it is as if they are living in a river of life and enjoy the journey celebrating it for what it is. This is because they embrace the facts and symbols literally. It's not until teenage years that they are able to move out of the stream and stand on the riverbank to analytically observe their life for its meaning and or question its implications.

Faith has consolidated with the discovery that life carries meaning and at this stage within the safety of their environment they prosper accordingly in preparation for one of the major developmental adjustments of life, the transition to adolescence.

Synthetic – Conventional Faith. Stage 3.

The most significant development in a person's life journey could arguably be made for the transition from childhood to adolescence when the indicators of adult human life emerge. This is most evident physically in the form of puberty, with both menstruation and ejaculation and mentally with new capacities regarded as the foundational functions of adult cognitive capability. For Fowler it marks the arrival of stage 3 faith development, which he refers to as the Synthetic – Conventional.

The Stage 3 individual's faith system is conventional, in that it is seen as being everybody's faith system or the faith system of the entire community. And it is synthetic in that it is nonanalytical, it comes as a sort of unified, global wholeness ²²

²² Ibid., 167.

Fowler defines more precisely the thinking within stage 3 as characterised by the emergence of 'formal operational thinking,' which may initially become apparent in an algebra class or biology lab as one is required to reflect upon one's thinking. Appraisal may lead to a range of hypothetical solutions. Working with propositions and symbols, manipulating them to find solutions before concrete contact with the physical issue. While generating hypothetical propositions of explanation, it can envision a universe of possible realities and futures. Formal operations can perceive of ideal features of persons, communities or beyond.

The development of storytelling takes a major shift from the previous stage 2. Fowler compares the two by speaking of storytelling at the earlier stage as if the child understands operating from within the river story of life, but now as adolescent can move out of the river onto its bank where one can reflect upon the reflection. One can observe and name certain patterns of meaning visible in the flow of the story. In this way the narrative of life carries its' own past myth and projects forward to imagine its future trajectory. This in itself is a measure of faith.

Of major development is the forging of a new social domain. There is a major transition from life under the supervision of authority figures like parents to the elevation of the importance of one's peer group, a new source for the affirmation of need and value formation. Harry Stack Sullivan refers to it as 'chumship'. Along-side the peer grouping development is the awakening to the love experience with powerful depth of feeling. This range of relationships acts very much as mirror-like and heightens a self-consciousness indicative of a new adolescent version of egocentrism. The tendency is for it to overinflate or de-inflate the ego still searching for its way in the mammoth world of adulthood. Both self and other awareness is what might be called, 'mutual interpersonal perspective taking'.

In these forming years of young adulthood, adolescents may find a degree of equilibrium in the system of societal images and values, it being a tacit or relatively unexamined understanding. As a consequence, it is common that people never move from such a group with a similar outlook. Non-the-less others may continue their search for acceptance and meaning and find themselves drawn to other tribal groupings, even though they carry the same behaviour of the conventional stage 3 of life. Events like a significant death, a traumatic break in relationship, a grave disappointment, or more positively a golden opportunity, or an inexplicable restlessness may lead one's life to a different tribal group. Sometimes this could even result in the move from a Christian group to an atheist group or vice versa. Essentially

the fundamental acceptance of the values of a specific societal group is the way of the conventional stage 3 development. Belonging trumps examination. Fowler points out that the 'identity crisis' of adolescence, labelled by Erikson as the crisis of Identity versus Role Confusion, derives from the discrepancies and dissonances between the images of the self and the value reflected by our significant others. For Stage 3 Sharon Parks refers to this crisis as the "tyranny of the they".

With new relational ability, those who perceive of God will find the experience now shaped with new intensity of emotion and a belief that one now knows of the Ultimate Other in far more comprehensive ways. The feeling of being known comes with important sense of affirmation and a stronger sense of a personal God. When God is a significant other in the midst of a significant collection of other relationships, James Cone refers to God as the "Decisive Other" for he exerts a powerful ordering on a youth's identity and values.

As life progresses events present vast new horizons. Leaving school, home, local teenage clubs or institutions, acquisition of a car, study, or work opportunities, all such events will shape one's environment and subsequent experience. A range of options are possible. As the path ahead will invariably splay into a range of options, two major trends could summarise the predominant outcomes. The basic choices on the one hand trend toward staying loyal to the conventional community one grew up with or on the other hand to move more freely toward an exploratory stage 4 where inner review is the prime disposition. Choice is the fundamental word. Such a time could be seen to replicate the wilderness wandering of Jesus as life challenged him to consider a range of lifestyle options for his own life purpose. Whether temptations or opportunities, he was required to make his choices to clarify the pathway ahead before he made his commitment to that which he regarded as the vital direction of life. In similar fashion the young adult must clarify their direction for a commitment to that which they deem to be the most suitable pathway as they transition from the search for identity to the intimacy experience Erikson believes is awaiting them.

History indicates that the large majority tend to hold fast to the traditional conventional ways of life that they have been brought up with. They remain faithful to the way they know. What typifies the mind of the Synthetic – Conventional stage 3 lifestyle is that the symbols of ultimate meaning remain as if one with the transcendent they are believed to represent. However, a significant group will turn to something else for their meaning making. This period of significant change will loosen their attachment to much of their earlier ways of life.

Fowler speaks of this as the emergence of a stage 4, which he refers to as the Intuitive-Reflective way. Whether internally stimulated or externally challenged it is common for some people to begin to question the conventional structure that held them steady in their earlier adolescence. Their symbols of meaning are losing connection with the sense of the transcendence they purport to represent. The process often referred to as demythologising may begin and sometimes with a long period of questioning. The search to move forward to something new beckons the inquisitive mind. For them the pathway to the individual – reflective stage 4 is possible.

In summary, the majority will maintain a faith in the familiar ultimate symbols of greatest meaning they have long held. They will build their future life upon these conventions and all that contributes to making them meaningful. They will do all they can to preserve the traditions they have known. Those lying outside the conventional society will venture on a broader journey and trace a pathway toward a more open vision which recognises the values and legitimacy of the ways of other societies. It is one small step toward those that will one day be drawn closer to a universal understanding of life.

Individuative – Reflective Faith. Stage 4.

As previously described it is generally spoken of societies being built upon the conventional style of living. They remain orderly in operation. Uniform laws and expectations keep the large majority well informed. Most people remain at a basic conventional level for life. However, conventional societies tend to be closed and the possibility of advancing its' ways is significantly restricted. That possibility of advancing with new and improved conditions is dependent upon people being creative and open to alternative possibilities. It requires freedom of imagination and the formation of new visions. Those who dare to enter the next transition beyond the conventional have changed the focus of their faith. They move freely guided by their own inner whim or intuitive exploration. Their faithful attitude has found new wings.

Developmental psychology maps this further way forward. Signs of people who are inclined to seek alternative possibilities might appear in quite early years of adolescence, some struggling to find their place in the conventional society and spoken of as rebellious, some recovering from a tragic happening, for others the specifically creative dreamers gazing beyond the well-known. More likely with the arrival of confidence in one's mobility and

independence following the education years common major life changes challenge many minds. The move from home, including one's village, town, city or country, the new interaction with people from various cultures and others of conflicting philosophical or lifestyle are typical of this stage of life. The flow of life's river represented by the late teens and early twenties could be likened to a series of rapids desired to unsettle and challenge. As already highlighted, many continue to remain faithful to their original conventional belief systems, but others are differently responsive to the challenges. It is through these early years of the twenties with such changing life circumstance, that many respond to the freedom of thought and engage in a more individually inspired time of reflection. The transition from stage three to a possible stage four is beginning to appear for them.

Through the subsequent decade those who have lost respect for the adequacy of the conventional lifestyle move forward with new freedom. It is worth noting that for a significant number, very little seriously matters as they drift from event to event, experience to experience. For the serious seeker a belief that there is something more needed to truly satisfy one's deeper search is enabled by an air of individual enquiry. The stage 3 trust in external authorities has begun to be eroded. One wants to determine one's own direction.

I return to the place of symbol where the emerging freedom is noticeable in the attitude to symbol. For stage 3 transcendence is deeply inter-woven with the symbol. The move toward stage 4 sees a growing separation between the two with room for definition, propositions, and conceptions. The thinking process is aiming at demythologizing the former understanding of faith. The search may well meander from possibility to possibility. A satisfying solution will only be found when one considers the options against the vast majority of perspectives on offer. Fowler speaks of a developing 'executive ego' in the seekers mind as he must manage the options of life and make his own choice for the preferred pathway forward. Faith is changing its orientation from that which was characterised by the externally acquired belief to that which has been more personally sculptured from within their personal search.

The emerging stage 4 seeker remains respectful of the face-to-face relationship of stage 3. Erikson speaks of the intimacy stage developing through the decade or so from the mid-twenties into the forties. Yet the seeker could be said to be moving higher up the mythological bank of the river of life to see even more clearly the patterns of life in the river. It is not just the face-to-face relationship but a great social network of which one is a part. A network that holds many different people and ways of life together. To the developmentalist

Stage 4 has certainly not completed the possibilities of the faith journey. Not all of the tribal connections so typical of stage 3 have gone. Certainly, a new social grouping will have emerged but the vision of ultimate meaning one is faithfully adhering to has certainly changed shape and colour. At this stage it is flush with a new intellectualism with significantly greater personal control than the community conformity of the stage 3 conventional obedience to community norms. In time a most significant vision of that which can be described as the universal will make meaning and a new stage of the journey will appear. It will be significantly shaped by more than personal intellect but a coming to terms with the challenges appearing from the unconscious. Seemingly conflicting experiences or approaches to life will challenge one to reconcile. The joining of different entities will in time lead to a Stage 5 with an awakening to an emerging universal spoken of as the conjunctive.

The Conjunctive Faith. Stage 5.

The human story displays a pattern of development mapping an ever-expanding complexity increasingly forging the importance of unity. The integral world sees all things inter-related whereby each component contributes to the enhancement of the other and ultimately the whole. From its inception the course of this journey appears to meander through a range of stages progressively maturing into a rich display of life. The nature of this meandering is characterised by a 'balancing' of one experience against the other with each stage drawing out something new to expand the totality of human experience. Stage 1 and 2, preparing the child for adulthood, stage 3 shaping the young adult according to the norms of society, stage 4 challenging the individual adult to reflect for themselves upon their life with their own personal observations and theoretical explanations and stage 5 the need to deal with the deeper unconscious that ultimately speaks of the source of the universal. Stage 6 faces the pilgrim with the need for a genuineness of their growth and with its question of character and commitment.

The challenge to the person who has displayed their own intuitive reflective capacities to demythologise the earlier life and formulate their own theories comes about with the recognition of the numerous possibilities evident across humanity. The challenge of finding the most satisfying personal explanation must deal with others who speak convincingly of their own perspective. A person of this stage 4 progressively matures as they happily respect the validity of the other and keenly seeks an understanding of their perceptions, accepting that the grand picture of life is made up of the myriad of systems. Something is always gained

from the others point of view but the move to a universalising perception requires a deeper level of knowing. The transition to the universalizing conjunctive stage 5 beckons one forward as described by Fowler,

Stage 5 as a way of seeing, of knowing, of committing moves beyond the dichotomizing logic of Stage 4's either/or. It sees both (or the many) sides of an issue simultaneously. Conjunctive faith suspects that things are organically related to each other: it attends to the pattern of interrelatedness in things, trying to avoid force-fitting to its own prior mind set.²³

The broader arena of experience will be heard calling from the realm of the unconscious.

Fowler continues,

Stage 5 Conjunctive faith involves going beyond the explicit ideological system and clear boundaries of identity that Stage 4 worked so hard to construct and to adhere to. Whereas Stage 4 could afford to equate self pretty much with its own conscious awareness of self, Stage 5 must come to terms with its own unconscious – the unconscious personal, social and species or archetypal elements that are partly determinative of our actions and responses. Stage 5 comes to terms with the fact that the conscious ego is not master in its own house.²⁴

Fowler indicates that the Stage 5 task is the process of integrating or reconciling the conscious and unconscious realms of life. Truth is more multi-dimensional and organically interdependent than most theories or accounts of truth one might grasp. He speaks of the specific tool for dealing with the new realm. Rather than the more commonly used dialectical form of dialogue, which is more typical of stage 4, enabling one to meet the need of formulating the conceptual definitions of life, he speaks of moving to a dialogical form of dialogue. This form of communicating seeks a more experiential knowing which is not bound to the analytical dualistic nature of verbal communication. Dialogical dialogue lends itself to a non-dualistic awareness of reality. In practice it emphasises listening and verbal expressions to emphasise an experiential understanding beyond communication of theory. It enables the coming together of deeper realms of the mind. Its' experiential knowing enables the perception of unconscious meanings and archetypal realities which reveals the truths of a universal interrelated unity and harmony.

Religiously, Stage 5 knows that the symbols, stories, doctrines, and liturgies offered by its own or other traditions are inevitably partial. Therefore, conjunctive faith, is ready for

²³ Ibid., 185.

²⁴ Ibid., 186.

significant encounters with other traditions than its own. The nature of such encounter is not afraid of one's vulnerability and calls for the courage to be open and honest. This does not indicate a wishy-washy treatment of one's own faith stance, for stability is well established within the stage 5 universal perspective of life. However, it certainly values that much is to be gained by mutual interaction, subsequently enhancing one's own life through a genuine reflection upon the intent of the others presentation. Together such engagement builds a truly universal experience. No longer is the high degree of control left in the hands of intellectual understanding as for the person of intuitive reflective stage 4 faith development. Control is now known as a stability arising from harmonious interaction between the various realms of reality, whether gift or weakness, knowing or unknowing, visible, or invisible, conscious or unconscious, communal or personal the whole interacts as an integrated and reconciled unity.

Universalizing Faith. Stage 6.

Stage 6 Universalizing Faith completes the intent of the Conjunctive vision of Stage 5. Where the Conjunctive vision began with an awakening to the inter-related nature of all, the journey is brought to maturity in Stage 6, as one enters fully into the personal devotion to all that the universal implies.

Stage 6 faith has shed the restricting skin of early ego-centric behaviour or tribal ideology and walks freely as one with the wonder of all life, celebrating all that the universal constitutes. They have been spoken of as the 'incarnators' of the vision that they perceive. In extreme circumstances the journey of martyrdom may come their way. It is neither sought nor resisted for the strength of commitment to the universal is greater than self-preservation. Understandably the examples of such people are relatively small.

As incarnators of their universal vision they live the spirit of the all-inclusive community. Never-the-less their life is regularly interpreted as subversive of the structures of society for they live beyond the restricting conventions of society or the visions of those still pursuing partial ideologies and pursued with a certain fervour. In Fowler's words, 'The rare persons who may be described by this stage have a special grace that makes them seem more lucid, more simple, yet somehow more fully human than the rest of us.'²⁵ They are seekers of interaction with people of all stages for all have a place within the universal vision. By way

²⁵Ibid., 201.

of dialogical dialogue, they seek to enrich all engagements, whether young or old, or from across all creation itself.

The paths the stage 6 ‘universalist’ may walk will cover all terrains, for their community is all inclusive, and it is done with their conviction to justice and love. It is done with clear intent for their purpose is not justifying self but for transformation of all. It is lived with a trusting vision of both the universally divine, a trans-imman-ence.

When seeking examples of the matured universalist names like, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Dag Hammarskjold, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Abraham Heschel and Thomas Merton such personalities are commonly spoken of as well recognised examples. One should never forget that there are countless others hidden from common sight who have walked this path of inspired humanity.

Chapter 4 - A Personal Reflection

My objective has been to reflect upon the great handiwork of creation with the help of integral scholar Ken Wilber, to present a story of evolution and development with scholars such as Jean Piaget, Laurence Kohlberg, Erik Erikson, and James Fowler to explore the place of faith within life. My thesis is that creation is wonderfully and meaningfully shaped to provide a natural pathway for humans to fulfil the purpose of life. Faith matures through the natural story of the life cycle. What follows is my reflection upon this faith journey through the various life stages from the perspective of the Integral vision of life.

Childhood

Up until the time of adolescence the newborn will go through the most extraordinary journey of development acquiring capacities, of body and mind that will prepare them for adulthood. Birth truly stands as the greatest miracle of life. From conception will emerge the wonder of the most extraordinary life. In its first few months the babe will have survived two of the most extraordinary life-threatening experiences. To emerge from the womb is a wonder but one of life’s most challenging transitions. The mortality rate for mother and babe is significant enough to remind us that this is a major transition for a newborn. Within months of successfully leaving the womb and the security of its warmth and reliable nourishment it begins its second life threatening adjustment. It is to be weaned from the security of the breast. The two major transitions are far more than physical events, the babes mind is being

moulded in the most challenging way from day one. From the most profound physical union it is hastened toward clear separation. Psychoanalyst Eric Erikson identified this as having the primary purpose of establishing an attitude of trust. A foundation for faith and they do it through the most amazing initiation experiences of life where unbeknown to their little lives they are being ushered through events that affirms that they are ready to take their place in the journey of life. In essence it is the most wonderful affirmation of life's experience. It requires innate trust in existence and the birth of the foundation for faith in life.

If this place in life is gifted, then they must respond in a way that will enable them to flourish. They need an 'ego' or 'I' consciousness. They must learn to make their stand. Sooner than not this pathway of trust will soon face a unique test through the 'terrible two's' which seem to stretch far longer than a simple year. Having weaned from mother the pathway toward independence and a sense of autonomy will hasten. It is the reminder that we are all fashioned within the womb by the hands of God to have our unique personality that in 'spiritual essence' reflects the image of God.

Life develops on two major fronts, the discovery of our capacities and the determination to stand apart. The determination to do, to copy and explore is coupled with delight in success. But this journey of delightful discovery is coupled with a defiant attitude, the demanding cry, the mischief insistence, the nasty throw, the hit or kick, all signs of the toddlers need to test the foundation of trust. Will my provider remain faithful? Can I trust this world I am discovering?

In the remaining few years as a pre-schooler (3-5) the young toddler faces the next major mental journey. It's very much to do with the mind. On the one hand the parents begin the process of introducing the culture of the community. The fairy tales carry simple but fascinating messages; the witch and the wizard, the hero and villain. And soon the concepts of God and Jesus may be introduced. Perhaps the hardest is the emergence of dreams from the psychic depths. Sometimes terror and sometimes pleasant. The tiny mind is being shaped to be bigger than their bodies. Can their ego develop a strength of character to forge a way forward with confidence in this challenging world that will soon take on the fresh fields of the school years.

The great challenge of the school years is to flourish with skill of mind and body. For some a delightful opportunity but for others a challenge. The chance to feast on new knowledge offers it satisfaction. Beyond the richness of one's daily experience where the young one's sense of time moves so slowly, the child builds a broader picture. The school age child learns of story. From their superheroes to family history events are joined together and suggest that life has direction and meaning. They have their own story that forms their unique life. It has a long journey, as long grandma, and grandpa. It has a past as far back as little baby brother or sister. Fancy mum and dad being little children. Will I be like them one day. Faith accepts that they can walk ahead and build their own story.

The childhood story ends with the emergence of adolescence and the commencement of the first signs of adulthood. Technically they could have their own children. This childhood journey has witnessed the most amazing growth in body but the mental development of such a small, fragile, dependent little being, traverses some of the most extraordinary depths of the mind with lifetime implications. To successfully accomplish its purpose, most importantly an attitude of trust and faith, and then the discovery of their own personality with the greatest of meaning, in preparation for the responsibilities and opportunities of adulthood is amazing. To successfully fulfil the purpose of this journey is not a foregone conclusion. It depends upon adults who have the greatest respect for the nature of this journey. Such respect is characterised by the greatest of love. We all grow most completely in an environment of love. There is no greater symbol of such love than the picture of Jesus rebuking the adults who would prevent the children coming to him but opening his arms to embrace each and every one of them. He surely understood the profound nature of their childhood journey.

Adolescence and the Conventional

“The Historical Christ”

The first dozen years of life are the childhood years preparing the young person for the arrival at the early stages of adulthood. Adulthood begins with the emergence of adolescence witnessed by some of the most dramatic changes, both physically and mentally. The physical signs of puberty, the mental development of complex operations, the comprehensive array of emotions and socially the creation of a new and broad network of relationships. Combining each of these facets of experience the teenager is driven to arrive at a stronger construction of

identity (as highlighted by Erikson). The core search is to find a construct that consolidates one's place in society in the most meaningful way possible.

Driven by a new depth and range of emotional needs the adolescent establishes a new peer network powerfully charged with feeling. For some the power in their experience is strong and spreads widely, while for others the power is seemingly too strong and they move forward hesitantly for fear it will overwhelm. Further still for some it becomes dominated by a negative thrust and shapes their anti-social mindset which directs the formation of their peer group into one devoted to negativity. While the description of such groupings may range across many types, small or large, constructive, or destructive, the trend to a new group which stands dominantly in the teenager's life is common.

A unique development for some is that the depth of emotion may open to the notion of something spiritual and a belief in God. Idealism is common for the teenager who might be drawn to one of a variety of 'ism' options. The search for identity and need of emotional fulfilment is a dramatic change from the childhood era where security is grounded in the oversight of the most trusted adults starting with parents. Now the teenager desires to carry responsibility for their own personal security. The formation of a system of belief is the common way. It is fortified by the support of other like-minded peers. This is not uncommonly aided by joining a community group. Further still the documented records that speak to a belief system can take on an authoritative status so providing confidence in the reliability of one's object of devotion and subsequent conclusions. As in the case of Christianity the Bible is so regarded as sacred that departure from its teachings is emotionally difficult. For others it may be the traditions of their faith that carry the voice of authority. In that case trust in the teachings of elders is adhered to unwaveringly.

The formation of a belief system in western society has traditionally been associated with Christianity and while in the twenty-first century it may not be as strongly adhered to as in past centuries, it still holds a prime place. It must be said that 'scientism' has emerged as a highly significant alternative theory of life and with its proliferation in the twentieth and twenty-first century it has eroded the confidence of the conventional approach to faith. The conservative nature of religion whether shaped by a literalist approach to scripture or religion shaped by the authority of tradition adherents have struggled to openly entertain much challenging knowledge spoken of by the scientific world.

Two common options for the emergence of belief can be detected from these years. This construction of an understanding of life during the teenage years and into young adulthood is the time developmental psychologists speak of the formation of the ‘conventional’ understanding of society. They note that for a major cross section of the faith community such developed belief systems remain constant for the remainder of a person’s life. For many Christians, it’s formulated theories and depth of emotion is commonly accepted for its ability to fulfil the human need and shape the adult life with ultimate meaning. The notion of it providing a sound and enduring system for the duration of life is extended to life beyond the grave. This conventional approach is highly regarded by many and embraced as a true test of maturing faithfulness and devotion.

The second option refers to the experience of a broad alternate group of society who find with ever broadening experiences as often happens in the early twenties, the conventional way of life leaves many inconclusive solutions to complex questions unanswered and begins to give way to a broader exploration. The encounter with other ways of life, notably of people of different lifestyles shaped by their culture, religion, or philosophy, can raise many questions. It may very well include many who having discovered their spiritual root in their teenage years eventually encountering a lack of certainty. This second general pathway can be described as one of broadening one’s perspective to be more respectful of alternative ways. Fowler speaks of the intuitive reflective experience opening a person’s interior mind which enables the freedom to follow a broadening pathway. If it is to continue it will find new fulfilment with the ‘Conjunctive’ stage during which time one searches for the reconciliation of difference.

The Conjunctive

“The Unknown Christ of Hinduism” Raimon Panikkar

The notion of the ‘conjunctive’ points to the process of joining different ideas together in a way that will enhance both. This process so used by Fowler reflects on the very common experience of humans in a struggle to deal with a world that displays division, contrast or conflict. Fragmentation is a fundamental reality of the world we live within, consequently, humans easily cluster with the like-minded to maintain an equilibrium. We speak of tribal living. Fowler would recognise the reconciling of the different as a legitimate pathway for some in their faith pursuit. Alternatively, the conventionally minded tends to hold fast within the realm of the initially known way for their display of faith.

A significant portion of young adults will turn with an open mind to their expanding vision of what they perceive is a complex world. There is no guarantee that reconciliation will be found, for solutions may not be a priority for all. Freedom from the past upbringing is welcomed. But at the faith level the spirit is stirred by the not insignificant number of others that form a movement of humans seeking some answers and reconciliation across the intricate collage of life. Hence, the emerging picture of the developing adult journey witnesses to a wide range of experiences from the conventional to the conjunctive by the population seeking to make meaning of faith. Characterised by these two tendencies is the notion of the dualistic and non-dualistic approach to life. The conventional embracing the dualistic while the conjunctive displaying an openness to the non-dual.

Encounter with the other creates movement in the mind. Questions and subsequent responses enliven the imagination and life moves forward. Whereas the conventional builds its faith particularly around the life of the historical Jesus the conjunctive approach is typified by the notion of the *Unknown Christ of Hinduism* as described by Raimon Panikkar where the vision of the sacred begins to appear in the other and a correlation of the two is believed to be possible. The conventional is rigidly devoted to the scripture recalling the words of Jesus. 'I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except by me.' The conjunctive is open to the notion of the universal nature of the risen Christ who manifests himself in all domains of life. Rather than defensive of the superiority of the Christian faith the conjunctive approaches difference with an openness and respect for the other. How might the breath of the spirit move in our current times. How might the face of the universal Jesus appear in the stranger. The conventional might recognise alliances across division within its own faith particularly with other similarly styled denominations, but the conjunctive has begun the move far beyond into the domain of other faiths.

The vision that will move the conjunctively orientated forward in pursuit of enrichment is the trust that when two different entities merge both will enhance the other. The common example of a man and woman engaging in a new and shared life will lead to the possibility of a child and the commencement of a family illustrating the vision. Far beyond the common example of family life the conjunctively minded seeks for the pathway that will lead to a depth of reconciliation, unity, and harmony that under-lies much of the apparently fragmented world. The notion that there is one world with a unity in its extraordinary diversity is a powerful enticement for the idealist. Each may walk forward declaring their story even if with different explanation. The Christian still finds his or her explanation of the

Christ their best way of explaining their universal story. The persistent pursuit of such a qualitative vision of life is an expression of the faithful conjunctively shaped pilgrim. Panikkar believes that the Hindu etc. may speak of the same experience in a way most meaningful to them. The notion of a universal bond between all people is the peak of the mountain they are haunted by. Teilhard de Chardin refers to this as the Omega point.

The Universal

‘The Cosmic Christ’

James Fowler describes the life of universal vision as the maturation of the conjunctive pilgrim. The flourishing of the scientific world of the past century has opened a world of infinite expanse to the human mind. Its technological capacity to paint a picture with stored data, perhaps an image of the ‘blue planet’ we call earth, the distant galaxies, or statistical evidence of every conceivable facet of human experience reminds us that reality can be measured and perceived in a myriad of ways. Faith has its own sight but shaped by one’s own experience. The unity of all grounded in the trans-immanent notion of God as the essence of creation beckons a universal vision of the faithful pilgrim. There is one reality that knows fulfilment in the reconciliation of all. As the Christian scripture declares, ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.’ For the conjunctive pilgrim the fulfillment of the Christian faith is perceived in the notion of the Cosmic Christ. For Teilhard de Chardin that oneness is symbolized by the omega point. That which holds all things together in its fulfilment is the completion of the goal of the redeeming Christ. Such unity is fulfilled in the reconciling of the diversity of being. This universal vision is the goal of the faithful life. Hope is its conviction and love its quality. Paul captured this vision in the life of spirit, declaring faith, hope and love were the greatest of spirits work, but the greatest was love. Faith is the human attitude while hope is the conviction to pursue life to its completion, but love is the pinnacle of the experience of unity in diversity. It is vital to understand that faith is characteristic of the journey while love is the quality of its accomplishments. The letter to James emphasises that faith without works is dead. The non-dual universal way does not separate any notion of being into an individual entity. All shades of the dynamic of reality work as one being in its becoming.

The faith journey that progresses through the conjunctive pursuit may in time expand to capture a vision of the universal. The fulfilment of this journey is the ultimate test of the

human endeavour. Its pinnacle accomplishment is only witnessed when one is transformed into the universal being devoted to its completion.

Chapter 5 - A Wholistic Journey

The study of Developmental Psychology is a complex one. Ken Wilber has compared approximately one hundred different streams of development. The problem is that they are perceived as standing alone, each on their own. But that is not in reality as it should be. They are each part of an integrated whole, but for simplicity that is how it is best explained. Nevertheless, I have drawn our attention to the need to always keep this in mind that we are dealing with a wholistic world.

I have described the overall structure of the developmental story of some of the leading psychologists of the modern world. They fall into two primary categories, those that describe the story which people inevitably encounter, like the work of Erikson. Each stage is encountered fully but the way we accomplish the growth through that period is either accomplice positively or negatively. Then there is the category where people don't necessarily progress through the full journey of life. This is particularly noticeable in the work of Lawrence Kohlberg and his work of Moral development. Most people remain at the conventional level despite living to well into their senior years.

The main question is, 'what constitute the story of spirituality'? The answer must speak of both the development and the quality of the life at any moment. The maturing story is a measure of how broadly the person is growing and how they are able to accomplish the work. The person who reaches the universal stage of faith development is able to accomplish great things. The Person who is not as developed but displays a faith quality every moment is fulfilling part of the spirituality quest.

The question remains, how do people continue to move through all stages without stalling at various levels of development? What motivates the movement forward? The answer is the condition that we call states of consciousness and the way it interacts with the stages of development.

The 'states of consciousness' are waking, dreaming, deep sleep and the divine. We live in this cycle every day and they provide us with energy upon our daily living. We grow according to the structure or level of development and our states of consciousness. The state of consciousness generates the energy for our interaction with the level we have reached. In the simplest description, if our state of consciousness is one of joy, we generate a positive movement. If we are depressed, we are more likely to create a negative movement.

States

Stage works progressively through the years, states work directly upon the issue at hand. States have no other purpose than bringing life to bear on the present moment. This is vital for energising life that one may grow with power and motivation. There are various states of consciousness that stand out as fundamental. They qualify the type of life we desire to live.

Trust

Jesus said, unless one becomes like a little child one cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. This affirmation of the importance of a childlike attitude is essential for living is astounding. What could he have meant when considering the long journey ahead. Eric Erikson lay the foundation for our understanding when he explained that the first stage of growth of any newborn child was one of trust. The foundation of life's journey was in grounding oneself in the attitude of trust less one be afflicted with a propensity for mistrust throughout life.

One evening at our 'Messy Church' gathering our four-year-old granddaughter, Charlotte raced outside the front door of the church narthex, through her arms wide apart, and said, 'I want to see the world'. My wife who had followed her to beckon her in, said come back in, to which she repeated 'I want to see the world'. This spontaneous gesture indicated the uninhibited joy and exuberance of young life. It was uninhibited from the strictures of right and wrong. Life was for living and exploration. At four it was fully blossomed trust in what lay beyond in a world of no limits. Toddler to Childhood is all about learning about the world.

This is the beginning stage of attitude that is vital for growth. The primary years that follow hopefully continue with the joy of learning and a positive enthusiasm for exploring basic knowledge. The world of strictures slowly appear as the child is shaped into the budding citizen that is fitting for a culture. With the dreams of parents, the child remains enthusiastic for the journey into adolescence and beyond. The exuberance in life does fluctuate, but it is sustained even though up and down. It must fight against self-doubt, self-questioning, until the skies become clearer again, and one wants to shown as if the whole world once again.

Love

While our life is born with love as the central attitude it blossoms in a special way in adolescence, young adulthood, and mature age personhood. Carol Ginnivan builds her entire theory of development upon love. She takes her lead from feminine development which is primarily relational. She describes in her book, *In a Different Voice*, the essence of the developing notion of care unfolding over the course of life, from “selfish” (egocentric), “care” (movement from self to groups – ethnocentric), “universal care” (concern for all peoples, regardless of race, colour, sex, or creed – world centric), and “integrated” (where both men and women integrate the contra sexual mode – our Integral).²⁶ The divide between the first two of Gilligan’s stages and the third and fourth stages highlights the shift from the self-concern and arrival at the conventional state of mind and the awakening to the second journey development toward the universal community.

But the story of love is fundamentally an attitude. It is an attitude of relationship. It speaks of the way we relate throughout our day with the world around us. While it is progressively and potentially developing throughout our life, it is taken seriously moment by moment. We hunger for love knowing when we have found it but also when we are missing it. This fluctuation indicates how precious it is, and its loss can stall our growth. The journey described by Gilligan, of selfish, care, ethnocentric to universal, is often stalled but not necessarily stopped. It persists at the level that we have arrived at and is a vital state of consciousness for engaging with people we meet. It is an attitudinal state that nourishes our development.

Faith

James Fowler has studied the subject of faith development. He has progressively traced the potential journey through to universal consciousness. But it is equally important to study faith as a state of consciousness. It begins with the attitude of trust at the first stages of life and progresses through the development of early childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, adulthood, and latter adulthood. Like all other states of consciousness, it has the potential for stalling in its progressive development, nevertheless it remains active as an attitude. Like love it fluctuates in its engagement.

²⁶ Wilber, *The Religion of Tomorrow*, 205.

The Arts

The Music industry, both instrumental and singing are unique in their ability to engage with our consciousness. Free of talk of development it has great potential to engage with the human. It has the power to reach beyond the conscious to engage with the unconscious. It inspires the most profound states by lifting people into an ecstasy at the best of times.

The visual arts are equally capable of arousing states of mind for the observer, transfixed by the wonder of both the skill of the classic painter or the magic of the innovator.

By engaging with this depth of conscious mind the observer is stirred to generate a quality of life that surpasses the mundane.

Day Dreaming

The experience of day dreaming is one which occasionally slips into as we wonder aimlessly about with our daily chores. Maybe a time when we have been struggling with a circumstance and from out of nowhere, we have an 'A-Ha' moment and discover the answer we have been looking for. A more relaxed occasion maybe when taking a nap or sunbaking on the edge of sleep which takes us into a state of mind when the wonder of life gels in a mystery of being and the veil of life is lifted, and we see it for all its glory.

The Unconscious

Carl Jung spoke of the unconscious mind. It is that depth of mind that is not readily seen or heard but is ever so active as a normal part of daily living. We are not just what we seem on the outer surface of our daily behaviour. We are encountering ever deeper realms of mind going to depths of the personal unconscious to the collective unconscious and finally the self-archetype, that which Jung described as the divine. We are engaged on all these levels even though seemingly unknowingly except for the occasional fleeting moments. This is the ultimate state of consciousness that engages with the world around us. It is a moment-by-moment engagement with a glimpse of the complete picture of life. It is our passionate engagements with events as they happen. It is most telling when we are angry or loving, impatient or tolerant, critical, or affirming, or seeking revenge or forgiving. It is the energy that drives and shapes our life.

Dreams

All ages of people dream, and dreaming is the unknowing stirring of the unconsciousness mind in sleep. Its language is obtuse because it speaks primarily in symbol. Sometimes it breaks through into the prophetic and speaks in language closer to the actual as an indicator or what is to happen, but these are rare.

The Divine

The highly uncommon experience is the divine that momentarily breaks-through in a profound way. These mysterious encounters make us ponder the eternal meaning and are designed to act for pure good. The meaning may be for a short-term temporary outcome, or on the other hand, the long-term farsighted direction of life. These messages are subtle and never take away the will of the recipient but leave an abiding feeling that the absolute depth of consciousness has passed by. If responded to, the engagement with one's surrounds is profound and assuredly effects the movement of the journey of life.

The Spiritual Quest

The spiritual quest of the twenty-first century is an integral one, where the context is the whole of life. It is primarily described by developmental psychology which maps the many streams of development through the course of life's journey. While developmental psychology maps the progressively maturing journey finally reaching the Universal outlook, many do not reach this state of maturity, in fact they remain at the conventional state of mind far from developing their full potential. However, this does not mean that they have not lived a spiritual life, just one that is narrower or limited in scope. This is determined by the state of consciousness working in conjunction with the journey of stages of growth. The state of consciousness provides the mind, the passion and energy to move one forward along the journey to maturity.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

The character of the journey of faith across the human population is broad in its display. Many have described it in its most natural human nature most notably those engaged in the field of developmental psychology. For the Christian community it has held a place of unique importance. Its elevated place is noted in the declaration that one is saved through faith by grace. Yet the ultimate purpose that we are called to mature in the journey of grace. Creation has a purpose with its unfolding story of God's gracious self-unfolding in ever flourishing love. Faith is our maturing attitude that draws us into its fulfilment.

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