Toward an Inclusive Model of Relational Spirituality:
An Exploration of Spiritual Type among Australian Anglicans

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Bachelor of Arts in Theology with Honours

This thesis is presented for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University, 2010.
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

_______________________________

Alisoun Nicol
Abstract

This thesis investigates spiritual formation and expression in the context of the increasingly pluralized world of the twenty-first century. Using qualitative empirical methods, it examines where, how, and, indeed, if ultimate meaning and purpose are being found at a time in which the givens of the past have given way to the relative uncertainties of the present. In line with Henri J M Nouwen’s concept of the ‘three movements of the spiritual life’, the project assumes a triadic relational structure to spirituality—the dynamics of which the empirical-findings suggest are now being renegotiated, and most notably in relation to the Divine.

The study was undertaken with Anglican churchgoers in Perth, Western Australia. It sought to construct a model of contemporary spiritual development, but the findings were such as to move the research in an unanticipated direction—albeit in accordance with its grounded-theory methodology—and, ultimately, a typological model was constructed. The emergent typology incorporates six distinct types of spirituality. It uncovered polarization among the participants, with some displaying spiritual uncertainty, dissatisfaction, and a shifting of religious beliefs; while others were confident, certain, and assured.

The research introduces a number of innovations which may have value in academic studies of spirituality beyond the boundaries of this project. For example, building on earlier empirical work undertaken by the researcher, music was used in the study as a conduit to the spiritual. Further, the analytical process led to the creation of two new research tools: the Relational Triad allows the spirituality of the individual to be measured and plotted; while The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality is a presentational template designed to allow spirituality to be charted visually.

The thesis takes an inter- and multi-disciplinary approach, engaging primarily with the disciplines of Christian spirituality, psychology, sociology, and music. It is argued that, conceptually at least, the emergent typology offers a possible framework for embracing spirituality of all forms across religious, social, and cultural difference.
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My thanks to The Most Reverend Roger Herft, Archbishop of The Anglican Diocese of Perth, for his permission to undertake the empirical research within the Diocese; and to the parish priests who not only gave permission for me to undertake my research within their parishes, but kindly and generously gave of their time and assistance in helping me to set it up.

Warmest thanks to my friends and fellow postgraduate students, Kerry George and Kathryn Imray, for their understanding and companionship, and for leading the way. And to all my dear friends—including Peter & Monica Salmon-Lomas; Julie Barrett-Lennard, Marvin Pearson, Ann Fitzpatrick, Dorothy Croft, Ian & Liz Gillis, Frank & Anne Budd, Geraldine O'Brien, Margaret Sealey, Chris & Alan Jones, Sue McLeod, and all at St Michael's—thanks for the myriad ways in which you have supported me.

My deepest gratitude goes to my family. Firstly, to my sons, Mark and Scott: special thanks for your unceasing love and encouragement—given in so many ways—and for helping me to keep life in balance. And to my son, Adam—fellow PhD traveller—heartfelt thanks for sharing the journey; and for your empathy, encouragement, and invaluable practical help. Thanks too to dear Leevs, for her friendship and understanding. To my beloved father, Charles—thank you for your unfailing love and support, which have meant so much to me. Dear Steven & Hazel—thank you for ‘being there’ always. And, finally, to my partner, Reece Anstey, who has been my shoulder to cry on, and my faithful encourager through thick and thin. Reece, your patience, love, and support have kept me going. Thank you for helping me to keep things in perspective; for lifting me up each time I fell, and for never failing to believe in me and in my ability to complete this work.

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my mother and best friend, Mary Cleall, who died shortly before I embarked on this research; and whose love, gentleness, compassion, grace, and courage will inspire me always.

Alisoun Nicol, November 2010
Chapter One: Introduction

In the present global culture, with the need for common values and visions in a multicultural and plural world, the time is propitious for the discovery of a universal spirituality.

David Tacey

Chapter One
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

To live in the Western world of the twenty-first century is to live in what some might argue is one of the most dynamic and exciting times in history. Scientific discovery, intellectual advance, and the innovations of technology are unbounded and unceasing, it seems; and developments often so rapid and seamless that many are integrated into our lives with barely a conscious register. Our systems of communication, for example, have long-since enabled us to link instantly and at will to anyone almost anywhere on the planet, and the media we employ to do so continue to increase in number, feature, and sophistication. The 2003-completion of genetic mapping that constituted The Human Genome Project has brought humanity to the cusp of medical breakthroughs that not only have begun to revolutionize preventative medicine and so enhance physical wellbeing, but promise to prolong human life exponentially. And, before long, it seems likely that the sum of recorded human knowledge will be at the fingertips, quite literally, of each and every one of us; available via the medium of a simple hand-held device.

We are gaining much in such ways, then. Yet, paradoxically, it appears that, for all the ‘riches’ of the Western world, not every Westerner is feeling wholly enriched. Many in the English-speaking world, in particular, are filling-up—not only figuratively, but, again, in some cases literally—on consumables, in what is becoming an increasingly materially-oriented society. Consumerism—a cultural drive aptly and colloquially known as ‘affluenza’\(^1\)—is causing us to confuse our wants with our needs by placing extreme value on money, possessions, appearance, status, and celebrity.\(^2\) And, as Roger Herft, Anglican Archbishop of Perth, Western Australia, remarked in a recent interview, the culture appears to be overwhelming society, creating uncertainty as to where happiness is to be found. He observes:

\(^1\) The noun ‘affluenza’ is a portmanteau blending ‘affluence’ or ‘affluent’, and ‘influenza’. It is now included standardly within numerous English dictionaries, including the Oxford English Dictionary.

\(^2\) Oliver James, Affluenza, (Reading: Random House, 2007), xvi
The great philosophers used to say, ‘I think, therefore I am’. But I think we’ve reached a stage in our life in society where the only meaning we can get for ourselves is to shop, by imagining that if we provide ourselves with more things it will somehow make us happier. We tend to move into thinking: ‘I shop, therefore I am’. The truth is it doesn’t help our own lives.³

British psychologist Oliver James goes further, suggesting that consumerism engenders within us feelings of insecurity; alienation; incompetence; inauthenticity, and a lack of autonomy, thwarting the meeting of our basic human needs for security, belonging, competence, and authenticity.⁴ ⁵ And it is unlikely to be by chance then, argues James—whose empirical research on the phenomenon of affluenza was undertaken in seven countries throughout the world⁶—that the rise in consumerism has coincided with a significant rise in cases of depression, anxiety, and substance abuse: all known signifiers of emotional distress.⁷

Certainly, the World Health Organization notes that the use of illicit drugs and alcohol is escalating noticeably;⁸ and predicts that depression ultimately will become the most prevalent disease in the world. By the year 2020, for example, depression will rank as the second-highest contributor to the global burden of disease across all ages, and both sexes.⁹ This rapid and widespread rise in cases of depression raises the critical question of whether all cases, in fact, are instances of clinical depression, or whether some might more fittingly be

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⁴ James, Affluenza, xvi. James acknowledges that psychologists vary in their view of what constitutes basic human needs, but suggests that there is general consensus on these four.
⁵ It is salient that three publications entitled Affluenza have been produced in the English-speaking world within the past decade. The works are (1) by American authors, John De Graaf, David Waan and Thomas Naylor—namely, Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2001, 2002, 2005); (2) by Australian authors Clive Hamilton and Richard Denniss, Affluenza: When Too Much is Never Enough (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005); and (3) by British author Oliver James—Affluenza (Reading: Random House, 2007). The latter work has been selected for principal citation here because of its empirical base, and because it alone focuses on the situation from a global perspective, rather than that facing one particular nation.
⁶ Namely, the US, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Russia, and Denmark. James’s research—the empirical component of which was undertaken in 2004—was both theoretically and empirically based. In addition to the undertaking of some 240 oneto-one interviews in seven major cities within these seven named countries, James draws on and cites an extensive number of peer-reviewed scientific studies. See James, Affluenza, xx-xxii and 533-548.
⁷ James, Affluenza, xiii-xiv. James expressly does not suggest, however, that all emotional distress is caused by consumerism, acknowledging that many other factors can affect our vulnerability to it. Rather, his argument is that the wellbeing of a nation is related to the extent to which that nation is affected by the consumer culture. Ibid, xix.
⁹ ‘Mental Health: Depression’. World Health Organization. Accessed 8 March 2010. Available from http://www.who.int/...orations/6th_dame_elisabeth_murdoch_oration_2009.pdf. WHO also reveals here that 121 million people worldwide—of all ages, genders, and backgrounds—are affected by depression. In the year 2000, depression was the fourth-highest contributor to the global burden of disease. Currently (2010), depression ranks as the second-highest contributor in the age-category 15-44 years, for both sexes combined.
attributed to a malaise of the spirit—in which case, spiritual practice rather than medication would be the more fitting and helpful response. Certainly, Kathleen Norris considers that we are witnessing a resurgence of the spiritual affliction, ‘acedia’—well-known among early-church monastics—which manifests as an inability to care, and deeming nothing worthy of effort.¹⁰ She writes:

I think it is likely that much of the restless boredom, frantic escapism, commitment phobia, and enervating despair that plagues us today is the ancient demon of acedia in modern dress.¹¹

And, Norris suggests, the “hyped-up world” of contemporary culture—in which we are endlessly assailed with information of all kinds and on all levels, and have overburdened and frenzied schedules—takes us beyond the point of caring: providing ideal conditions for acedia to flourish.¹²

Acedia, then, may be the more fitting diagnosis for many, and this has ramifications in terms of remedy. However, no matter what name is given to such emotional distress, it appears likely that it is linked to affluenza—a culture which creates ephemeral satisfaction for most, significant financial gain for a few, but which manifestly fails to bring happiness and fulfilment in the long-term. Plainly, a complex interaction of political, cultural, and historical forces—some of which will be discussed later in this chapter—is behind the emergence of consumerism, the roots of which may be able to be traced back some twelve-thousand years.¹³ Philip Cushman and others¹⁴ consider that a significant shift toward the culture took place following World War II when economies relied on, and therefore encouraged, the consumption of non-essential items (leading to what Cushman conceptualized in 1990 as ‘The Empty Self’¹⁵).¹⁶ For James, however, the particular distorted and narcissistic values of affluenza that now have a firm and (significantly) universal foothold in many developed nations

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¹³ Oliver James considers the institution of private property-ownership among rulers and the elite to have been the starting point in the emergence of the consumer culture. James, *Affluenza*, xvi.
¹⁴ John De Graaf, David Waan and Thomas H Naylor, for example, consider that, though other consumer booms have taken place previously, the consumer boom that followed World War II was “unparalleled in history”. De Graaf, Waan and Naylor, *Affluenza*, 142.
¹⁵ Cushman explains the concept of The Empty Self as follows: “Since the end of World War II the configuration of an empty self has emerged in the middle classes. It is empty in part because of the loss of family, community, and tradition. It is a self that seeks the experience of being continually filled up by consuming goods, calories, experiences, politicians, romantic partners, and empathic therapists in an attempt to combat the growing alienation of fragmentation of the era”. Philip Cushman, ‘Why the Self is Empty: Toward a Historically Situated Psychology’, 600-601. In *American Psychologist* 45/5 (1990):599-611.
¹⁶ Cushman, ‘Why the Self is Empty’, 599-600.
emerged only in the 1970’s, triggered by a specific type of capitalist economy common to many English-speaking countries. Irrespective of when or why the culture began, however, there is no question that it exists, and that it has been fuelled ably by the advertising industry, which has grown-up around it. And, in turn, the advertising industry has been aided in an unprecedented way by modern technology. In the world of the twenty-first century, persuasive messages promoting the appeal of money, possessions, and physical perfection are ubiquitous, reaching not only into our homes but into our places, and even tools, of work and leisure too.

1.2 The Research Project in Overview

The establishing of consumerism is but one of a number of socio-cultural movements to have taken place in Western society over the course of the past forty to fifty years, in particular; and each of the developments, individually and collectively, is significant and of relevance in prompting and informing the current research. Nonetheless, it was perhaps fitting that it was in one of the world’s most materialistically-driven cities (Sydney, Australia) that Pope Benedict XVI, present for World Youth Day festivities in 2008, observed:

In so many societies, side by side with material prosperity, a spiritual desert is spreading, an interior emptiness, an unnamed fear, a quiet sense of despair.

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17 James, Affluenza, xvi. The non-English-speaking countries of Denmark, China, and Russia, for example, do not manifest such consumerist tendencies.

18 James does not suggest that capitalism in itself causes affluenza. Rather, the particular capitalist model that he sees to be at the root of consumerism—“Selfish Capitalism”—has the following core markers: (1) the success of a business is judged almost exclusively on its current share price; (2) a drive to privatize public utilities—water, gas electricity, &c—or to keep them in private ownership; (3) little regulation of business, and limited taxation of the rich and very rich, creating an increasing gap between rich and poor; (4) a conviction that consumption and market forces are able to meet almost every human need. Ref: James, Affluenza, xviii. See also ibid, 492.

19 It is noted that, since the outset of the current research project, the Global Financial Crisis of 2008/9 has had a major and devastating effect on the economies of the countries in question, of course (a circumstance which, it might be argued, relates directly to affluenza). And while, at the time of writing, it is too early to ascertain whether or not the situation will have a long-lasting effect in stemming the tide of overconsumption, early signs are that it may not in that, currently (2010), signs of recovery clearly are evident on stockmarkets globally.

20 In the English-speaking world, in particular.

21 Some of these developments will be discussed in more detail below.

22 That profound changes and developments have impacted the Western world of the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries is not in and of itself a remarkable situation, of course. Plainly, shifts and turns affect every age, culture, and society to varying degrees. This research project, then, has not been motivated simply by an awareness of change per se, but, rather, by the particular circumstances that have come together, and the particular effect that, in combination, they have had—which, quite clearly, must be unique to our time.


And it is the question of this spreading “spiritual desert” that, in broad terms, is at the core of this thesis. How are the particular developments of the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries affecting human spiritual growth and development in real terms? Who—if anyone—is coping well with life today? Where are ultimate meaning and purpose to be found in a world in which the majority, as suggested above, are seeking in places not able to satisfy even the most fundamental of human needs? Does it remain the case that, as David Tacey observed in 2003, “[t]he yearning for sacredness, spiritual meaning, security, and personal engagement with the spirit are the primary needs and longings of the contemporary world”? Or have such needs and longings now lessened or—indeed—worsened? In what shape is present-day spirituality in the Western world? And how might spiritual growth now be understood and measured?

1.2.1 Aims and Goal of the Research

These questions form the heart of this research, and, clearly, if answers can be found to some or all of them, the insight and understanding provided may offer a stepping stone toward developing suitable and effective means by which to support and encourage spiritual wellbeing and growth in contemporary times. Early explorations by the researcher led to the realization that the most creative and productive way to approach the issue—and one which might answer many if not most of the questions, albeit within a limited population—would be to undertake an empirical study, and use the resulting data to construct a model of spiritual development. This went on to become the formal goal of the research.

1.2.2 Narrowing the Research Focus

Plainly, it would be difficult, and certainly unwise, to attempt to construct a model of spiritual development unless participants of both genders and all ages were represented in the gathering of data. But these prerequisites aside, the parameters of the project-overall required a substantial narrowing of focus within the empirical component if the research were to be in a position to contribute anything of value, even potentially, to the debate. Of salience here is the knowledge that active involvement in religion appears to safeguard Westerners

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25 David Tacey, *The Spirituality Revolution: The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality* (Hove: Routledge, 2004 [2003]), 19-20. To set this quotation in context, Tacey goes on to suggest that this situation is behind the contemporary resurgence in interest in religion and spirituality—making this a time of challenge yet unprecedented opportunity for faith institutions.

26 However, as will be seen in Chapter Six, the logistics of the project ultimately—and regrettably—prevented the inclusion of children in the study.
from the worst excesses of the consumer culture. “Almost by definition, religious people are less likely to be materialistic”, notes Oliver James, whose position is endorsed by H Wesley Perkins’s study of 860 young college-educated adults in the US, which found that those with a greater religious commitment were less likely to have materialistic values; less likely to abuse alcohol, and generally were happier than those with little religious commitment. An exception to this rule, however, comes with those who are extrinsically, as opposed to intrinsically religious, who are as likely as non-believers to succumb to the material and depression.

These factors together make the actively religious stand-out as a group of particular interest in considering how twenty-first-century life might be affecting human spiritual growth and development. And thus this grouping was selected as the most suitable for the current research. Ultimately, the focus was narrowed further by conducting the research from the perspective of the Christian religion; with the empirical component undertaken within one country (Australia), and within one denomination (Anglican) of the Christian Church.

1.2.3 Scope and restrictions

The narrowing of the research in this express way makes it pertinent and important to note at the outset that—as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two—this paper does not view spirituality as the sole prerogative of the actively religious. Rather, spirituality is seen as a

Notwithstanding, it is clear that controversies currently surrounding religion and religious institutions may be creating other problems for the actively religious. See discussion in section 1.3.5, below.


Indeed, these and other general findings on the effects—both positive and negative—of religion on people of all ages are now well-documented by psychology-of-religion researchers including Michael Argyle, Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, Doug Omen, and Carl E Thoresen. For references and further discussion, see section 1.3.5, below.

An intrinsic/extrinsic religious-orientation scale created by Gordon Allport differentiated between intrinsic religious belief (initially framed by Allport as ‘mature’ belief) that is devout, heartfelt, and an end in itself; and extrinsic (initially framed as ‘immature’) religious belief that is more utilitarian, used as a means to non-religious ends. See, for example, Gordon W Allport, The Individual and His Religion (New York, Macmillan, 1960 [1950]). C Daniel Batson has since proposed a third orientation in which religious belief is characterized as an ongoing search (quest). See, for example, C Daniel Batson, Patricia Schoenrade, and W Larry Ventis, Religion and the Individual: A Social-Psychological Perspective (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993 [1982]).

The aims and goals of the research (see section 1.2.1, above), and the subsequent selection of this particular participant-grouping essentially align the study to the ideology of positive psychology—an approach to psychology, introduced in 1998, which seeks to nurture and promote human wellbeing and positive functioning by studying, understanding, and then building-on, what is known to work best. Introducing the approach, its pioneer, Martin E P Seligman (one-time President of the American Psychological Association), and colleague, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, elucidate: “[P]sychology is not just the study of pathology, weakness, and damage; it is also the study of strength and virtue. Treatment is not just fixing what is broken; it is nurturing what is best”. Ref: Martin E P Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, ‘Positive Psychology: An Introduction’, 7. In American Psychologist 55/1 (2000): 5-14.
corollary of human being. For this reason, it is acknowledged that, no matter what the ultimate outcome of the research, any contribution that it may make can be a starting point only in the quest to understand and chart spiritual form and development in the Western world of the twenty-first century.

1.3 A Selective Exploration of Our Times

1.3.1 Introduction

It has been noted, above, that Westerners actively involved in religion are less likely to succumb to materialistic values than their non-believing counterparts, but, in line with society as-a-whole (and, indeed, with societies of every era), they too have moved through and been subject to many other changes and cultural shifts. It is not the task of this paper to explain why such changes have—indeed, are—taking place, of course, but it is relevant to the research to consider, in broad terms at least, what some of these changes are in order to gain insight into their impact—if any—on spiritual formation and growth. A brief exploration will be made here, then, of a selection of developments that have affected the structure and operation of society; the impact and effect of science and technology, and shifts that have taken place within the sphere of religion. For the most part, this discussion embraces Western society in general, and the English-speaking world in particular; but, where specific examples are required, Australia—as the location in which the empirical study is to be undertaken—has been used as a representative nation.34

1.3.2 Historical Overview

To set this exposition into its big-picture framework, it might be said that Western society to-date has moved through at least three major cultural stages—from the religious and moral certainties of the small, stable, family-Based agrarian communities of the pre- to mid-eighteenth century, to the more individualistic and rationally/scientifically-oriented industrialized world of the modern era. A further shift began in the mid-twentieth-century with the advent of information technology and advances in communication from which emerged the fragmented,

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34 It is acknowledged, however, that examples used may or may not reflect the situation in other Western nations. While Australia shares similarities with its Western peers, it remains distinctive in a number of ways—a helpful overview of some of which is provided by Gary Bouma. Bouma writes: "While of British modern origin, Australian society is not British. While heavily overlaid with substantial European migration, it is not European. While deeply allied with the USA in foreign policy and subject to massive cultural injection from the USA, it is not American...On the other hand, Australia is one of the most advanced multicultural societies, and has seen itself as secular for decades. Australia can be seen as a postmodern, secular, and multicultural society." Gary Bouma, Australian Soul: Religion and Spirituality in the Twenty-first Century (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3.
globalised, and socially-constructed postmodernist culture. John McLeod provides a helpful overview of key characteristics that have changed in Western society since agrarian times—as set-out in Table 1.3.2, below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.3.2</th>
<th>Key characteristics of the cultural development of the Western world</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Way of Life</td>
<td>Collective, family-oriented way of life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self definition</td>
<td>In terms of external factors: importance of honour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundational belief</td>
<td>From religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moral Values</td>
<td>Moral certainty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>Static</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political control</td>
<td>Localised</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary work</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As the Table illustrates, the experience of human living today is markedly different from that of earlier times. It is more complex; and offers less direction, stability, and certainty. And, notes McLeod, all aspects of a cultural framework have an impact on the experience of being—and on more than one plane:

The differences between the traditional, modern and postmodern worlds exist not only at the level of social organisations, institutions and forms of communication, but also at the level of the individual person. The sense of what it is to be a person is socially constructed. It depends on the relational web, the belief and kinship systems, the economic order, into which one is born. And the sense of what it means to be a person has changed.37

Plainly, understanding ‘the sense of what it means to be a person’—and, specifically, the sense of what it means to be a Christian person—is fundamental to this thesis. Yet understanding it may prove highly complex in that, clearly, in today’s world, some have been born into modern culture, and may relate more strongly to its characteristics and outlook; while

36 For a more detailed and specific list of characteristics that define postmodern culture, see, for example, David B Perrin, Studying Christian Spirituality (New York: Routledge, 2007), 81.
37 McLeod, Narrative and Psychotherapy, 3-4.
younger adults are likely to identify more keenly with the postmodern approach into which they were born.\textsuperscript{38} And, as David Perrin observes, this time of transition may be unsettling for some:

\begin{quote}
[It] would be false to suggest that we have passed completely from a modernist to a postmodernist perspective on the world. We can see both the characteristics of modernity and the newly developing sensitivities of postmodernity active in the social, political, economic, and ecclesial systems of the world. Clearly, societies are in a period of transition. Indeed, change and flux are salient characteristics of postmodernism. But this period of change and flux is difficult for many: the familiar, which is being lost, has not yet been replaced by the new.\textsuperscript{39}
\end{quote}

Several features of this sometimes-challenging contemporary period—which constitutes the societal framework in and through which the experience of personhood now is being constructed—are outlined, below.\textsuperscript{40}

1.3.3 The Social Revolution

High levels of emotional distress notwithstanding, there can be no doubt that members of advanced nations within twenty-first-century society are living longer and physically healthier lives than ever before. In Australia, for example, life expectancy has increased by three years in the course of a decade, with life expectancy for those born in 2007 now seventy-nine years for males and eighty-four years for females.\textsuperscript{41} And the fabric of society in which these longer lives are being lived has changed exponentially over the past twenty-five to thirty years, in particular, leading social researcher, Hugh Mackay, to deem the changes a “revolution”—not only within day-to-day living, but in “the gender revolution, the workplace revolution wrought by the restructure of our economy, the IT revolution and even the revolution in our sense of who we are”.\textsuperscript{42}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{38} Furthermore, members of either grouping simultaneously may uphold traditional beliefs, especially in relation to religion and moral values; and some may draw on all three worldviews. Carrie Doehring sets-out the complexities of this situation in her publication on pastoral care, and—citing the work of Emmanuel Y Larty—argues that pre-modern, modern, and postmodern approaches can co-exist simultaneously for an individual, requiring carers to have ‘trifocal lenses’ in their approach. Carrie Doehring, The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Practice (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 1-6.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Perrin, Studying Christian Spirituality, 81-2.
\item \textsuperscript{40} As noted elsewhere, the following discussion is not intended to be comprehensive, but, rather, seeks to offer a selective snapshot of contemporary living in the Western world.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Hugh Mackay, Advance Australia…Where? (Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2008), 7.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The following is a selective summary of some of the societal shifts that have resulted from such ‘revolutions’ within contemporary Australia; impacting every generation at least to some degree.\(^{43}\)

- Australia’s birth-rate has dropped to the lowest in recorded history, with many couples now viewing having children as an option rather than an expectation. The incoming generation is the country’s smallest-ever generation.

- At the same time, proportionately the largest generation of children (the Baby Boomer generation) is now in or approaching retirement—a situation which, coupled with today’s increased life-expectation, is creating a top-heavy society, and, with it, major economic concerns.

- Women are having children later in life. Today, the average age for a woman to have her first child is thirty-one years (thirty years ago, the average was 22-23 years).

- Most couples live together before marriage; and there is a more flexible and transient attitude to marriage. The current marriage-rate is the lowest in a century, and falling.

- Less than half the population are married by the age of thirty (thirty years ago, ninety per-cent were married by this age).

- Forty-five per-cent of 20-25-year olds, and thirty per-cent of 20-29 year olds, still live in the family home.

- Divorce is no longer stigmatized, and the divorce rate is more than forty per-cent.

- Half of all divorces involve children under the age of eighteen.

- Twenty-two per-cent of children aged 0-17 live with only one of their birth parents.

- More than 500,000 children move either weekly or fortnightly from the home of one of their parents to that of their other parent.\(^{44}\)

- More people than ever before are living alone. More than half of all households now are one-to-two person, and it is projected that, by 2026, more than a third of all households will house one person only.

- There has been a major redistribution of work, with some working longer hours than ever before, but others under- or unemployed—creating a significant shift in the distribution of wealth.

\(^{43}\) Information and statistics given in the following list have been drawn from those noted by Australian social researcher and psychologist, Hugh Mackay, in the 2008-edition of his book, *Advance Australia…Where?* (Sydney: Hachette Australia). Mackay acknowledges the Australian Bureau of Statistics (URL: [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)) as the source of his statistics.

Manifestly, such profound shifts, taken together, cannot come without human consequences—both positive and negative. But what effect might they be having on spiritual being and development?

1.3.4 The IT Revolution

The American philosopher, Eric Hoffer, is once said to have observed, wryly: "In a time of drastic change it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists". And it is notable that one of the effects of major societal shifts on younger people in particular has been in their easy adaption to change itself. Mackay suggests that they have learned to keep their options open, stay uncommitted, and be prepared for constant change. And, in some ways, the ability of young people to be open to change has stood—and should continue to stand—them in good stead in dealing with the ongoing progressions that have come with advances in science, and, in particular, in technology. The advent and rapid rise of the Internet in the late twentieth-century means that most were born into or have grown-up in the Digital Age, and so have learned to adapt with ease to its often-rapid developments. The virtual networking sites of Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and YouTube, for example, are now more accessible than ever with the incoming synthesis of technologies that is quickly moving multi-media into mono-media; and a mobile phone is often all that is needed for people to stay in touch, and remain up-to-date with news and views around the clock—and, indeed, around the world.

Plainly, these are exciting developments, bringing numerous benefits, but downsides are evident too. For one thing, a new generational divide is emerging, with younger people invariably displaying an expertise in an area that, in general terms, is markedly less well understood by their older counterparts. Young people have grown up learning the language of the digital era and, metaphorically-speaking, have become ‘digital natives’ to their elders’ ‘digital immigrants’, suggests Marc Prensky. Certainly, digital immigrants may have adopted many aspects of the new technology, but, in keeping with all who learn another language later

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45 This often-quoted axiom invariably is attributed to American writer and philosopher, Eric Hoffer (1902-1983). The researcher has been unable to substantiate this for citation purposes, however. It is noted that a few have attributed the adage to Eric Hoffer, of the US-based Vanguard Management Corp.
46 Mackay, Advance Australia…Where?, 170.
in life, they cannot help but retain the ‘accent’ of their first language—in this case, that of the pre-digital world. In this case, that of the pre-digital world.  

Our younger generations, on the other hand, Prensky observes:

...represent the first generations to grow up with this new technology. They have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age. Today’s average college grads have spent less than 5,000 hours of their lives reading, but over 10,000 hours playing video games...Computer games, email, the Internet, cell phones and instant messaging are integral parts of their lives...our students today are all native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet.

For neurologist Daniel Levitin, Prensky’s citing of the “10,000 hours playing video games” would not be insignificant in that ten-thousand hours is the time-frame now known to be required by the human brain to achieve excellence:

The emerging picture...is that ten thousand hours of practice is required to achieve the level of mastery associated with being a world-class expert—in anything...The ten-thousand-hours theory is consistent with what we know about how the brain learns.

However, the sheer ubiquity of the digital environment means that, not only have they attained such mastery, but digital natives have come to learn, think, and process in a way that is fundamentally different from that of many or most of their elders (pertinently, the people to whom other members of society once looked as providers, if not masters, of human wisdom).

Prensky highlights some of the distinctions in terms of operating preferences—as shown in Table 1.3.4, below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferences of Digital Natives</th>
<th>Preferences of Digital Immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To receive information quickly via multiple sources</td>
<td>Slow and controlled release of information from limited sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel processing and multi-tasking</td>
<td>Linear processing and single or limited tasking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To process pictures, sound, colour, and video ahead of text</td>
<td>To process text ahead of pictures, sound, colour, and video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random access to hyper-linked information</td>
<td>Information that is linear, logical, and sequential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To network simultaneously with many others</td>
<td>To work independently before networking or interacting with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant gratification and immediate rewards</td>
<td>Deferred gratification and delayed rewards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50 Daniel Levitin, This is Your Brain on Music (London: Atlantic, 2006), 197.
51 The information in this table is drawn from Prensky, ‘Listen to the Natives’, 8.
Perceptibly, many of the cognitive processes preferred by the older-aged digital immigrants are those attributed to left-brain function (verbal, sequential, logical, rational, for example\textsuperscript{52}), while many of those preferred by the younger digital natives are those attributed to right-brain function (nonverbal, visuo-spatial, simultaneous, for example\textsuperscript{53}). What the significance of this might be in the long-term remains to be seen,\textsuperscript{54} but, for neuroscientist Susan Greenfield,\textsuperscript{55} it is clear that the effect of spending so much time in the virtual world of cyber-space is actually altering the human brain in a particular way.\textsuperscript{56} With the brain now known to be malleable and ‘plastic’,\textsuperscript{57} every post-natal experience physically changes it in some way. And, she posits, the area of the brain to be changed, and the way in which it changes, is wholly dependent on the particular input it receives.\textsuperscript{58}

It is clear from this then, that no two human brains can be identical. Having been personalized—and, continuing to be personalized—by a singular set of experiences, each must be unique. For Greenfield, the personalized brain is what constitutes the human mind.\textsuperscript{59} And the human mind—synonymous with human identity—determines what it means to be human. In our digital age in which the brain of some is beginning to be reshaped by technology, and generations are coming to function in disparate ways,\textsuperscript{60} what effect are these developments together having on the human spirit, and, in turn, on the shape of human spirituality?

### 1.3.5 The Religious Revolution

With its empirical study to be conducted within the Christian church, an area of particular interest to this research is, of course, that of religion. And this interest is all the more pertinent


\textsuperscript{53} Springer and Deutsch, \textit{Left Brain, Right Brain}, 272.

\textsuperscript{54} For discussion in this area, see, for example, Daniel Pink, \textit{A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age} (New York: Riverhead, 2005).

\textsuperscript{55} Susan Greenfield is Director of the Royal Institution and Professor of Pharmacology at Oxford University.

\textsuperscript{56} As an adjunct to this—and its benefits notwithstanding—Greenfield expresses concern about the negative effects on younger people of spending so much time in the two-dimensional world of screen-culture, which, she suggests, not only inhibits the imagination, but is subsuming personal identity into a collective identity, bereft of personal meaning. See Greenfield, \textit{ID}, 173-190. Furthermore, the use of networking sites—in which individuals invariably and openly detail personal thoughts and actions—together with the increasing use of (often-interconnected) electronic information bases, mean that current concepts of what constitutes personal privacy seem set to disappear. Greenfield, \textit{ID}, 8-9, 123, & 129.

\textsuperscript{57} Used in this sense, the word plastic is derived from the Greek, \textit{plastikos}, meaning ‘to be moulded’. Ref: Susan Greenfield, \textit{ID: The Quest for Identity in the 21st Century} (London: Sceptre, 2008), 27.

\textsuperscript{58} Greenfield, \textit{ID}, 31.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 93.

\textsuperscript{60} It is acknowledged that—future developments aside—this may be a problem unique to our times, in that, ultimately, of course, all generations will be digital natives, born into the digital language.
in that, as will be seen, every participant is to be an active churchgoer at the time of the conducting of the study. In keeping with all members of Western society, each participant will have been exposed to the various cultural shifts discussed above, to some degree at least. But this section seeks to highlight some of the additional changing circumstances that go hand-in-hand with being an active member of a religious organization, and that may, in turn, be impacting on the faith and spirituality of those concerned.

It has already been noted that the actively religious are less likely to succumb to the culture of overconsumption, but church members also enjoy a number of other benefits as a result of their regular attendance at church. Studies in the psychology of religion are now well established, and have shown that churchgoing can bring with it numerous benefits—the following, among them. Churchgoers, note psychologists:

- Tend to be happier than non-churchgoers—especially the older members
  
  This comes as a result not only of faith and relationship with God, but also from benefits derived from being part of a strong and supportive social network

- May enjoy better physical health
  
  As a consequence of the increase in their subjective wellbeing, plus behavioural tendencies

- Live longer, on average

- Fear death considerably less

- Have happier marriages/partnerships, which are more likely to last

- May achieve more, and have a slightly higher degree of worldly success

- Can benefit society as a result of some of their behavioural tendencies
  
  Altruism; work in the community; lower rates of crime; concern for the suffering, for example

Negative effects of churchgoing, while evident, are much less salient; and so, in general terms, church membership can be a highly positive and fulfilling experience—and for both the extrinsically-oriented and intrinsically-oriented religious.

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61 See Chapter Six. Research data for the study was collected during 2007-2008.

62 This list has been compiled from the following sources: Michael Argyle, *Psychology and Religion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000), 141-154; Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi and Michael Argyle, *The Psychology of Religious Behaviour, Belief, and Experience* (Routledge: London and New York, 1997), 184-229; Doug Omen and Carl E Thoresen, “Do Religion and Spirituality Influence Health?” In Raymond F Paloutzian and Crystal L Park (eds), *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* (New York and London: The Guilford Press, 2005), 435-459. It is emphasized that these are generalized findings, and that differences in some of the findings may be evident between the intrinsically- and extrinsically-oriented religious; and between those of different religions and denominations.

63 This is only the case if partners attend the same church. This benefit is negated—and generally worsened—if partners attend different churches.
Such bonuses of churchgoing aside, in recent years religion as-a-whole has been tarnished with markedly less positive associations. Indeed, it is something of a paradox that, though the twenty-first-century has provided humanity with both means and opportunity to communicate more widely and swiftly than ever before, impasses, misunderstandings, and breakdowns in communication have soured many inter-group relationships—and arguably most noticeably in the domain of religion. Terror, scandal, schism, and ongoing conflicts have raised the profile of religion in ways that have been both shocking and devastating. The 2001 ‘9/11’ terror attack in the US; the 2002 Bali bombings; and the 2005 ‘7/7’ terrorist bombing in the UK all are instances of extremist activity, supposedly undertaken in the name of religion, which together caused the death or injury of many thousands of people. Furthermore, there have been allegations and findings of the sexual abuse of children at the hands of church leaders in positions of pastoral care. And splits from within have emerged caused by developments such as the ordination of women, and, more recently, the consecration in the US of a gay bishop. All are examples of incidents and events that, in the eyes of the secular world at least, have raised serious questions about religion in general; drawn indictments of prejudice, and/or have undermined church authority and leadership.

Undoubtedly, such happenings have added weight to the arguments of outspoken atheists from around the world—A C Grayling, Michael Onfray, and the so-called ‘Four Horsemen’ of Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens, for example, some of whom—rejecting all forms and types of religious belief, both liberal and conservative—have predicted the end of religion per se. For philosopher, Grayling, in his essay, ‘The Death Throes of Religion’, for example:

64 For example, a loss of freedom to think; behavioural prohibitions (both of which might be considered a positive for some, however); plus evidence of increased prejudice among some of the less religiously active. Ref: Argyle, Psychology and Religion, 198.
65 As footnoted above, an intrinsic/extrinsic religious-orientation scale created by Gordon Allport differentiated between intrinsic religious belief that is devout, heartfelt, and an end in itself; and extrinsic religious belief that is more utilitarian, used as a means to non-religious ends.
66 It is notable that The Tony Blair Faith Foundation is now establishing globally in response to these concerns, seeking to “promote respect and understanding about the world’s major religions and show how faith is a powerful force for good in the modern world”. The Foundation’s website further notes: “[T]he values of respect, justice and compassion that our great religions share have never been more relevant or important to bring people together to build a better world. But religious faith can also be used to divide. We have seen throughout history and today we still see how it can be distorted to fan the flames of hatred and extremism. The Tony Blair Faith Foundation is a response to these opportunities and challenges”. Ref: ‘About Us’, The Tony Blair Faith Foundation. Accessed 14 September 2010. Available from http://www.tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/pages/about-us.
The grinding of historical tectonic plates will be painful and protracted. But the outcome is not in doubt. As private observance, religion will of course survive among minorities; as a factor in public and international affairs it is having what might be its last-characteristically bloody-fling.\(^{67}\)

For evolutionary scientists such as Dawkins, Darwin’s theory of natural selection is all that is required to explain successfully what religion has been trying to explain unsuccessfully, essentially making God redundant.\(^{68}\) And further muddying of the religious waters may have come with new and critical understandings of sacred texts that have come through the literary, historical, and textual approaches of scholars.

Clearly, such major developments, individually and collectively, cannot have gone unnoticed by churchgoers, and it is notable that, in recent years, there has been a steady decline in overall attendance of the Christian church,\(^{69}\) at the same time as there has been a distinctive rise in interest in spirituality in the secular world.\(^{70}\) However, almost inexplicably, a renewal in churchgoing now is underway, and, the differing religious landscapes evident among the English-speaking countries notwithstanding,\(^{71}\) the picture of rejuvenation is one that is being painted on all sides of the world. In the UK, Alister McGrath comments: "Religion, long predicted to be on its way out, has obstinately refused to go".\(^{72}\) In the US, Richard Flory and Donald E Miller observe that, despite the arguments, “religion isn’t going anywhere any time soon”.\(^{73}\) And, in Australia, Gary Bouma reports: “It is now clear that Australia’s religious and spiritual life is alive and responding creatively to the chances and changes of its social and cultural context.”\(^{74}\) Plainly, however, the renewing landscape of religion as humanity enters the second decade of the twenty-first century is markedly different from that of times past, with Bouma noting:

\(^{67}\) A C Grayling, Against All Gods (London: Oberon, 2007), 57.

\(^{68}\) See, for example, Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion (London: Transworld, 2006), 113-151.


\(^{70}\) Heelas and Woodhead posit that this concurrent decline and growth is due to a major cultural shift in which Westerners are choosing to move away from life lived according to external expectations and hierarchical authority, in favour of living life in-relation in accord with one’s own inner experience. And this shift from ‘life-as’ to ‘subjective-life’, they argue, also is at the heart of the difference in contemporary meanings between religion and spirituality. Ref: Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 1-7. (A fuller discussion on the difference between religion and spirituality is offered in Chapter Two of this paper).

\(^{71}\) See, for example, Gary Bouma, Australian Soul (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3.


\(^{74}\) Bouma, Australian Soul, 171.
This reawakening is taking place in a different sociocultural environment: a world characterized by the global movement of ideas, capital and people; and a world to which some are happy to apply the term ‘postmodernity’; that is, a world that is radically different to modernity.\textsuperscript{75}

This thesis seeks to discover how churchgoers of today, young and old, are shaping-up spiritually in the socio-cultural context of this radically different postmodern world.

1.3.6 Conclusion

This brief exploration has endeavoured to provide the context and backdrop to the research by touching on a selection of some of the more profound ‘revolutions’ through which society is moving today, some or all of which will be impacting every member of society on at least some level. It has sought to draw together some relevant, if disparate, threads in the complex tapestry of the Western world of the current era: a world in which emotional distress is rife; a ‘spiritual desert’ spreads, yet hope and promise remain.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This investigation takes an inter- and multi-disciplinary perspective, drawing principally on the academic disciplines of Christian spirituality, theology, psychology, sociology, history, and music. It seeks to examine spiritual growth and wellbeing in light of the major cultural and social changes that have taken place in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries; aiming to construct a model of spiritual development. Notwithstanding that spirituality is understood as a function of humanity rather than that of the religious exclusively, the research has been intentionally narrowed to active churchgoers of the Christian faith; and the investigation will centre on an empirical study undertaken with adults of all ages within the Anglican Church of Australia. The first six chapters of this paper relate to the planning and execution of this empirical work. Specifically, Chapter Two seeks to lay the foundations for the project by discussing what spirituality is; how it is expressed; and how it might best be examined. Drawing on literature in the field, it will offer understandings of spirituality and Christian spirituality for current purposes, and further will seek to place spiritual growth in the context of overall human development. The paper moves on in Chapters Three and Four to explore the potential worth and effectiveness of two media—namely, narrative and music—through which study-participants might be aided to access, explore, and articulate their

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, xiii.
spiritual being; and seeks to validate their use within the empirical study. Chapter Five discusses the chosen methodological framework and investigative tools for the study; and the specific research-design is detailed in Chapter Six.

The final four chapters of the thesis report on and discuss the findings of the empirical study. Chapter Seven is the pivotal chapter of the thesis, presenting the findings of the study, and including the conceptualization of a new model of spirituality. Chapter Eight engages the emergent findings in dialogue with established models of spirituality, before the findings as they relate to the research questions are discussed in Chapter Nine. Chapter Ten offers conclusions, including implications of the research and potential for further study in the area.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has set the context for the research-project by exploring a number of significant shifts and developments that have taken—or, indeed, are taking—place within contemporary Western society. Questions have been raised about the collective effect of these changes on spiritual wellbeing and growth; and these are to be investigated using empirical methods.

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76 Chapters Three and Four are believed to be essential to the thesis, serving not only to justify the use of, and to explain the background to, the two media in question, but to determine the most effective way to employ these media within the empirical study. It is advised, however, that both chapters stand alone in a number of ways—notwithstanding some cross-referencing to them later in the paper—and thus would be suitable for reading at a later stage if a reader preferred to learn initially of the empirical study.

77 See section 1.2, above.
Chapter Two: Exploring Spirituality

Spirituality is a journey that, for me, never ends. And it’s about me, my relationship with God, and my relationship with other people.

‘Jeff’, aged 65

Chapter Two
Exploring Spirituality

2.1 Introduction

In broad terms, the current research project seeks to undertake an empirical exploration of spiritual development, with a view to generating a model that will reflect and chart spiritual development in the contemporary Western world. To set the scene for the undertaking, this chapter will offer a selective overview of what is known about spirituality, and, indeed, Christian spirituality, in the twenty-first century. It is pertinent to note at the outset that, in line with recommended guidelines for the methodology to be employed, this review of literature will be kept within general parameters, with a subsequent review—encompassing the specific field of the study—to be undertaken after completion of the conceptual analysis of study data.

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. Firstly, it seeks to frame a specific understanding of spirituality—including conceptual limits—for the purposes of the research. Secondly, it aims to outline the scholarly framework in which the empirical component of the research sits, and highlight relevant findings from within it, in order to select the most suitable methodological tools for the gathering and analysis of study data. The chapter begins by examining what is meant by the term, spirituality, including an exploration of the origin and development of the word, and an outline of the concepts and limits of spirituality that are to be assumed within the current paper. It will move on to offer an overview of the academic study of spirituality, including aspects pertinent to the empirical component of the current research. Finally, it will explore the concept of human spiritual development, including setting spiritual development in the context of human development as a whole; and exploring the

1 Namely, that of constructivist grounded theory. See Chapter Five.
2 As will be seen in Chapter Five, the intention of this guideline is to avoid placing a researcher in a situation in which his/her analysis of study-data might be unduly influenced by extant findings.
3 Within this paper, a review of literature specific to the study-findings is offered in Chapter Eight.
4 As Philip Sheldrake suggests, “Spirituality, as an area of study, must be capable of definition. If it has no conceptual limits, effectively it means nothing”. Ref: Philip Sheldrake, Spirituality and History (SPCK: London, 1991), 32.
characteristics, qualities, and attributes that, in real terms, might constitute and identify human spirituality and its development.

### 2.2 What is Spirituality?

#### 2.2.1 Introduction

Spirituality “is one of those subjects whose meaning everyone claims to know until they have to define it,” observes Philip Sheldrake. And, certainly, there can be few contemporary words more open to misunderstanding than that of *spirituality* and its derivatives. As Sandra Schneiders noted in 1986, “[s]pirituality is, in a sense, a phenomenon which has not yet been defined, analyzed, or categorized to anyone’s satisfaction”. And, some twenty-five years on, that situation appears not to have changed, or, if anything, to have worsened, with definitions and understandings arguably as numerous as those who seek to define or understand it. Indeed, so vague and obscure has the word become that it is rare to find a contemporary text on spirituality that does not refer in some way to the difficulties that arise in attempting to define it. As will be seen, spirituality initially emerged as an exclusively Christian term, and the definitional difficulties of today can be traced back to a gradual undermining of traditional and fixed understandings regarding the expectations and constituents of Christian living, and their steady replacement with approaches that are less rigid and significantly more adaptable. Walter Principe cites the middle of the twentieth-century as a time when this paradigm shift became particularly evident, with scholars openly beginning to question the meaning of *spirituality* (a noun of Latin origin, with an adjectival counterpart of early-Christian origin); and, in particular, whether Christian spirituality was of one form only, or could be of several. At the time, use of the term was escalating, with *spirituality* being used in place of previously-favoured words and phrases such as *piety*, *devout life*, and *interior life*. Moreover, it was coming to be applied within a wide variety of academic studies ranging, for example, from expositions into the spirituality of specific individuals, historical periods, and the Bible; to that of

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5 Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, 32.
8 A fuller examination of the origins of *spirituality* is given below.
Chapter Two: Exploring Spirituality

the land, matter, and even the spirituality of the human voice.\textsuperscript{10} It can be seen that subtle shifts in meaning and scope were implicit amid such applications—a situation that escalated markedly when use of the word moved beyond academic and religious circles and into the vernacular. Set within this broader framework, spirituality quickly assumed a proliferation of socially-constructed meanings and expressions; and Bregman observes that some one-hundred definitions have been put forward in recent years by scholars, clinicians, health professionals, therapists, and church leaders.\textsuperscript{11}

A clear outcome of such competing claims is that spirituality has deteriorated as a linguistic symbol, and, for some, now even is polarized, carrying both positive and pejorative connotations.\textsuperscript{12} For Carrette and King, for example:

\begin{quote}
[Spirituality]...represents on the one hand all that is banal and vague about New Age religiosity, while on the other signifying a transcendent quality, enhancing life and distilling all that is positive from the ‘ageing and outdated’ casks of traditional religious institutions.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

And in a world marked increasingly by terrorism, Tacey discerns a rising confusion between spirituality and religious fundamentalism,\textsuperscript{14} and a blurring of the line between such respectively creative and destructive forms of spiritual expression—with the result that many are rejecting both in the erroneous, if understandable, belief that humanity’s sense of the sacred is at fault.\textsuperscript{15} Such instances show spirituality to be an exemplar of words that have suffered the fate of the movement and limitations of the English language—as T S Eliot so expressively articulates:

\begin{quote}
\begin{itemize}
\item Spirituality and fundamentalism are at opposite ends of the cultural spectrum, notes Tacey, who differentiates between them as follows: “Spirituality seeks a sensitive, contemplative, transformative relationship with the sacred, and is able to sustain levels of uncertainty in its quest because respect for mystery is paramount. Fundamentalism seeks certainty, fixed answers and absolutism, as a fearful response to the complexity of the world and to our vulnerability as creatures in a mysterious universe. Spirituality arises from love of and intimacy with the sacred, and fundamentalism arises from fear of and and possession by the sacred. The choice between spirituality and fundamentalism is a choice between conscious intimacy and unconscious possession”. Tacey, The Spirituality Revolution, 11.
\end{itemize}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, 128-129. Principe offers full references of these and other similar studies.
\textsuperscript{11} Lucy Bregman, ‘Defining Spirituality: Multiple Uses and Murky Meanings of an Incredibly Popular Term’, 158. Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling 58/3 (2004): 157-168.  And, plainly, in the years since Bregman undertook this research, the number of definitions is likely to have increased significantly.
\textsuperscript{13} Carrette and King, Selling Spirituality, 2. Clearly, however, not all would agree with this sentiment in that precisely which expressions of spirituality within the New Age/traditional-religion dichotomy constitute the pejorative, and which the positive, surely would be subjective—resting on the situation, outlook, and experience of the individual.
\textsuperscript{14} Spirituality and fundamentalism are at opposite ends of the cultural spectrum, notes Tacey, who differentiates between them as follows: “Spirituality seeks a sensitive, contemplative, transformative relationship with the sacred, and is able to sustain levels of uncertainty in its quest because respect for mystery is paramount. Fundamentalism seeks certainty, fixed answers and absolutism, as a fearful response to the complexity of the world and to our vulnerability as creatures in a mysterious universe. Spirituality arises from love of and intimacy with the sacred, and fundamentalism arises from fear of and and possession by the sacred. The choice between spirituality and fundamentalism is a choice between conscious intimacy and unconscious possession”. Tacey, The Spirituality Revolution, 11.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 11-12.
Today, with no universal understanding in anything other than the broadest sense, *spirituality* has become “a Humpty Dumpty word that means whatever the speaker wants it to mean”, posits Rowe. For this reason, for this paper to be in a position to explore spirituality in such a way that it can be understood by every reader, a definition first must be given for it. This cannot be done arbitrarily, however, and an understanding first must be sought that best fits the context and purpose of the research: namely, that of an inter- and multi-disciplinary academic research project exploring human spiritual development, and centring on an empirical study to be undertaken within a traditional religious institution (Christian). The following exposition seeks to move toward this customized understanding by exploring the origins of spirituality; distinguishing between concepts of religion and spirituality, and concepts of spirituality and Christian spirituality, and framing lived human spirituality as personal, unique, and relational.

### 2.2.2 The Origins of Spirituality

It has been established that numerous understandings of *spirituality* now exist; and the development of the word from the mid-twentieth-century has been examined. But how far removed are these contemporary meanings and concepts from that understood in antiquity? As suggested above, it is known that the adjective, *spiritual*, is Christian in origin, coming from the early church, and perhaps specifically from St Paul, who is thought to have invented the word (at least in its Greek form of *pneuma*) to describe that which is imbued with the Holy

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17 Dorothy Rowe, “What Do You Mean by Spiritual?” in Simon King-Spooner and Craig Newnes (eds), *Spirituality and Psychotherapy* (Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books, 2001), 41. Here, Rowe is referring to the following extract from nineteenth-century novelist Lewis Carroll: “When I use a word”, Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less”. “The question is”, said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things”. “The question is”, said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be Master—that's all”. Ref: Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass (And What Alice Found There)* (London & New York: Merrell, 2006 [1871]), 59.
Spirit.¹⁹ And the noun, *spirituality*, is linked to the Latin verb, *spiro*, *spirare*, meaning ‘to breathe’,²⁰ and, in turn, to *spiritalis*, *spiritus*, meaning ‘breath of air, breath, breathing’.²¹ These latter Latin cognates were used by the Scriptural scholar and apologist, St Jerome (345—c419 CE)²² to translate the Greek *pneuma* and *pneumatikos* of Pauline theology into Latin,²³ and went on to be used in the later translation into English.²⁴

As Principe observes, Paul made a clear distinction between ‘spirit’ (*pneuma*) and ‘flesh’ (Greek: *sax*; Latin: *caro*), and further contrasted ‘spiritual’ (*pneumatikos*) with both ‘fleshy’ (*sarkikos*; *carnalis*) and ‘animal’ (*psychikos*; *animalis*). Notably, however, he did not contrast ‘spirit’ with either ‘body’ (*soma*; *corpus*), ‘bodily’ (*somatikos*; *corporalis*) or ‘matter’ (*hylē*; *materia*). This, suggests Principe, reflects Paul’s thinking that the entire being, both body and soul, of the spiritual person are guided by and in line with the Holy Spirit of God, as opposed to the fleshly or carnal person and the psychic or animated person, the entire being, body and soul, of both of whom are against the Spirit. Thus, body and soul—the corporeal and the incorporeal, the material and the immaterial—are aligned rather than distinct from one another, and instead it is the chosen way of life that distinguishes between the spiritual and the carnal person.²⁵ ²⁶ ²⁷ Schneiders further notes that Paul also uses *spiritual* when citing and

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²² Now known as St Jerome, Jerome’s Latin name was Eusebius Hieronymus. Ref: Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality*, 55.


²⁶ Paul clearly distinguishes between the spiritual and the unspiritual in his first letter to the church in Corinth: “Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God’s Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else’s scrutiny. ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?’ But we have the mind of Christ. And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants of Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations?’” (1 Corinthians 2:14-3: 3). Biblical reference highlighted by Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality*, 27.

²⁷ Specifically for Paul, the carnal person—one who is opposed to the Spirit of God—is marked-out by certain behaviours. These are cited in his letter to the church in Galatia: “The works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these”. (Galatians 5:19-21a). In contrast, the spiritual person—living in line with the Spirit of God—displays the fruit of the Holy Spirit, writes
Chapter Two: Exploring Spirituality

describing the intangible or the abstract which are deemed to be expressions of the Holy Spirit—for example, truth,\textsuperscript{28} songs,\textsuperscript{29} gifts,\textsuperscript{30} and the Law.\textsuperscript{31,32}

The Pauline view of spirituality as that which is in line with the Holy Spirit went on to be upheld essentially unchanged from the time of the early church, throughout the Patristic period.\textsuperscript{33} It was upheld by the desert fathers and mothers of fourth- and fifth-century CE Egypt,\textsuperscript{34} and by later writers such as the thirteenth-century’s St Thomas of Aquinas (1225-1274 CE).\textsuperscript{35,36} However, from the twelfth-century CE onwards, a shift in theological thinking—emerging primarily as a result of the establishment of universities in Europe, and the onset of scholasticism—\textsuperscript{37}began to align spirituality to the rational, incorporeal, immaterial self as against the non-rational, corporeal, material self.

Perrin posits that this arose from the interpretation of Paul’s writing by some twelfth and thirteenth-century CE scholars,\textsuperscript{38} in which they misguidedly took the word \textit{pneuma} (spirit) to mean the human soul, and the word \textit{sarx} (flesh) to mean the human body, and set one against the other. The body, in consequence, came to be seen disparagingly, as separate from the soul, and of markedly lesser significance; and created a shift away from the Pauline notion of spirituality:

\begin{quote}
Paul, specifying that “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”. (Galatians 5: 22-23a). Both biblical references highlighted by Perrin, \textit{Studying Christian Spirituality}, 27.

\textsuperscript{28} “And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting \textit{spiritual} things to those who are \textit{spiritual”}, (1 Corinthians 2:13).

\textsuperscript{29} “…as you sing psalms and hymns and \textit{spiritual} songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts’. (Ephesians 5:19).

\textsuperscript{30} “Now concerning \textit{spiritual} gifts, brothers and sisters…To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allot to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses”. (1 Corinthians 12:1 & 8-11).

\textsuperscript{31} “For we know that the Law is \textit{spiritual}’ (Romans 7:14).

\textsuperscript{32} Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality’, 258.

\textsuperscript{33} Evidence for this can be found in a letter written in the early part of the fifth century CE, in which the word \textit{spiritualitas} was used in a context which makes clear that it is being used in the Pauline sense. Ref: Jean Leclercq, ‘Spiritualitas’, 280-81, \textit{Studi Medievali} 3 (1962): 279-96, as cited in Principe, ‘Toward Defining Spirituality’, 130.

\textsuperscript{34} Further, Perrin notes that the Latin version of the Bible, including the letters of Paul—translated in the early fifth-century CE by St Jerome—was widely circulated and read. Perrin, \textit{Studying Christian Spirituality}, 28.

\textsuperscript{35} Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality’, 258.

\textsuperscript{36} Principe, ‘Toward Defining Spirituality’, 131. Here, citing the concordance of Roberto Busa (ed) (\textit{Index thomisticus: Sancti Thomae Aquiniatis operum omnium indices et concordantiae}. Secio II: \textit{Concordantiae operum thomisticorum: Concordantia prima}, Vol 21 (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1975), 111, s.v. ‘spiritualitas’), Principe notes that within the body of work of Thomas Aquinas, the words \textit{spiritualis} and \textit{spiritualitas} appear seventy and about five-thousand times, respectively. For the most part, Aquinas employs \textit{spiritualitas} in the Pauline sense of living life according to the Spirit of God, but there are instances where it is set against body and matter.

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Spiritualitas}, employed in the Pauline sense of the word, appears in other extant writings from the ninth to the thirteenth-century CE. Ref: Leclercq ‘Spiritualitas’, 280-1, as cited in Principe, ‘Toward Defining Spirituality’, 130.


\end{quote}
Increasingly, spirituality referred to one’s interior life, pious practices, prayers, and rituals. It gradually lost its holistic reference to living one’s entire life under the influence of God’s Spirit, as Paul had taught in the New Testament. The body, or the material world, became identified with the place of darkness and sin, while the spirit (soul) became identified with all that was light and holy. Spiritual life and material life were seen as two separate, and antagonistic, elements of Christian human life. The important thing was to save your soul.\(^\text{39}\)

Sheldrake summarizes the approach to the spiritual life during this medieval period as being one of “separation and division”, and in three primary areas:\(^\text{40}\)

- A gradual shift in thinking began to separate the inner, spiritual life (concerning human endeavour) from theology (concerning academic theory and knowledge about Christianity).
- As subjective experience and the expression of emotions and feelings gained in credibility and appeal, the primary focus of spirituality moved from being participatory expression to individually-based expression.
- Spirituality began to separate from the liturgical, with the emphasis transferring to personal—as opposed to communal—prayer and meditation.\(^\text{41}\)

Nonetheless, for some time, these philosophical understandings co-existed with the traditional Pauline theological position. Furthermore, in the thirteenth century, a further comprehension emerged—which went on to prevail until the seventeenth century—in which spiritual came to denote members of the clergy.\(^\text{42}\) The spiritualitas, or ‘lords spiritual’, of the church were distinct from the temporalitas, or ‘lords temporal’, who held civil positions. The former appellation later was expanded to include church property, and the latter to include the property of civil rulers.\(^\text{43, 44}\)

Interest in spirituality in the Western world reached new heights—both positively and negatively—in the seventeenth century. By this time, the religious sense of the word had re-emerged, now generally understood to mean the inner life of the individual, and his or her relationship with God. In post-Reformation times (until the late nineteenth-century CE), use of

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\(^{39}\) Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality*, 28. Perrin notes that this interpretation appears to have been prompted by a writing of the ninth-century CE, and also by the work of the sixth-century mystic, Pseudo-Dionysius, who followed the Greek school-of-thought that spirit and matter were opposed. Ibid, 28 & 55.

\(^{40}\) Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, 44.

\(^{41}\) Ibid.

\(^{42}\) Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality’ 258-9. Indeed, Schneiders suggests that spiritual was most often used in this sense during the period.


\(^{44}\) In contrast to other scholars—Principe and Schneiders, for example—Perrin considers that the term spiritualitas used in this ecclesiastical sense did not cover material church-property such as land and money. Rather, he suggests, it conveyed spiritual observances—for example, prayers, rituals, penances, and pious practices—only. Ref: Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality*, 29.
the term was limited to the Roman Catholic church, and to France in particular. Here, the quest for a life of Christian perfection was widespread, with significance attached to the inner life and to proper practices of devotion. However, new and controversial practices such as those of Quietism began to attach pejorative connotations to spirituality. In consequence, the word devotion occasionally would be set against spirituality to highlight the difference between orthodox human endeavour and the more-dubious, unorthodox practices.

Perhaps because of such derogatory connotations, spirituality was used infrequently in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Christian expression, with words such as piety and devotion used in its place. Notwithstanding, interest in the life of Christian perfection intensified, with much deliberation about whether or not all humans, or merely some, were called to live it continuously. Scholarly interest in the subject escalated, and culminated with the emergence of the discipline of spiritual theology, which (separated into divisions of ascetical theology and mystical theology) considered the various stages of the Christian life. By this time, spirituality had re-emerged within Roman Catholic spheres in France, employed (in its French form of spiritualité) as an overarching term embracing all stages of the inner Christian journey, as pursued by all people. The source Pauline understanding of spirituality as life lived in line with the Holy Spirit was still in evidence, but now was seen as the prerogative of the few who were striving for the way of perfection.

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46 Also known as the mystical life.
50 Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality’, 259. This debate ultimately was not settled until the mid-twentieth-century CE when the Second Vatican Council ruled out any distinction. Ibid.
51 The discipline of ascetical theology considered growth in and observances of the Christian life as practised by the majority, while mystical theology was concerned with later stages in the quest for perfection, culminating in Divine-union. The title and meaning of these sub-divisions of spiritual theology was put forward in the mid-eighteenth century by the Italian-born Jesuit writer, Giovanni Battista Scaramelli (1687-1752). Ref: Sheldrake, Spirituality and History, 45.
52 Ibid.
In the late nineteenth century, use of the word *spirituality* slowly began to extend beyond the Roman Catholic church, but remained essentially a Catholic term until the meeting of The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) in the 1960’s.\(^{54}\) The opening of inter-denominational dialogue that came into being as a result of Vatican II saw Protestant churches—whose operating lexis had continued to favour words such as *piety, perfection* and *devotion* with which to speak of the inner life and strivings of the individual—beginning to embrace the term *spirituality* in the interests of mutual understanding. In the process, the meaning of spirituality expanded to include both Catholic and Protestant understandings.\(^{55}\) Moreover, the formal deliberations of the Vatican II council led to the forging of new pathways in Christian spiritual practice both within and beyond the Roman Catholic church. Michael Downey writes:

> With its focus on the universal call to holiness, the importance of the Word of God in scripture, the centrality of the liturgy, and a fresh understanding of the relationship between church and world, the council gave shape to a new understanding of Christian life and practice...[T]he renaissance in spirituality which followed...extends well beyond Roman Catholicism.\(^{56}\)

And it was a renaissance that developed incrementally, tending to increase in scope, and manifesting in several forms. In the lives of some members of the laity, for example, spirituality became synonymous with prayer. For others, it signified prayer life coupled with the living-out of faith in everyday life. For yet others, it meant holistic activity, embracing prayer, the living-out of faith in everyday life, and the link to one’s entire being—including that pertaining to the body and to the emotions. And, for a fourth group, spirituality was broader still, meaning living the Christian life actively within the wider social, cultural, and political arena. From these broader ecumenical understandings, the term ultimately moved into the secular world in the latter part of the twentieth century—at which point it took-on non-religious and, ultimately, even anti-religious understandings.\(^{57}\)

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\(^{55}\) Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality’. 255.


\(^{57}\) Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality’. 254-5.
Clearly, with each new layer of understanding, *spirituality* gained exponentially in both breadth and complexity of meaning. As Wolski Conn explains:

Since the 1950s the meaning of spirituality has expanded far beyond a Christian or even a religious denotation to refer to the whole realm of experiences and practices involving the human spirit and the soul dimension of existence. Spirituality is now used in three ways. First, it refers to a general human capacity for self-transcendence, for movement beyond mere self-maintenance or self-interest. Second, the term spirituality can refer to a religious dimension of life, to a capacity for self-transcendence that is actualized by the holy, however that may be understood. Third, it may refer to a specific type of religious experience such as Jewish, Christian, Muslim or Buddhist.  

And, while use of the term continues to be fluid today, three general levels of meaning—as identified in 1983 by Walter Principe—still are evident:

1. existential—comprising all that pertains to the lived experience of spirituality
2. formulative—teachings about the lived experience that may be passed down from others, whether directly or indirectly, formally or informally. Sources may be the doctrines of a particular tradition; spiritual communities, or individual mentors/role models, for example
3. disciplinary—the academic study of spirituality, in which one or both of the above levels of spirituality may be examined

Within this thesis, which incorporates an empirical study to be undertaken within a Christian framework, it seems probable that at least some aspect of each of these levels of meaning will be present, or will manifest, in some form.

### 2.2.3 Differentiating between Spirituality and Religion

The complexity of its origins and the breadth of meaning now assumed by *spirituality* mean that the ongoing quest for a conclusive definition may never be resolved in anything other than the broadest sense. However, it is worthy of note that, more than a century ago, similar confusion reigned about the meaning of the word, *religion*. As American psychologist and philosopher, William James (1842-1910), wrote in his seminal work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*:  

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60 For an overview of the development of the academic discipline of Spirituality, see section 2.3, below.
The very fact that [definitions] are so many and so different from one another is enough to prove that the word ‘religion’ cannot stand for any single principle or essence, but is rather a collective name... Let us not fall immediately into a one-sided view of our subject, but let us rather admit freely at the outset that we may very likely find no one essence, but many characteristics which may alternately be equally important in religion.\(^\text{62}\)

The principal dichotomy to consider, as James saw it, was that of religion as institutional (including the ecclesiastical organization, and systematic theology) and religion as personal. It was an external/internal divide,\(^\text{63}\) with institutional religion the external art “of winning the favor of the gods”,\(^\text{64}\) and including “worship and sacrifice, procedures for working on the dispositions of the deity, theology and ceremony and ecclesiastical organization.”\(^\text{65}\) Personal religion, on the other hand, constituted the internal branch, concerning:

…the inner dispositions of man himself which form the centre of interest, his conscience, his deserts, his helplessness, his incompleteness…the relation goes direct from heart to heart, from soul to soul, between man and his maker.\(^\text{66}\)

Or, more formally expressed:

…the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.\(^\text{67}\)

Plainly, James’s early-twentieth-century definitions of personal religion would serve equally well as a suitable definition for at least some early-twenty-first-century notions of spirituality. And undoubtedly this has fuelled ongoing confusion between the terms. For Robert Fuller, this is not surprising in that, for him, spiritual and religious essentially are synonymous.\(^\text{68}\) However, with the unmistakable pull away from institutional religion evident within the contemporary Western world,\(^\text{69}\) and many now preferring to identify as ‘spiritual, but not religious’,\(^\text{70}\) interpretations are shifting. A 1997 study into what the general public of the United States understood by spirituality and religion, for example, showed that eighty per-cent believed

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\(^\text{62}\) James, The Varieties, 39.

\(^\text{63}\) Today, this dichotomy more often is expressed as private/public. See, for example, Robert C Fuller, Spiritual but not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p4.

\(^\text{64}\) James, The Varieties, 41.

\(^\text{65}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{66}\) Ibid. As noted above, in keeping with writers of his time, James does not employ inclusive language—his intent, however, is understood as being inclusive.

\(^\text{67}\) Ibid, 42.

\(^\text{68}\) Fuller, Spiritual but not Religious, 5.

\(^\text{69}\) This is especially the case in Britain, Canada, Scandinavia, Australia and New Zealand, and to a lesser extent in America—which remains deeply Christian in culture. Ref: Gordon Lynch, The New Spirituality: An Introduction to Progressive Belief in the Twenty-first Century (London: I B Tauris, 2007), 2-3.

\(^\text{70}\) Fuller estimates that twenty per cent of all Americans—approximately half of all un-churched Americans—might come within this category. Fuller, Spiritual but not Religious, 5.
spirituality to be the overarching of the two terms, or understood the two to overlap in meaning while being different concepts. A 2000-dated review of literature undertaken within the social sciences showed that, though religion and spirituality generally were perceived to share several inherent characteristics, as spirituality had begun to separate from both religion and religiousness with the rise of secularism (and the consequent seeking of spiritual experience outside the auspices of religious institutions), so it had assumed conceptual attributes formerly attributed to religion. This had had the effect of making understandings of religion increasingly narrow, and, furthermore, had triggered something of a polarization of the two. Table 2.2.3, below—drawn from the work of Brian Zinnbauer and colleagues—summarizes changes that have taken place in approaches to religiousness and spirituality from the perspective of psychology theorists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.2.3: Contrasts in Approach to Religiousness and Spirituality</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Approach</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion viewed as a broad-band construct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spirituality not widely differentiated from religion; and not polarized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emphasis on personal religiousness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion includes substantive and functional elements</td>
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<td>Religion regarded as positive and negative</td>
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72 Namely, that both: develop across the lifespan; typically are expressed in, or influenced by, groups; are related to cognitive phenomena; are related to emotion and affect; are relevant to the study of personality and in the genetic determinants of personality; have important relationships with mental-health status; are negatively related to drug and alcohol abuse; increasingly are recognized as having positive derivative social functions. Ref: Peter C Hill, Kenneth I Pargament, Ralph W Hood Jr, Michael E McCullough, James P Swyers, David B Larson, and Brian J Zinnbauer, ‘Conceptualizing Religion and Spirituality: Points of Commonality, Points of Departure’, 53-6. Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour 30/1 (2000): 51-77.

73 Hill et al. ‘Conceptualizing Religion and Spirituality’, 60.


76 The information in this table has been drawn from Zinnbauer et al, ‘The Emerging Meanings’, 899.
The above shifts in the approach to, and understanding of, religion and spirituality also have been recognized by professionals within the sphere of religion, as suggested by a 2001 study investigating the meaning of spirituality through the eyes of leaders drawn from five major religious traditions. The study found that distinctions were indeed being made between the two terms, and that, among the differences, spirituality was perceived to be the more expansive construct, encompassing those who had no alignment to a particular faith-tradition. Moreover, spirituality was seen to be based standardly on three measures: ongoing reverential experience of some kind; continuing practice of some form, and a life lived with love. Here, then—in contrast to James’s dichotomous understanding of religion—the term spirituality can be seen to be encompassing what for James were internal, personal matters, with religion veering toward the external and the institutional.

Today, there is no doubt that popular emphasis and widespread interest lies firmly within the former field—on matters that are internal and personal. As Wade Clark Roof notes:

More than any other, it is the experiential face of religion that takes on current prominence...the quest is for something more than doctrine, creed, or institution, although, of course these are usually involved. What is sought after has more to do with feelings, with awareness of innermost realities, with intimations of the presence of the sacred—what amounts to the very pulse of lived religion.

Roof’s distinction between that which is experiential and that which is doctrinal, creedal, and institutional is endorsed by David Tacey—for whom the former constructs now sit securely under the umbrella of spirituality, and the latter under that of religion:

Spirituality is by no means incompatible with religion, but it is existential rather than creedal. It grows out of the individual person from an inward source, is intensely intimate and transformative, and is not imposed upon the person from an outside authority or force.

With common usage plainly having shifted perceptions of religion and spirituality as constructs, the broad understanding of spirituality and religion offered by Tacey, and implicit within Roof’s statement, will be assumed within the current research.

77 Stuart Rose. ‘Is the term ‘spirituality’ a word that everyone uses, but nobody knows what anyone means by it?’ Journal of Contemporary Religion 16/2 (2001): 193-207. The study included priests (male and female), rabbis, monks, temple presidents, etc, drawn from Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim and Hindu traditions.
78 Specifically, what might be termed ‘spiritual love’ as opposed to romantic, familial, or erotic love. Ref: Rose, ‘Is the term ‘spirituality’ a word that everyone uses, but nobody knows what anyone means by it?’, 201-3.
79 Ibid, 202-3 & 205.
81 Tacey, The Spirituality Revolution, 8.
2.2.4 Differentiating between Spirituality and Christian Spirituality

In tracing the historical passage of the term, *spirituality*, above, it was noted that, since the mid-twentieth century, the concept of spirituality has moved beyond its exclusively-religious denotation to encompass ways-of-being, experiences, and practices that, in some way—and among other things—harness a sense of the sacred. Approached in this way, *spirituality* is a term that no longer applies to the actively religious only, but may apply equally well to the non-(or even anti-)religious person. For Wolski Conn, the marker of spirituality is not adherence to a religion, but rather the capacity for self-transcendence:

> Self-transcendence is at the core of any definition of spirituality. This does not mean that one transcends or escapes being one’s self or stops attending to oneself or caring for oneself. Rather, one acts out of the centre or heart of one’s self in a way that reaches out in love, freedom, and truth to others and to the unrealized dimensions of one’s own capacities. One does this within the horizon of whatever one imagines or judges to be ultimate. Spirituality, then, depends on what is judged to be of ultimate value.82

Within this framework of understanding, Christian spirituality “presupposes that ultimacy is God revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus, known in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit poured out in the community”.83 And the non-Christian, humanistic, understanding of spirituality “derives from the ultimacy of the individuated self”.84 In a similar way, spirituality for Schneiders also centres on the capacity for self-transcendence, and is “the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives”.85 For the spirituality to be Christian:

> ...these formal categories are specified by Christian content: the horizon of ultimate value is the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ, and the project involves the living of his paschal mystery in the context of the Church community through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Living within this horizon of ultimate value, one relates in a particular way to all of reality and it is this relationship to the whole of reality and to reality as a whole in a specifically Christian way which constitutes Christian spirituality.86

Thus, the capacity for self-transcendence; the perceiving of what constitutes ultimate value, and the conscious moving toward the latter through the former are the central components of

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83 Ibid, 357.
84 Ibid.
human spirituality *per se.* And Christian spirituality can be identified when the content of these central components are of a Christian nature.

These understandings will be assumed within this paper—where, for ease of reading, and where appropriate, the terms *spirituality* and *Christian spirituality* will be used interchangeably.

### 2.2.5 Spirituality as Personal and Unique

The process of narrowing-down *spirituality* to identify it as a definable construct runs an inevitable risk of framing human spirituality as homogeneous. However, this is not the case. On the contrary, when considering spirituality on an existential level, it is personal and unique to each individual, with spiritual formation and growth necessarily shaped in, by, and through the singular set of experiences of each human life. As Wolski Conn notes: “[T]here is no generic spirituality. All spirituality is concrete, embedded in the particularities of experience.” And the effect of each separate experience will be deep and complex in that the way in which it is interpreted, and the meaning ultimately drawn from it, will be affected by numerous factors including the culture, gender, ethnicity, class, and age of the individual.

Spirituality, then—dependent on experience—will be taken to be personal and unique.

### 2.2.6 Spirituality as a Relational Construct

It is not only experience that influences and shapes spirituality, of course. This thesis supposes human spirituality to be inherently relational in the sense that spirituality is not formed, experienced, or developed in isolation but, rather, in and through relationships—including that with the self. The premise is not new, and the interconnected nature of life itself

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87 A definition of spirituality written from a humanistic perspective—emerging from theoretical research undertaken by a group of education and psychology academics and graduate students—clearly echoes the central components of Schneiders’s definition: “Spirituality…is a way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers to be the Ultimate”. David N Elkins, L James Hedstrom, Lori L Hughes, Andrew J Leaf, and Cheryl Saunders. “Toward a Humanistic-Phenomenological Spirituality: Definition, Description, and Measurement.” 10. In *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 28/4 (1988): 5-18.

88 As noted above, the existential level is one of three general levels of meaning identified by Walter Principe. It comprises all that pertains to the lived experience of spirituality.

89 Wolski Conn, ‘Toward Spiritual Maturity’, 357

90 Ibid.

91 Indeed, further to the discussion, above, differentiating between spirituality and Christian spirituality, it might be said that Christian spirituality is implicitly relational in that, within this spiritual paradigm, the triune God serves—to reiterate Schneiders’ words—as “the horizon of ultimate value”, with and through which a
has long been valued and understood. Almost four hundred years ago, for example, it was eloquently conveyed by English poet and priest, John Donne:

All mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language...God employs several translators, but God's hand is in every translation...No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.  

The relational dynamic of spirituality is implicit too in William James's work, and is at the heart of Henri J M Nouwen's approach to spirituality. Indeed, in the foreword of Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life—Nouwen's definitive publication on the nature of spirituality and the constitution of the spiritual life—the author summarizes his approach to spirituality as follows:

One way to bring all that I have written in the following pages together is to say that the spiritual life is a reaching out to our innermost self, to our fellow human beings and to our God...

Spirituality for Nouwen, therefore, is intrinsically relational, and the relationships in question are triadic in form: that with self, that with others, and that with God.

Nouwen's notion of spirituality as relational is widely endorsed within both religious and secular circles. Rebecca Nye and David Hay, for example—drawing on their extensive qualitative research with children—consider 'relational consciousness' to be fundamental to, and at the core of, spirituality; and posit that it encompasses relationships with God, with others, with the world, and with the self. For Peter Holmes, spirituality, broadly defined, is

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92 John Donne, Meditations XVII in Devotions upon Emergent Occasions (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975 [1624]) 86-87. It is noted that, as with other writers of his time, Donne does not use inclusive language.
93 In particular, James stresses the relationship between individuals and the Divine. See quote at 2.2.3, above.
94 Indeed, in her overview and critique of Nouwen's work, Deirdre La Noue suggests that Nouwen's approach to spirituality was characterized by its relational nature, which formed a cohesive thread that ran through the author's corpus: "[T]he majority of his writings address in some fashion how one can nurture one's relationship with God, with self, and with others". Ref: Deirdre La Noue, The Spiritual Legacy of Henri Nouwen (New York and London: Continuum, 2001), 2.
96 This will be examined in more detail later in this chapter.
97 Nouwen, Reaching Out, 16.
98 'Relational consciousness' is Nye's term for a core category of the spirituality of children—a compound property which incorporates the following two patterns: (1) 'An unusual level of consciousness or perceptiveness, relative to other passages of conversation...'. (2) 'Conversation expressed in a context of how the child related to things, other people, him/herself, and God'. Ref: Rebecca Nye, 'Identifying the Core of Children’s Spirituality', pp108-128. In David Hay with Rebecca Nye, The Spirit of the Child, revised ed. (London & Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006), 108-9.
“the human search for meaning, particularly relationally”. For Charles Keating, “[s]pirituality is a way of life, a dynamic clustering of assumptions, attitudes, inclinations, patterns, and behaviors that characterize our relationships with God and with each other.”

For Elizabeth Dreyer:

Christian spirituality is the daily, communal, lived expression of one’s ultimate beliefs characterized by openness to the self-transcending love of God, self, neighbor, and world through Jesus Christ and in the power of the Spirit.

Dyson, Cobb, and Forman—reporting on a literature review investigating the meaning of spirituality among health professionals—note that “[a] strong emerging theme from the literature is the centrality of the relationships between self, others and ‘God’.” And relatedness/connectedness, they recount, emerged as another core theme—a theme endorsed by Philip Sheldrake:

In a world of accelerated and confusing change, people increasingly seek...the possibility of deep, even mystical, experiences of interconnectedness with other people, with nature, and with the divine.

Shults and Sandage suggest that relationships are at the root of spirituality, and are essential to spiritual formation—and transformation—on numerous levels. And a 2008 study aimed at expanding understandings of the link between spiritual and relational dimensions, undertaken with 385 Christian participants, not only endorsed support for a relational approach to spirituality, but found that the relationship that individuals had with God was “significantly related” to the relationship they had with others.

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101 Charles Keating, Who We Are is How We Pray (Mystic: Twenty-Third Publications, 1987), 126.
103 Jane Dyson, Mark Cobb, and Dawn Forman, The Meaning of Spirituality: A Literature Review, 1183-8. In Journal of Advanced Nursing, 26 (1997): 1184. ‘God’ in this context is interpreted by Dyson et al., as follows: “[I]t is proposed that the nature of God may take many forms and, essentially, is whatever an individual takes to be of highest value in his/her life”. Ibid, 1183.
104 Ibid, 1186.
106 Namely: (1) ‘Spiritual formation is passed on relationally”; (2) “Spiritual formation is facilitated through quality apprenticeship relationships with mentors, teachers, and spiritual guides”; (3) “Spiritual formation requires relationships with attachment figures and communities that can both hold on and let go”; (4) “Spiritual formation is often generated through relationships with persons and communities that wisely and intentionally face contradiction and foster change”; (5) “Spiritual formation and transformation are given rootedness by families, communities, and other social networks that generatively remain in place”. F LeRon Shults and Steven J Sandage, Transforming Spirituality: Integrating Theology and Psychology (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2006), 176-180.
It can be seen from this multi-disciplinary sample\textsuperscript{109} that spirituality is widely viewed as being inherently relational—an understanding that will be assumed within the current research. And a particular focus will be placed on the triadic form of relational spirituality proposed by Nouwen—a model of spirituality that will be explored in greater depth later in this chapter.

2.2.7 Conclusion

This exploration has shown that spirituality has a rich and complex history; that it has shifted and expanded significantly in both concept and meaning since it emerged in early-Christian circles, and that, today, it can be approached on at least three levels—existential, formulative, and disciplinary. For the purposes of the current research, spirituality will be viewed as compatible with religion, but as embracing existential concerns in contrast to the creedal/doctrinal/institutional concerns of religion. The capacity for self-transcendence; the perceiving of what constitutes ultimate value, and the conscious moving toward the latter through the former will be viewed as the central components of human spirituality \textit{per se}. And, while spirituality will be understood to be a function of human being, and thus applicable to all, Christian spirituality will be identified when the content of the central components of spirituality are of a specifically Christian nature. Finally, spirituality will be understood not only to be experiential, personal, and unique, but as inherently relational—formed, developing, and expressed in and through a triad of relationships with the self, with others, and with the \textit{D/divine}.\textsuperscript{110}

\textit{NOTE:} Understandings of ‘spirituality’ as articulated by participants of the empirical component of the current research appear in the Appendices of this paper.

2.3 The Academic Study of Spirituality

2.3.1 Introduction

The above understandings of spirituality underpin the current research project, which, plainly, is situated under the auspices of the academic discipline of spirituality—the third-named of Principe’s three general levels of meaning.\textsuperscript{111} Drawing on the work of several leaders in the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{109} Disciplines from which these quotations have been sourced include theology, psychology, sociology, and health & medicine.
  \item \textsuperscript{110} It is advised that, throughout this thesis, \textit{Divine} will be used to refer specifically to God/Jesus/Holy Spirit; while \textit{divine} will be used to refer to alternative conceptions of the sacred, such as that found in nature or music. \textit{D/divine} will be used in instances where the concept of the sacred is non-specific or unknown.
  \item \textsuperscript{111} See section 2.2.2, above.
\end{itemize}
field, this section seeks to present a selective overview of the discipline. Initially, the discipline will be contextualized within its historical framework, before practical concerns, of potential significance to the empirical component of the current research, are considered.

2.3.2 Historical Overview

The academic discipline of spirituality is a relatively new field of critical inquiry, having developed in its current name and form only from the 1960’s. However, the object that it studies—variously described by Schneiders as “spiritual life as experience”,¹¹² “experience as experience”,¹¹³ and “lived experience of the faith”¹¹⁴—is known to have been a core interest many centuries earlier, intrinsic to Patristic theology.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless, this situation shifted from the Middle Ages, when the rise and impact of philosophy, together with the (arguably unintentional) influence of St Thomas Aquinas (c1225-1274),¹¹⁶ had the effect of subordinating experiential-faith matters from being integral to theology to being a subdivision of moral theology—itself a subsidiary of theology, linked to the theory of dogmatic theology. Remarkably, perhaps, this notional downgrading of the importance of experiential-faith continued until the 1960’s, despite both renewed interest in the spiritual life from the seventeenth century, and the subsequent introduction and establishment of spiritual theology in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹¹⁷

Spiritual theology was described as ‘the science of perfection’, and was situated within the domain of moral theology. It comprised two subdivisions—ascetical theology and mystical theology—both of which were devoted to studying differing aspects of the life of Christian perfection.¹¹⁸ Spiritual theology remained as a relatively-stable and unchallenged field of study until Vatican II, when—as noted in section 2.2.2, above—the Council’s focus on the idea of there being a universal (rather than a selective) call to holiness was a primary instigator in the

¹¹³ Schneiders, Spirituality in the Academy, 692.
¹¹⁵ Patristic theology included the exegetical interpretation of Scriptural writings with a view to gaining understanding of the living-out of faith. Ref: Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy’, 685.
¹¹⁶ Specifically, Aquinas’s placing of such experiential-faith matters in Part Two of his influential magnum opus, Summa Theologica, caused it to come to be seen as being under the umbrella of moral theology, rather than as an integral component of theology per se. Schneiders, Spirituality in the Academy, 685.
¹¹⁷ Ibid, 686.
¹¹⁸ Ibid, 685-6. For additional detail of spiritual theology, see section 2.2.2, above.
exponential rise in interest in spirituality. And this society-wide happening, in turn, was a major trigger for the institution and gradual establishment of the academic discipline of Spirituality—not least because, as David Perrin notes, the movement brought with it the need “to rediscover the legitimate place of spirituality within human experience per se”.

2.3.3 The Contemporary Situation

Today, as an academic discipline in its own right—albeit one in its infancy—spirituality no longer is rooted in dogmatics, or considered to be a lesser cousin of theology. Indeed, Schneiders persuasively argues that spirituality in fact precedes theology “both ontologically and psychologically” in that theology comprises secondary-level reflection on what for spirituality is its direct object of study—namely, lived experience of faith. Furthermore, the perceived value of this experience is such that Sheldrake believes spirituality to be the linchpin in the future of theology, rather than the reverse. “[T]he nature of theology and its raison d’être is an increasingly contentious issue. In my view, the developed discipline of spirituality now has a unique capacity to help in the renewal of theology in constructive and refreshing ways”.

Furthermore:

[T]here is an increasing weariness with the viability and attraction of a purely detached approach to theology...The ‘vocation’ of spirituality is to remind theology not to separate from the wisdom found in lived experience and practice...

And, as Schneiders suggests, the distinctive nature of this ‘lived experience and practice’ means that, with the appropriate methodology, spirituality, as an academic discipline, is well positioned to be able to contribute to human understanding in a way that is both unique and significant.

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119 Downey, Understanding Christian Spirituality, 75.
122 However, though now separate disciplines, theology and Christian Spirituality undoubtedly are related. See discussion in Perrin, Studying Christian Spirituality, 33-35.
127 To be discussed, below.
Sociologist Peter R Holmes notes that the rise in spiritual awareness in society as a whole is such that interest in it is now reflected within numerous academic disciplines: psychology, medicine & healthcare, religion, anthropology, education, sociology, and even business and commerce—a list which, he suggests, is likely to expand significantly in future. And human spiritual expression may be realized in and through a variety of outlets and genres—including those of art, music, and architecture, discerns Sheldrake. These observations make it plain that the study of spirituality is fundamentally multi-disciplinary—a factor which, in and of itself, endorses the holistic and complex nature of spirituality itself. Perrin writes:

Significant issues in life, and spirituality is one of them, cannot be studied within any one, or even several, of the artificially constructed boundaries placed on the many academic disciplines. Each discipline, to be sure, contributes to the conversation in a unique way. But when it comes to the human condition, no one discipline can claim to control fully the understanding of human life, let alone how God’s presence mysteriously animates life in general.

And it is not surprising, then, that studies coming under the auspices of the discipline of spirituality must dialogue with as many other disciplines as necessary in each respective circumstance. Schneiders asserts: “Spirituality as an academic discipline is intrinsically and irreducibly interdisciplinary.” Further:

[It] is precisely because spirituality is interested in the experience as experience, ie. in its phenomenological wholeness, that it must utilize whatever approaches are relevant to the reality being studied. In the case of Christian spirituality, usually at least biblical studies, history, theology, psychology, and comparative religion must be involved in the investigation of any significant subject in the field.

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129 Holmes, ‘Spirituality: Some Disciplinary Perspectives’, 23-37. The disciplines to which Holmes sees spiritual interests expanding include contemporary literature, poetry, fiction, developmental psychology, and creative areas such as theatre, drama, and media. Ibid, 36.


132 Sandra M Schneiders, ‘The Study of Christian Spirituality: Contours and Dynamics of a Discipline’, 5-24. In Dreyer & Burrows, eds. Minding the Spirit, 7. Schneiders—held by her peers to be “one of the most significant and influential figures in the emergence of Christian spirituality as an academic discipline” (Ref: Lescher and Liebert (eds), Exploring Christian Spirituality, back cover)—posits that the intrinsically interdisciplinary nature of studies in spirituality has ramifications in that that no scholar of the field can be a master of spirituality per se, but only of a highly-refined and specialized area. “I venture to affirm that no one is, or ever will be, a universal expert in spirituality”, she suggests. Ref: Schneiders, ‘The Study of Christian Spirituality’, 13-14.

133 Perrin reflects on the idea of ‘experience as experience’ as follows: “[T]here is no such thing as experience per se, any more than there is such a thing as history or religion. All these words, and many like them, are constructs. Human beings give them meaning (content) with reference to particular contexts (such as the social, political, and ecclesial) and particular operations of the mind (such as the emotional, imaginative, and thinking). From these sources, and others, content (or shape) is given to human experience so we can study it as experience. What we are talking about here is the nature of experience in itself.” Perrin, Studying Christian Spirituality, 47.

134 Schneiders, Spirituality in the Academy, 692.
Perrin agrees: “A full account of human experience can be gained only when input from all the relevant disciplines is combined”, he notes.  

As will be seen, the disciplines relevant in the interdisciplinary approach to the current study are numerous, and include theology, various branches of psychology, sociology, music, history, biblical studies, philosophy, and literature.

### 2.3.4.2 Characteristics and Principles of the Discipline

Linked to the idea of the study of spirituality being an interdisciplinary endeavour—or a “field-encompassing field”—is that the specific approach used within any given research project must be determined by the needs and nature of the particular topic in question. And Schneiders moots several characteristics and principles which together distinguish the discipline. An academic study under the auspices of spirituality invariably should be:

- **Descriptive and analytic**
  
  In contrast to being prescriptive and evaluative. The phenomenon under examination must be understood on its own terms—as it is/was experienced.

- **Ecumenical and (where appropriate) cross-cultural**
  
  Important in a pluralistic and inter-connected world. The phenomenon being studied must be set it into its big-picture perspective to be understood fully—hence, the Christian search for meaning and integration is understood to be but one of many legitimate search-paths.

- **Inclusive and holistic**
  
  The human being cannot be fragmented, but should be understood as a multi-faceted and holistic unit—comprising mind, body, spirit, will and emotions; and an integration of the individual and social, the masculine and feminine, the active and passive, the achieving and the struggling, etc. “What spirituality as life process must bring together, spirituality as academic discipline must not split asunder.”

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137 Lescher and Liebert, ‘Introduction’, 5.
138 The following characteristics and their descriptions have been drawn from Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality’, 267-269.
139 However, Schneiders acknowledges that the approach to a study will differ according to purpose—and particularly as it relates to personal practice forming part of the research project. For example, a distinction must be made between a study that is being undertaken for personal appropriation, and formative purposes—say, within the context of a seminar, and integral to preparation for ordination, and that which is being undertaken as part of a research programme, such as a doctorate. In the former case, it would appropriate to incorporate practice specifically aimed at personal transformation, but in the latter, it would not (though transformation may, of course, result indirectly as a result of the researcher’s increased knowledge and new understandings). For discussion, see Schneiders, ‘A Hermeneutical Approach’, 57-59.
Participatory

A researcher cannot hope to understand spirituality as a phenomenon without having personal experience of the quest—even if the spirituality under question is of a wholly different nature to that personal experience. A disengaged approach to spirituality not only is inappropriate but may be impossible.

“The science of the individual”¹⁴¹

As a study of lived experience, spirituality necessarily studies the concrete regarding the individual rather than principles and generalities. Interpretation is pivotal—sought through an interplay of explanation and understanding.

And, in general terms, Schneiders advocates employing the “articulated and explicit interpretational strategy” of hermeneutics within a study; incorporating the following three stages:¹⁴²

1. a description of the phenomenon under investigation
2. critical analysis
3. constructive interpretation

These approaches and research tools will be incorporated as far as possible and practical within the methodological framework of the current study.¹⁴³

2.3.4.3 The Scope of Academic Studies in Spirituality

It has been established that the discipline of spirituality is rooted in and attached to the Christian tradition, but spirituality itself, of course—as identified earlier in this paper—is inherent to humanity, pertaining to all. And with interest in spirituality and spiritual practices now extending well beyond traditional faith circles, and with the “wisdom found in lived experience and practice”¹⁴⁴ not limited to those within the Christian tradition, it is clear that potential exists for the discipline to be of universal scope and reach. Sheldrake, however, cautions against all-inclusive approaches that inevitably de-contextualize experience. A cross-cultural, trans-historical, or inter-religious approach, for example, he suggests, would reveal “only particularity and difference”.¹⁴⁵ Schneiders agrees:

¹⁴¹ Schneiders draws this phrase and associated understanding from Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 79.
¹⁴³ For full details, please see Chapters Five and Six.
¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 16-17.
Chapter Two: Exploring Spirituality

While it is possible and desirable to define spirituality in an inclusive way, there is no such thing as ‘generic spirituality’. Spirituality as lived experience is, by definition, determined by the particular ultimate value within the horizon of which the life project is pursued. Consequently, it involves intrinsically some relatively coherent and articulate understanding of both the human being and the horizon of ultimate value (i.e., in Christian terms, theology), some historical tradition, some symbolic system, and so on.  

With this in mind—and in order to keep the current research manageable within its logistical boundaries—participants of the empirical study will be restricted to active members of the Christian faith, whose ‘horizon of ultimate value’ might thus be anticipated to fall within a Christian framework.  

2.3.5 Conclusion

Spirituality approached from an academic perspective, then, has as its objective focus ‘spiritual life as experience’—a focus the importance of which is being recognized increasingly, and in ever-widening circles, both within and beyond the academic world. The discipline of spirituality is intrinsically interdisciplinary; distinguished by several common characteristics and principles, and context-critical—all factors which must be integrated within the current research. It has been established, however, that the specific methods and research tools employed within a study must be determined by the needs and nature of the particular topic in question. Those deemed apposite for the current study will be outlined in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis.

2.4 Spiritual Development in Relation to Human Development

2.4.1 Introduction

The examination of extant theories and models specifically relating to spiritual development necessarily must be kept for later in this paper, of course. But in order to contextualize this project, initial consideration must be given to where and how spiritual growth fits in with more general developmental concerns that may, or may not, overlap with—or, indeed, impact on—human spirituality. In their 2000-dated review of literature reporting on psychological research, Schneiders, “Spirituality in the Academy”, 684. In addition, Schneiders writes: “What is said...about Christian spirituality as an academic discipline is applicable, in general and with appropriate modifications, to other spiritualities. While nonreligious spiritualities obviously do not have theologies, they do have ideological structures which function analogously.” Ibid, footnote 35, 684.

It is recognized that this cannot be presumed, however. As will be seen in Chapter Six, the study will be narrowed still further by means of additional variables. As noted at 2.1, above, this is a requirement of the chosen methodology for the current research. See also Chapter Five.
Peter Hill and his colleagues note a number of findings pertinent to this task. Among other things, and in general terms, human spirituality, they suggest, has been found to:

- parallel general developmental processes
- develop across the lifespan
- be relevant to psychological development across cultures
- be a social-psychological phenomena
- relate to personality
- be related to cognitive phenomena
- be related to affect & emotion

Together, these factors shed light on several important aspects of human spirituality. But the finding that spirituality develops across the lifespan as a parallel to general development not only is of particular relevance, but sits comfortably with the presupposition made by Daniel A Helminiak in his publication, *Spiritual Development: An Interdisciplinary Study*, that "spiritual development is nothing other than human development viewed from a particular perspective". Helminiak’s view is endorsed by a consensus of one-hundred-and-eighteen international advisors to the US-based Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence, who together agree that "spiritual development—though a unique stream of human development—cannot be separated from other aspects of one's being." And, having undertaken a review of literature in the sphere of education, Christopher Meehan notes the support of numerous others for this viewpoint, suggesting that spiritual development is widely understood to be rooted in human development:

150 Peter C Hill, Kenneth I Pargament, Ralph W Hood Jr, Michael E McCullough, James P Swyers, David B Larson, and Brian J Zimbauer. ‘Conceptualizing Religion and Spirituality: Points of Commonality, Points of Departure’, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 30/1 (2000): 51-77. It is noted that the intent of Hill et al’s paper was to compare commonalities and differences between religion and spirituality; and all the following points also apply to religion.


152 Helminiak, *Spiritual Development*, xii.

153 These advisors include scientific, theological, and practice advisors.


There appears to be a widespread view that spiritual development is concerned with human development. In other words, spiritual development aims to promote in a qualitative sense what Macquarie refers to as a deepening, enhancing and enriching of life: a ‘becoming more human’.¹⁵⁶ ¹⁵⁷

And, viewing spiritual development in this light, it further might be said that, just as the many demographic variables that exist across and between individuals¹⁵⁸ must be considered for their impact—albeit in differing ways and to different degrees—on the general development of an individual, so too must they be considered for their impact on the spiritual development of the individual. It is clear also that, in that spiritual development is known to parallel general development, an overview of general development—in other words, developmental shifts and movements that might be anticipated for most people over the course of the lifespan—should provide beneficial insight into the milieu in which spirituality forms and develops. The following discussion seeks to pursue this endeavour.

2.4.2 An Overview of General Human Development

Setting aside the numerous theories and models that might be said to reflect human spiritual development in some way,¹⁵⁹ many differing theories of human development from a more generalized perspective exist on which to draw here. These include the longstanding and overarching ‘grand theories’ of Psychoanalytic Theory,¹⁶⁰ Learning (or Behavioural) Theory,¹⁶¹


¹⁵⁷ To set this quotation in its appropriate context, it is noted that Meehan’s purpose in writing the article from which it has been drawn is to resolve confusion that he suggests exists within the realm of education, by arguing a case for distinguishing between ‘spiritual development’ and the differing concept of ‘developing spirituality’. ‘Spiritual development’ currently is used as an umbrella term covering both concepts, but Meehan posits that clarity would be gained were it to be used only to refer to that which has “an educational aim relevant for all, concerned with sensitizing students to issues at the heart and root of human existence”. The latter term would be better employed as an exclusive term for that which has “a catechetical aim, concerned with nurturing the beliefs, values and beliefs and practices of the Christian faith, and therefore inappropriate for some students”. (Ref: Meehan, ‘Resolving the Confusion in the Spiritual Development Debate’, 291 & 304). The researcher has re-contextualized this quotation for current purposes, but it has been done in good faith in the belief that—with no distinction in terminology currently existing between the two concepts—it is relevant to the current discussion, and that the differing context has not, in fact, subverted Meehan’s meaning.

¹⁵⁸ These include, but are not limited to, culture, age, gender, education, marital/partnership status, parenting status, family size, family structure, socialization, income, occupation, religion, race, nationality, degree of intro- or extraversion, and even state of health.

¹⁵⁹ For example, Helmniak’s model of Spiritual Development; James Fowler’s Faith Development Theory; Lawrence Kohlberg’s Moral Development; Daniel Levison’s Seasons of Life, etc.

¹⁶⁰ Psychoanalytic theory was founded by Sigmund Freud who put forward a psychosexual version of the theory. A later psychosocial version was put forward by Erik Erikson. In general, psychoanalytic theories stress the importance of childhood experiences (Erikson’s model, however, posits lifelong development) and consider that human thoughts and behaviour emerge from powerful impulses and conflicts, of which the individual may not be consciously aware. Ref: Kathleen Stassen Berger, The Developing Person through the Life Span, Fifth ed. (New York: Worth, 2001), 39, 64 & 66.

¹⁶¹ This theory, instigated by John B Watson and furthered by B F Skinner, is set against psychoanalytic theory, and considers the impact on human behaviour of the immediate environment—in other words, the relationship between an event or an experience and the reaction to it. Berger, The Developing Person, 42, 64, & 66.
and Cognitive Theory;\(^{162}\) and the later-emerging Socio-cultural Theory,\(^{163}\) and Epigenetic Systems Theory.\(^{164}\) Grand theories are based on psychology alone, but the two emergent theories draw on multiple disciplines;\(^{165}\) yet all five have been subject to criticism on at least some level.\(^{166}\) Each approaches human development from a particular perspective,\(^{167}\) offering its own slant on the causal underpinnings of development. And, in some cases, a vastly different weighting is placed on what developmental psychologist, Kathleen Stassen Berger, calls “the central controversy of human development”—that is, the nature versus nature debate: the relative influence of genes and/or experience in shaping the growth and characteristics of the individual.\(^{168}\)\(^{169}\)

Kail & Cavanaugh posit that an interaction of four specific forces now is considered by most developmentalists to be “the dominant framework” within which all human development takes place.\(^{170}\) These contextual forces are:\(^{171}\)

1. Biological—including genetic and health-related factors
2. Psychological—internal perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and personality factors
3. Sociocultural—interpersonal, societal, cultural, and ethnic factors
4. Life-cycle—the effect of age on people’s differing responses to the same stimulus

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\(^{162}\) Cognitive Theory—pioneered by Jean Piaget—stresses the effect on development of the intellect and thought as individuals strive to understand their experiences. Ibid, 47, 54 & 66.

\(^{163}\) This theory stresses the primary influence of the socio-cultural context on development, with the influence of parents, teachers, and peers seen to be of particular significance. Ibid, 51-52.

\(^{164}\) Epigenetic Systems Theory stresses the genetic origins of human behaviour, but also recognizes the ongoing, systematic, and direct affect of the environment of the individual in shaping his/her behaviour. Ibid, 55 & 66.

\(^{165}\) Socio-cultural theory draws on research in psychology, education, sociology and history. Epigenetic theory draws on research findings in psychology, biology, genetics, ethology and neuroscience. Ibid, 51.

\(^{166}\) Most notably, and among other criticisms, psychoanalytic theory has been criticized for being overly subjective; behavioural theory for being too mechanized; cognitive theory for underrating genetic distinctions; socio-cultural theory for discounting the individual, and epigenetic theory for overlooking society. Ibid, 65.

\(^{167}\) Respectively—and in broad terms—unconscious processes; the effect of the environment; human cognition; the effect of culture, and the effect of genes. Ibid, 65.

\(^{168}\) Ibid, 52.

\(^{169}\) Kail and Cavanaugh note the existence of two further debates that are ongoing in the field: (1) Continuity versus Discontinuity—which seeks to investigate if development manifests as a smooth progression across the lifespan, and if major shifts (for example, a shift from being extrovert to introvert) can occur; and (2) Universal versus Context-Specific—seeking to discover if there is a common route to development for most or all. For example, do cultural differences simply provide a variation in input that will produce the same underlying developmental process? Or is development shaped fundamentally differently in response to fundamentally different environments? Robert V Kail and John C Cavanaugh, Human Development: A Lifespan View, Third ed. (Belmont CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2004), 9.

\(^{170}\) Kail & Cavanaugh, Human Development, 13. The authors note that this referential framework first emerged in the field of gerontology, before coming to be considered universally applicable. Ibid.

\(^{171}\) Ibid, 9-13.
And each person, suggest the authors, is “a product of a unique combination of these forces. No two individuals, even in the same family, experience these forces in the same way.”

The uniqueness and complexity of the individual is salient here. Hence, it is not surprising that, as far as theoretical frameworks of development are concerned—some of which are noted, above—Dixon and Lerner consider no theory yet to exist that alone can account fully for the breadth and intricacies of human behaviour across the lifespan. To be sure, the research arena for them necessarily is one of ‘theoretical pluralism’. Berger agrees, and, in advocating the benefits of an eclectic approach until such time as the insights of existing theories can be satisfactorily integrated, moves on to provide a helpful overview of what she introduces as “typical development—the usual patterns of growth and change that everyone follows to some degree and that no one follows exactly”. And she divides these patterns into the following three principal, and overlapping, domains of human development:

- **Biosocial**—concerning the physical human body and that which impacts on or relates to its operation and growth
- **Cognitive**—concerning the workings of the brain, and that which impacts on or relates to human mental processes.
- **Psychosocial**—concerning the development of emotions, personality, and relationships, and that which relates to these.

Table 2.4.2, below, reproduces Berger’s concept of typical human development within these three domains—concentrating, for current purposes, on the ‘what’ and ‘when’ questions of

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175 By which Berger expressly means the selective drawing on ideas and aspects from many or all of the established theories. Ibid, 65.
176 Ibid, 3.
177 Ibid, 5. Notwithstanding, Berger stresses the holistic nature of development and that, in consequence, almost every aspect of development must relate in some way to all three of these domains. For the most part, the division of development into these domains is made to benefit the study of human development. Ibid.
development, rather than on the more subjectively-oriented and problematic concerns of ‘how’ and ‘why’.\textsuperscript{178}
## Table 2.4.2 An Overview of General Developmental Processes Across the Lifespan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in Years</th>
<th>Biosocial Development</th>
<th>Cognitive Development</th>
<th>Psychosocial Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One to Two</td>
<td>Infancy</td>
<td>Senses linked, and sensory information transferable. Interest in benefits of experiences. Memory capacity increasing. Some experimenting via sensory-motor and mental images. First communication—crying, cooing, etc. One to two words by age one; short sentences by two.</td>
<td>Emotions from basic to complex and self-conscious. Independence increasing. Basic temperament believed born and lifelong. Parents and infant interact by synchronizing behavior; infant then begins to participate socially (reacting, social referencing). Definite personality from nature/nurture interaction by two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to Six</td>
<td>The Play Years</td>
<td>If in a supportive context, maturing of some cognitive abilities—including memory and problem-solving. Beginning to absorb the ideas and emotions of others. Thinking may be illogical and egocentric. Language developing rapidly—able to adjust to audience. Used to learn. Some 10,000 words at age six; extensive grammatical knowledge.</td>
<td>Concept of self emerges; able to regulate emotions. New activities initiated if praised. Play adds development of physical and intellectual skills. More imaginative play as social and cognitive skills develop. Autonomy and self-control increasing. Some stereotyping of sex/gender differences in appearance and behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven to Eleven</td>
<td>The School Years</td>
<td>Growth in knowledge, memory and processing-capacity leading to better learning and understanding. At 12, able to understand logic principals—eg, identity, reciprocity and reversibility. Morality emerging—influenced by parents/peers.</td>
<td>Increased understanding of self and others. Peer group increasingly important in development of interests. Families meeting more basic needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve to Nineteen</td>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>Emerging ability to think hypothetically, reason deductively, and explain theoretically. But teenage egocentrism, plus feelings of invincibility may impair judgement and create self-absorption. Education influences intellectual growth</td>
<td>Seeking self-understanding and identity—will be influenced by relationships; and cultural, societal, and political circumstances. Peer group increasingly important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty to Forty</td>
<td>Early Adulthood</td>
<td>Commitments and responsibilities make thinking more adaptive, practical, and dialectical. Moral thinking becomes deeper; and any religious faith more reflective. Greater appreciation of diverse viewpoints, but also more commitment to own. Tertiary education fosters openness to new ideas and brings higher earnings. Cognitive growth fostered by all life experiences.</td>
<td>Friends and romantic commitment may fulfill need for affiliation. The former important throughout adulthood, particularly for the single. Work and parenting can fulfill need for achievement. Several jobs likely in course of working life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forty to Sixty</td>
<td>Middle Adulthood</td>
<td>Fluid intelligence decreases with age; crystallized intelligence increases. Reaction time and speed of thinking slow; practical intelligence deepens. Intelligence and expertise heightened in areas of particular interest (caused by motivation leading to practise and involvement).</td>
<td>More stability in the Big Five personality traits (neuroticism; extraversion; openness; agreeableness; conscientiousness). Any personality changes will be from historical shifts and personal efforts. Rewarding relationships with adult children and grandchildren likely, and partnerships less conflicted. Work a major source of both stress and status. Balance of life is likely to be achieved in middle age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixty Five-plus</td>
<td>Late Adulthood</td>
<td>Memory declines, with short-term memory first to slow. Deficits in ability to receive, store, organize and interpret information. May be the result of decreased brain and memory function, and/or the influence of social expectations. Most able to compensate for memory loss and slower thinking. Dementia not inevitable but more likely, especially among the very old. Causes primarily genetic or organic. Aesthetic and philosophical interests develop or intensify. Life review can be highly beneficial.</td>
<td>Highest degree of life variability. Older adults usually remain active, and seek ways to expand horizons (eg, education, volunteering). Life satisfaction largely dependent on continuing interaction with friends and family. Mortal satisfaction continues to improve. Greatest source of social support likely to be from peer group—particularly longstanding friends. At very old age, assistance may be needed with daily life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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179 The information in this chart has been drawn from Berger, *The Developing Person*, 215, 297, 377, 461, 541, 611, & 707.

180 The age-ranges selected by Berger necessarily are approximations; and it is noted that, in places, there is both an overlap and an omission of several years.
2.4.3 Conclusion

This, then, provides a broad outline of the general-developmental arena, viewed from a lifespan perspective, in which spirituality develops. And five distinct characteristics are assumed within it—namely, that human development is multidirectional; multicontextual; multicultural; plastic, and multidisciplinary.¹⁸¹ In this way, development—insights and data about which are gained from multiple academic disciplines¹⁸²—is not always linear; every human life is contextually entrenched, and subject to the expectations and norms of a particular culture; and every individual, plus each one of his/her distinguishing characteristics, is open to change at any point in life.¹⁸³ As Berger observes: “When it comes to human life, nothing is ever chiselled in stone. People are always evolving, with the specific rates, degrees, aspects, and directions of their evolution being more variable than scientists once thought”.¹⁸⁴

It is suggested in turn, that, in keeping with human development per se, these factors apply equally to spiritual development—which, as Helminiak has mooted, is “nothing other than human development viewed from a particular perspective”.¹⁸⁵ This is the understanding of the relationship between spiritual development and human development to be assumed within this paper.

2.5 Identifying Features of Spirituality

2.5.1 Introduction

It would be imprudent to plan an empirical study into spiritual development without first gaining an understanding of what human spirituality might look like in real terms. From a practical perspective alone, without such insight, any questions asked of study-participants become ad hoc and arbitrary. With it, it becomes more likely that questions can be framed to be suitably focused, purposeful, and, in turn, potentially more productive. This section, then, seeks to

¹⁸² Most notably, psychology, biology, education, and sociology; and including—but not limited to—neuroscience, economics, medicine, anthropology, and history. Berger, The Developing Person, 4.
¹⁸³ Ibid.
¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 5.
¹⁸⁵ Helminiak, Spiritual Development, xii.
frame such an understanding, and will explore how spirituality manifests in terms of broadly-based, yet identifiable features, qualities, and characteristics. This will be done, firstly, by offering an overview of Henri Nouwen’s triadic conceptualization of spirituality, before the ideas of others—including psychologists, theologians, educators, and sociologists—are considered. A visual interpretation, incorporating and drawing-together these ideas, concludes the exploration.

### 2.5.2 The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life

#### 2.5.2.1 Introduction

In line with the now-established understanding that spiritually is intrinsically relational, the specific framework offered by Henri J M Nouwen—a theologian and psychologist, whose writings clearly reflect his knowledge and understanding in both fields—is of particular interest to this research. Central to Nouwen’s thesis (indeed, Nouwen’s theology) is the idea that the spiritual life is a life lived in, with, and through tension and paradox. It is life which vacillates between poles: an active and life-long process of becoming aware of inner polarities, embracing them, learning to live between them, and learning and growing from them. More specifically, the spiritual life comprises three inter-related—and frequently overlapping—relationally-based ‘movements’. Each movement concerns one of three major relationships—that with the self, that with others, and that with God—and manifests in a constant movement along the continuum of its singular set of polarities. Nouwen elucidates:

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186 The following exposition has been drawn primarily from Nouwen’s 1975-published work, Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life. It is acknowledged that Nouwen’s later writings developed some of the themes in this publication—but it is believed that they did so without negating Nouwen’s core ideas. Indeed, in her 2001-dated overview of the development of Nouwen’s theology, as evidenced across his body of work, Deirdre LaNoue (The Spiritual Legacy of Henri Nouwen—full citation given above) stresses that the overarching thread throughout Nouwen’s work was his unchanging understanding of spirituality as relationship with God, self, and others (LaNoue, Spiritual Legacy, 11). She further notes (ibid, 59) that Nouwen’s understanding openly was biblical, drawing on Jesus’ response to the Pharisees in Matthew 22:34-40—viz: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind’. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

187 For discussion, see 2.2.6.

188 LaNoue, Spiritual Legacy, 58-59.

189 It is notable that within his writings, Nouwen uses the term, God, in both objective and subjective senses. Certainly, his advocacy of the building of a personal relationship with God, coupled with his intermittent use of the phrases “their God”, “our God”, etc, suggest that Nouwen (a Catholic priest) acknowledges that the concept of God may differ from person to person. This same understanding is assumed within the current paper. Humanity will be understood to be open to relationship with the sacred, the D/divine—which some may know as ‘God’—but it is recognized that the personal sacred/D/divine may be conceptualized variously. Thus—notwithstanding that the empirical component of the research is to be undertaken within the Christian Church—no assumptions will be made regarding any automatic framing of the D/divine in the explicit form of the Trinitarian Christian God. And where the term, God, is used within this paper, unless it is contextualized to a specific understanding, it should be read to have subjective meaning.
The first polarity deals with our relationships to ourselves. It is the polarity between loneliness and solitude. The second polarity forms the basis of our relationship to others. This is the polarity between hostility and hospitality. The third, final, polarity structures our relationship with God. This is the polarity between illusion and prayer. During our life we become more aware not only of our crying loneliness but also of our real desire for a solitude of the heart; we come to the painful realization not only of our cruel hostilities but also of our hope to receive our fellow humans with unconditional hospitality; and underneath all of this we discover not only the endless illusions which make us act as if we are masters of our fate but also the precarious gift of prayer hidden in the depth of our innermost self. Thus, the spiritual life is that constant movement between the poles.¹⁹⁰

And the perspective that may be gained in moving between the poles, and embracing the tension and struggle of living life between them, is the source of spiritual growth.

An outline of each of three movements that together conceptualize Nouwen’s vision of the shape and form of human spirituality—integrating a developmental perspective—follows below.

### 2.5.2.2 Relationship with Self: The Movement from Loneliness to Solitude

The relationship of the individual to him or herself, as manifest in and through the loneliness/solitude continuum, marks the beginning of the spiritual journey for Nouwen in that a person must know and value him/herself before s/he can know and value others. And the true self can emerge only when one acknowledges and understands the false, or self-deceiving, self.¹⁹¹ The movement begins with a willingness to enter ‘the desert of loneliness’, and the spiritual endeavour is to convert it into ‘a garden of solitude’.¹⁹² Specifically:

...it is the movement from the restless sense to the restful spirit. From the outward-reaching cravings to the inward-reaching search, from the fearful clinging to the fearless play.¹⁹³

This does not constitute a gradual withdrawal from life, however, but rather requires using solitude creatively to enable re-engagement at a deeper level¹⁹⁴ through the development of “a quiet inner centre.”¹⁹⁵ And, while the quest to move from loneliness to solitude may require

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¹⁹¹ Ibid., 31-37. La Noue summarizes Nouwen’s thoughts in this area, across his body of work, as follows: “Only in the furnace of solitude with God could a person come to grips with his or her true self by facing the false self. Our true value, apart from others, has to be realized before any relationship with others can be meaningful”. *La Noue, The Spiritual Legacy*, 100.
¹⁹³ Ibid.
¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 49.
times of planned isolation in order free oneself from distraction, the solitude that is being sought is not of a physical nature:

The solitude that really counts is the solitude of heart; it is an inner quality or attitude that does not depend on physical isolation...[S]olitude is one of those human capacities that can exist, be maintained and developed in the centre of a big city, in the middle of a large crowd and in the context of a very active and productive life. A man or woman who has developed this solitude of heart is no longer pulled apart by the most divergent stimuli of the surrounding world but is able to perceive and understand this world from a quiet inner centre.  

Working toward this requires attentive living—in other words, not denying life as it is, but rather being open to and aware of the happenings of the world, and, indeed, in one’s personal life both past and present, in all their imperfection; entering into them, engaging with them, and drawing them into contemplation. Meaning then can be drawn from these experiences, and responses made that are honest and creative, and free from bias or bitterness. In this way, the happenings of life—both good and bad—become symbolic, cohesive, and full of meaning; they can be interpreted as opportunities for life rather than interruptions to life; and will challenge the individual to form responses from his or her innermost self that potentially may be life-changing.  

Movement toward the attainment of solitude of heart will, of course, fluctuate and is ongoing, stresses Nouwen, but, once solitude has been understood and experienced, an individual will never stop searching for it. Further, it is integral to the second movement in the spiritual journey—that of relationship with others—for, without it, relationships can become needy, dependent, or exploitative in that the individual will not be free to appreciate others as unique and sacred beings in their own right, but rather may see them as a means through which to fulfil personal, perhaps unacknowledged, needs. Thus, as Nouwen summarizes: “The movement from loneliness to solitude is a movement by which we reach out to our innermost being to find there our great healing powers, not as a unique property to be

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196 Nouwen, Reaching Out, 38.
197 Ibid, 50-52.
198 Ibid, 48.
199 Ibid, 44. Nouwen expounds: “Friendship and love cannot develop in the form of an anxious clinging to each other. They ask for a gentle fearless space in which we can move to and from each other. As long as our loneliness brings us together with the hope that together we no longer will be alone, we castigate each other with our unfulfilled and unrealistic desires for oneness, inner tranquility and the uninterrupted experience of communion”. Ibid, 31.
defended but as a gift to be shared with all human beings. And so, the movement from loneliness to solitude leads us spontaneously to the movement from hostility to hospitality.²²⁰

2.5.2.3 Relationship with Others: The Movement from Hostility to Hospitality

The movement from hostility to hospitality—concerning the relationship with fellow human beings—is a measure of spirituality and spiritual growth that is of equal import to that of the movement from loneliness to solitude. And the task of the movement, suggests Nouwen, is to build on the changing sense of self and extend it to others, converting one’s attitude toward others fundamentally so that unfamiliar people and those outside one’s close circle are no longer perceived as potential enemies to be avoided or feared, but rather as guests, brothers and sisters, to be cherished and appreciated.²⁰¹ The two spiritual movements cannot, however, be separated:

The movement from hostility to hospitality cannot be thought of without a constant inner connection with the movement from loneliness to solitude. As long as we are lonely, we cannot be hospitable because we cannot create free space. Our own need to still our inner ravings of loneliness makes us cling to others instead of creating space for them.²⁰²

In this way, work in both relational spheres necessarily is concurrent, rather than chronological, and the individual will move from hostility to hospitality to the same measure in which his or her loneliness translates into solitude.²⁰³

Hospitality—as an attitude—can be expressed in many ways,²⁰⁴ but the key to it is the making of free space:

²²⁰ Ibid, 42.
²⁰¹ Nouwen acknowledges that there are different types of interpersonal relationship—such as that between a parent and child, teacher and student, professional and client—and notes that many people will find themselves in all three such relationships, potentially on both sides, at some point in life. The concept of hospitality applies in some way to all, however, and—with an emphasis on the idea of receptivity—which may provide the unifying dimension in all forms of human relationship. For discussion, see Nouwen, Reaching Out, 74-93.
²⁰² Ibid, 95.
²⁰³ Ibid.
Hospitality [does not seek to] change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines. It is not to lead our neighbour into a corner where there are no alternatives left, but to open a wide spectrum of options for choice and commitment. It is not an educated intimidation with good books, good stories and good works, but the liberation of fearful hearts so that words can find roots and bear ample fruit. It is not a method of making our God and our way into the criteria of happiness, but the opening to others of an opportunity to find their God and their way. The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free... Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the life style of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his [her] own.\textsuperscript{205}

However, hospitality can emerge only from a place of solitude, and not loneliness, in that loneliness causes people to cling to others, unable to create free space for them.\textsuperscript{206} And creating the emptiness and lack of occupation required to cultivate an attitude of hospitality can be difficult, especially in that it goes against the inherent ‘busy-ness’ of present-day Western culture. Many will see it as undesirable, and most are likely to find it uncomfortable. Indeed—and ironically—the fear of unoccupied time and ‘empty places’ can cause a preoccupation with them, and a consequent inability to sit with the unknown, the unresolved, and the open-ended—the capability for each of which is a mark of solitude and essential to a climate of hospitality.\textsuperscript{207}

Movement along the hostility/hospitality continuum cannot always be in one direction, of course, with everyone open to reversions in response to certain situations.\textsuperscript{208} However, the paradox of hospitality is that it is the gradual acceptance of one’s aloneness (in the sense of vocation rather than fate) that is the path to hospitality, in that the centre of life can be found within the self.\textsuperscript{209} And therefore opening oneself to others requires removing personal defences—which act as barriers to others\textsuperscript{210}—by cultivating an inner disposition of poverty, of both mind and heart. Only then is it possible to become a good host.\textsuperscript{211} For Nouwen, poverty of mind is “an articulate not knowing…a learned ignorance” that empties us of preconceived ideas, opinions, and convictions, bringing with it the inner space with which to listen, and the

\textsuperscript{205} Nouwen, \textit{Reaching Out}, 69.
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid, 94-95.
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid, 70-71.
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid, 74.
\textsuperscript{209} Or, as Nouwen puts it, within “the heart”. Ibid, 95.
\textsuperscript{210} When a person has something to defend, a stranger always will be perceived as an enemy. Nouwen clarifies. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid.
openness needed to discern the gift of the other.\textsuperscript{212} Poverty of heart empties us of the worries, prejudices, and jealousies that bar others, bringing a spiritual attitude of inclusivity:

\begin{quote}
[\textit{W}\textit{hen we are willing to detach ourselves from making our own limited experience the criterion for our approach to others, we may be able to see that life is greater than our life, history is greater than our history, experience greater than our experience, and God greater than our God. That is the poverty of heart that makes a good host. With poverty of heart we can receive the experiences of others as a gift to us. Their histories can creatively connect with ours, their lives give new meaning to ours, and their God speak to ours in mutual revelation.}\textsuperscript{213}
\end{quote}

Voluntary self-emptying, then, achieved through the removal of internal obstacles, holds the key to moving from hostility to hospitality. And it is somewhat ironical that, though the contemporary world lauds strength, power, and influence, spiritual growth demands the inversion of such attitudes. As Nouwen suggests: “\textit{[I]f there is anything to boast of, we should boast of our weakness. Our fulfilment is in offering emptiness, our usefulness in becoming useless, our power in becoming powerless”}.\textsuperscript{214}

\textbf{2.5.2.4 Relationship with God: The Movement from Illusion to Prayer}

The final, most difficult, yet most important movement of the spiritual life concerns the relationship of the individual with God. It is the movement from illusion to prayer—the path to the heart of the spiritual life—the aim of which is to “unmask the illusions of our existence”. It underpins both other movements in that solitude and hospitality can be sustained only when they are rooted in the “broader, deeper and higher reality” which fuels and vitalizes them.\textsuperscript{215}

The greatest barrier to moving along the illusion/prayer continuum is human illusion itself, present in manifold endeavours. Most damagingly, illusion causes the individual to place an exaggerated sense of importance on outer and earthly ideas and endeavours, and immortal expectations on fellow human beings—an approach which is limiting and restrictive, and inevitably leads to \textit{disillusion}.\textsuperscript{216} The antidote to it, however, is to reach out to God through prayer. To fully grasp Nouwen’s meaning here, it is critical to note that the author conceptualized prayer as far more than simply a channel of communication. Indeed, he describes it as an attitude—“the basic receptive attitude out of which all of life can receive new

\textsuperscript{212} Ibid, 96.
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid, 99.
\textsuperscript{214} Ibid, 100.
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid, 105-6.
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid, 108. Nouwen names this most damaging illusion, ‘the illusion of immortality’.
vitality," and suggests that its focus is on "the most personal vocation"—that is, what is most profound in the life of the individual.²¹⁸ LaNoue observes that Nouwen used the word prayer in a number of ways in his corpus overall, but that, in general terms, it was used to describe the leanings and activity of the heart (as opposed to those of the mind).²¹⁹ Prayer for Nouwen, then, is "the encompassing word for the whole idea of nurturing a relationship with God through the spiritual disciplines of the inner life".²²⁰

Spiritual disciplines required if an individual is to progress in the movement include silence, contemplation (particularly on Scripture), and the direction of a spiritual guide.²²¹ ²²² Inevitably, the practice will be challenging for the individual in that it requires moving from the known to the unknown, and from a place of perceived safety into a place of vulnerability. As part of the process, fellow human beings must not be clung to, but rather released so that their lives can be viewed as precious gifts to be received. The idolization of ‘false gods’ must be recognized and resisted. Death must be wholly accepted as human destiny. And the individual further must ‘reach out’ beyond the limits of his/her own existence to God.²²³ In this way, there will be a gradual detachment from “false certainties to true uncertainties, from an easy support system to a risky surrender, and from the many safe gods to the God whose love has no limits.”²²⁴

²¹⁷ Ibid, 122.
²¹⁸ Ibid, 122-123.
²¹⁹ LaNoue, Spiritual Legacy, 66. Indeed, drawing on the writings of nineteenth-century Russian spiritual writer, Bishop Theophan the Recluse, Nouwen writes: “To stand in the presence of God with our mind in our heart, that is the essence of the prayer of the heart. Theophan expresses in a very succinct way that the prayer of the heart unifies our whole person and places us without reservation, mind in heart, in the awesome and loving presence of our God”. Nouwen, Reaching Out, 133.
²²⁰ LaNoue, Spiritual Legacy, 66. LaNoue further notes that, with his emphasis on prayer as active and ongoing relationship, Nouwen rarely talked of prayer as the means to a desired end: “Some people tend to view prayer as something that is done in order to elicit a certain result. Nouwen hardly ever spoke of prayer in this manner. For him, prayer was the means through which the Spirit of God shaped the heart and mind of the believer”. Ibid, 68.
²²¹ Spiritual guidance does not come only in the form of a one-to-one relationship, notes Nouwen, but can be found also from studying the lives and spiritual journeying of influential historical figures such as Benedict, Francis, Teresa of Avila, John Wesley, Martin Luther King Jr, Thomas Merton, etc. Nouwen, Reaching Out, 127.
²²² Ibid, 123. Drawing on Nouwen’s other works, LaNoue adds to these the spiritual disciplines of prayer (presumably used here in the sense of a channel of communication between the individual and God); solitude, and worship. LaNoue, Spiritual Legacy, 65.
²²³ Nouwen, Reaching Out, 110-111. Clearly, Nouwen’s idea of ‘reaching out’ beyond the limits of one’s own existence fits in precisely with the concept of ‘self-transcendence’, as later articulated by both Sandra Schneiders and Joann Wolski Conn—see discussion above.
²²⁴ Ibid, 117.
Chapter Two: Exploring Spirituality

Ultimately, progress in the movement from illusion to prayer—leading to spiritual maturity—will be evident and measurable in terms of the gradually increasing depth to which the polarities of pain and love are experienced, and the degree of spread between these poles. But the passage—which will be never-ending—is far from easy:

"[I]t does not keep pain away from us... To the degree that our prayer has become the prayer of our heart we will love more and suffer more, we will see more light and more darkness, more grace and more sin, more of God and more of humanity. To the degree that we have descended into our heart and reached out to God from there, solitude can speak to solitude, deep to deep and heart to heart. It is there where love and pain are found together." ²²⁵

So central to human spirituality is this form of reaching out to God that it may be hard for the individual concerned to grasp, much less articulate. Indeed, “it is so close that it hardly allows the distance needed for articulation and understanding... too deep and too close to our innermost being to be caught in human words.” ²²⁶ However, advocates Nouwen, it is vital for the individual to strive to articulate it in order to hold on to all that emanates from it. ²²⁷ And, in an apparent anomaly, notwithstanding that the relationship with God is personal, unique, and hard to articulate, it must be shared in a community of faith—“the climate and source of all prayer”—where it can be supported, protected, and, in turn, will blossom and grow. ²²⁸

2.5.2.5 The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life: Conclusion

The spiritual life for Henri Nouwen, then, is framed in the form of a triad of relationships—that with self, that with others, and that with God. Spiritual growth begins when the individual starts consciously to become aware of the unique set of polarities and challenges of each one of these relationships, and embraces the inner tasks required of each. ²²⁹ In and through the challenging, painful, and life-long process of undertaking these tasks, the individual will be

²²⁵ Ibid, 138. Nouwen openly draws on biblical sources here—“[T]hose who lose their life... will find it”, Matthew 16:25—but it is notable that he addresses the theme in a way that is remarkably similar to that of Kahlil Gibran in Gibran’s early-twentieth-century work of philosophical prose, The Prophet. In the latter-named work, Gibran contrasts joy and sorrow in a way that is akin to Nouwen’s understanding of the relationship between love and pain. In that Nouwen draws on Gibran elsewhere in his writings (including within Reaching Out), it may be that Gibran was an influential source—if unconsciously so—in the framing of at least this part of Nouwen’s approach to spirituality. See Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet (London: Heinemann, 1982 [1923]), 36-7.


²²⁸ Ibid, 139-40. And such a community—for its own sake—should not be a narrow and closed circle of like-minded friends, but rather a forward-looking group that is open to and welcoming of others, whatever their background. Ibid, 142.

²²⁹ It might be argued that this awareness is most likely to begin—and, indeed, may continue—on an unconscious level. And this might be the case particularly for children—the spirituality of whom Nouwen does not address explicitly.
enabled to move gradually from a place of loneliness, hostility, and illusion toward the respective goals of solitude, hospitality, and an ever-deepening relationship with God. Vacillation and regression will be inevitable from time to time, however—in any or all of the movements—and the places from which the individual came will not disappear. Rather, it is a mark of spiritual maturity when these painful places are transformed into signs of hope, “just as the wounds of Jesus did for the doubting Thomas”.

### 2.5.3 Characteristics and Features of Spirituality

The triadic framework offered by Nouwen is helpful not only in grasping spirituality conceptually, but in understanding some of the constituents of spiritual development. And notably—as will be seen here—many of Nouwen’s ideas are widely supported, both directly and indirectly, by writers and readers of literature on spirituality, both past and present. His sense that a mark of solitude—essential to a climate of hospitality—is the ability to sit in ‘empty places’, with the unknown, the unresolved, and the open-ended, for example, is clearly reflected in Romantic poet John Keats’s notion of ‘negative capability’—an attribute of spiritual maturity:

> [A] once it struck me, what quality went to form a [Hu]man of Achievement...I mean Negative Capability, that is when a [hu]man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason...

And the merit of Keats’s thinking is supported in turn by Tacey (who, also in-line with Nouwen, patently perceives spirituality to be relational):

> [Negative capability] is surely a condition to aspire to...If we were less certain of our beliefs and more receptive to mystery and wonder, we would paradoxically be closer to God, more intimate with the spirit, and more tolerant of our fellow human beings...

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230 Nouwen, Reaching Out, 149.
231 In the discussion below, ‘General Characteristics of Spirituality’, a number of the spiritual disciplines and characteristics mooted by Nouwen will be seen to be indirectly endorsed by others. Moreover, in a direct sense, Nouwen wrote more than forty books on spirituality in his lifetime (1932-1996), and LaNoue reported in 2001 that, in North America alone, more than one-and-a-half million copies had been sold. This, she suggests, “places Nouwen within a small circle of Christian leaders who have made an impact on American spirituality”. LaNoue, Spiritual Legacy, 150.
232 Nouwen, Reaching Out, 71. See section 2.5.2.3, above.
233 John Keats (1795-1821), in a letter to his brothers George and Thomas Keats (dated 1817). As cited in Li Ou, Keats and Negative Capability (London & New York: Continuum, 2009), 1. Li Ou notes that Keats used the term ‘negative capability’ once only in his writings, but that, perceived to be the most significant of the poet’s philosophical ideas, it went on to become Keats’s best known and most widely quoted phrase. Ibid, xiv.
234 Tacey, The Spirituality Revolution, 12.
These examples suggest that, though spirituality on an individual level is known to be personal and unique, having been shaped in, by, and through a singular set of experiences, there are a number of constituents which together identify spirituality on a more general level. These will be considered in this section.

2.5.3.1 General Characteristics of Spirituality

It has been established, above, that the capacity for self-transcendence; the perceiving of what constitutes ultimate value, and the conscious moving toward the latter through the former are the central components of human spirituality per se. And, where more-specific markers of human spirituality are concerned, many—frequently overlapping—observations have been made, ranging from the abstract and generalized to the concrete and detailed. Psychologist George D Boone, for example, suggests that “[t]he ultimate expression of spirituality” occurs when the individual comes to trust self, others, and God; and manifests a sense of peace, satisfaction with his/her path in life, general happiness, and an ongoing sense of justice, love and compassion for others. A further broad-picture perspective is offered by Peter C Hill and colleagues, who note the presence of one or more of the following six dimensions of spiritual experience among the myriad descriptions of spirituality that have been put forward by scholars from various academic disciplines. These are the existence of an ultimate concern; an integrating or unifying factor within the personality; a sense of authenticity; a source of yearning; a meaningful identity and purpose, and union with the Divine.

235 See section 2.2.5, above.
238 Including philosophy, theology, social science, and psychology. Ibid, 57.
239 Ibid.
240 Minister and theologian, Lawrence L LaPierre—who is cited by Hill et al (Ref: Ibid)—similarly observes the regular appearance within the literature of several common factors—“fundamental aspects of spirituality”—from which he concludes spirituality to be multidimensional. His factors include: (1) Journey—the spiritual journey begins with a conscious decision to search for meaning, purpose, or direction; (2) Transcendence—belief in a transcendent dimension to life: whether seen as ‘Mystery’ or ‘God’; (3) Community—a sense of connectedness with the world, of being in community; (4) The mystery of creation—the relationship with God or Mystery as encountered in the natural world; (5) Transformation—an ongoing process of ‘becoming’. LaPierre further includes Religion as a common factor—though his discussion suggests (albeit indirectly) that he takes Religion to mean whatever is perceived is the highest value in life. Ref: Lawrence L LaPierre, ‘A Model for Describing Spirituality’, 153-159. In Journal of Religion and Health 33/2 (1994): 153-61.
Empirical research in the area undertaken by education and psychology researchers, led by David N Elkins and his colleagues, essentially endorse these factors, but go further.\textsuperscript{241} In their quest to develop a humanistic measure of spirituality to assess the spirituality of non-churchgoers,\textsuperscript{242} the researchers first reviewed the literature of major writers who approached spirituality phenomenologically,\textsuperscript{243} and compiled a shortlist of nine major components of human spirituality. They then sought-out and interviewed five spiritual leaders from various religious traditions\textsuperscript{244}—each of whom was deemed by the researchers to be highly spiritual—in order to get an evaluation based on the personal experience and knowledge of each of the leaders.\textsuperscript{245} Ultimately, all five endorsed the nine components of spirituality, set-out together with accompanying descriptions, in Table 2.5.3.1a, below:

\begin{itemize}
\item Namely, the ‘Spiritual Orientation Inventory’. Ibid, 5.
\item The leaders were drawn from Buddhist, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religious traditions. Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Table 2.5.3.1: Elkins et al: Nine Major Components of Spirituality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Explanation as a shortened, direct quotation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Transcendent dimension</td>
<td>&quot;The spiritual person has an experientially based belief that there is a transcendent dimension to life. The actual content of this belief may range from the traditional view of a personal God to a psychological view that the ‘transcendent dimension’ is simply a natural extension of the conscious self into the regions of the unconscious or Greater Self&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning and purpose in life</td>
<td>&quot;The spiritual person has known the quest for meaning and purpose and has emerged...with confidence that life is deeply meaningful and that one’s own existence has purpose...[E]ach person has filled the ‘existential vacuum’ with an authentic sense that life has meaning and purpose&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission in life</td>
<td>&quot;The spiritual person has a sense of ‘vocation’...feels a sense of responsibility to life, a calling to answer, a mission to accomplish...[and] understands that it is in ‘losing one’s life’ that one ‘finds it’&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacredness of life</td>
<td>&quot;The spiritual person believes life is infused with sacredness and often experiences a sense of awe, reverence and wonder even in ‘nonreligious’ settings. He or she does not dichotomize life into sacred and secular, holy and profane, but believes that all of life is ‘holy’...&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material values</td>
<td>&quot;The spiritual person can appreciate material goods...but does not seek ultimate satisfaction from them...[knowing] that ultimate satisfaction is found not in material, but spiritual things.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>&quot;The spiritual person believes we are our ‘brother’s keeper’ and is touched by the pain and suffering of others. He or she has a strong sense of social justice...is committed to altruistic love and action...[and] knows that ‘no [human] is an island’&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealism</td>
<td>&quot;The spiritual person is a visionary committed to the betterment of the world...loves things for what they are yet also for what they can become...[and is] committed to high ideals and to the actualization of positive potential in all aspects of life.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of the tragic</td>
<td>&quot;The spiritual person is solemnly conscious of the tragic realities of human existence...deeply aware of human pain, suffering, and death...[T]his gives depth...and provides him or her with an existential seriousness toward life. Somewhat paradoxically, however, awareness of the tragic enhances [his/her] joy, appreciation, and valuing of life&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits of spirituality</td>
<td>&quot;The spiritual person is one whose spirituality has borne fruit in his or her life. True spirituality has a discernible effect upon one’s relationship to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers to be the Ultimate”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By way of comparison, and more recently, Roehlkepartain and colleagues at the US-based Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence put forward a similar list—having drawn on literature reviews, focus-group data, team dialogues, and input from some ninety-six international advisors. Table 2.5.3.1b highlights the dimensions that the Center rated (in descending order) as being either ‘essential’ or ‘important’ components of spiritual development.
Table 2.5.3.1b

Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence: Fifteen Possible Dimensions of Spiritual Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual Development is, in part, how individuals…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>…address ultimate questions of existence, meaning and purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…develop the sense that life has meaning beyond the ordinary or mundane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…make sense of their lives and understand their reason for being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…understand their relationship to that which is transcendent or sacred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…grow in self-awareness through relationship to community, to nature, to humanity, to the divine, to ancestors, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…embed the self in something larger than the self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…develop and live out an orientation to life in response to that which is for them the highest truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…find and honour the sacred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…create the hope or conviction that their time on earth matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…understand and make commitments to what they see as eternal and timeless such as ultimate truth or reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…forge a connection between the self and the universe community, ancestors, nature, humanity, higher power, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…become mindful of and accept the fullness of human potential or capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…discern and come to peace with who they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…discover and embrace their essence as mind, body, and spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…find and experience unity and interdependence between ‘the essence of me’ with ‘the essence of the universe’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plainly, though approaching the issue from a different perspective—-with Elkins et al offering a ‘still shot’ of (mature) spiritual being, and Roehlkepartain and colleagues framing a more generalized view of variable factors of spiritual growth—overlaps are evident in the content of the two tables. Not least, these include the quest for meaning and purpose; a sense of the sacred and the transcendent, and awareness of the need for connection and relationship.

249 The information in this table has been drawn from Ibid.
Chapter Two: Exploring Spirituality

2.5.3.2 Specific Characteristics of Spirituality

This, then, provides an overview of the possible constituents of spirituality. But education academic Clive Beck moves to a more specific and personal level when he offers a list of hallmark characteristics of spirituality which he believes to apply both across cultures and to both religious and non-religious people. Table 2.5.3.2 highlights many of these typical characteristics, most of which, Beck posits, will manifest to a greater or lesser extent within the spiritual person:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.5.3.2: Clive Beck: Characteristics of a Spiritual Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awareness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The attainment of a substantial level of insight and understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breadth of outlook</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to see things in perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A holistic outlook</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An awareness of the interconnectedness of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of body, mind, soul, and spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wonder</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of awe, mystery, the transcendent in life; that there is always ‘something more’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gratitude</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladness and humility re the good things of life, while acknowledging the bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hope</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of hopefulness or optimism—necessary for everyday living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Courage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A courageous and ‘spirited’ approach to life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Detachment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A balance between detachment and attachment: ‘going with the flow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of the inevitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gentleness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sensitive, thoughtful, caring approach to other people, to one’s own needs, and to the cosmos in general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Love</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often considered the prime characteristic of spirituality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Malcolm Hollick agrees with Beck’s supposition that such spiritual characteristics essentially are universal, and, drawing on a variety of sources, puts forward an extended list of spiritual values—which encompass not only many of those offered by Beck, but other more general components of spirituality mooted by both Elkins et al and Roehlkepartain. Among these universal spiritual values are: balance, compassion, cooperation, courage, devotion, fairness, 

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251 This is taken to mean that the extent to which they will manifest hinges on an individual’s level of spiritual development/maturity.
252 The information in this table has been drawn from Beck, ‘Education for Spirituality’, 151-153.
253 Malcolm Hollick, *The Science of Oneness: A Worldview for the Twenty-First Century* (Winchester & New York: O Books, 2006), 352. Hollick notes that his list is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather seeks to offer a ‘flavour’ of underlying spiritual qualities. The sources he cites include: (1) A 1996 survey of representatives from forty countries and more than fifty faith communities (http://www.globalethics.org/gvs/summary.html); (2) core values adopted by the UNESCO-supported ‘Living Values in Education’ project (http://www.livingvalues.net/about/index.html); (3) Taoist and Buddhist values/qualities. Ibid, 409.
freedom, frugality, generosity, happiness, harmony, honesty, honour, humility, joy, justice, love, non-attachment, openness, peace, preservation of nature, respect, responsibility, reverence for life, self-respect, service, simplicity, social harmony, temperance, tolerance, truth, unity, vocation, and wisdom.\textsuperscript{254}

\textbf{2.5.4 Conclusion}

It has been established, then, that there are indeed a number of discernible features, qualities, and characteristics—both general and specific—which can help to identify what human spirituality might look like in real terms. And a number of markers of spiritual growth also have been identified. Plainly, such information is invaluable to the current research, not least for its potential to assist in the planning of the empirical study—and, in particular, in the framing of pertinent questions to put to participants—but also in the analysis of ensuing data. Figure 2.5.4, below, concludes the exploration by drawing together many of the findings in a more readily accessible visual format. Adopting Nouwen’s triadic conceptualization of relational spirituality,\textsuperscript{255} and incorporating ideas from some of the many scholars, from multiple disciplines, who have been cited in this chapter-section,\textsuperscript{256} it highlights examples of the type of qualities and characteristics that together may comprise mature spirituality, within each relational area.

\textsuperscript{254} Hollick, \textit{The Science of Oneness}, 352.
\textsuperscript{255} It is acknowledged that other scholars and writers also share Nouwen’s conceptualization of spirituality as relational, triadic in form. See section 2.2.6, above.
\textsuperscript{256} The scholars whose work is incorporated in Figure 2.5.4—and to whom the researcher is indebted—include Henri J M Nouwen; David N Elkins and colleagues; Eugene C Roehlkepartain and the Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence; Clive Beck; Lawrence L LaPierre; Malcolm Hollick; Peter C Hill and colleagues, and George D Boone. (For references of each, please see footnotes in section 2.5 of this chapter).
Chapter Two: Exploring Spirituality

Figure 2.5.4: Potential Features of Mature Spirituality

- Ongoing search for meaning and purpose to existence
- Acceptance of the inevitable
- Sense of hope and optimism
- Inclusive
- Humble
- Altruistic
- Open to new perspectives/other views. Able to adjust viewpoint
- Understanding of, and willingness to embrace life’s polarities
- Sense of gratitude for life
- At peace, and in harmony with oneself and all else
- Broad outlook. ‘Big picture’ perspective
- Material goods kept in perspective
- Sense of mission/vocation
- Quiet strength, courage
- Inspiration from divine
- Sense of awe and wonder
- Appreciation of beauty
- Belief in transcendent dimension to life
- Searching for ultimate truth/highest value
- Of service
- Hospitable
- Respect and appreciation for the mystery of creation
- Able to live with the unknown/the unanswered
- Sense of awe and wonder
- Sense of community, connectedness
- Loving Gentle
- Compassionate Empathetic
- Sense of awe and wonder
- Loving Gentle
- Compassionate Empathetic
2.6 Conclusion

In seeking to offer a selective overview of what is known about human spirituality—and, indeed, Christian spirituality—for the purposes of this thesis, this chapter has framed the understanding of spirituality to be assumed within this paper. In brief, spirituality on the level of the individual has been established to be personal and unique; shaped, expressed, and developing throughout the lifespan not only in response to the singular set of experiences that comprise each individual life, but in and through a triad of relationships with self, with others, and with that which is perceived by the individual to be D/divine. The capacity to transcend the self; the identifying of what constitutes one’s ultimate value, and the conscious moving toward this ultimate value by means of self-transcendence have been identified as the central constituents of spirituality—central constituents which, for Christians, will be of Christian form. Furthermore, though the spiritual life-passage of each individual is inherently unique, there are many characteristic markers of spirituality and, indeed, of spiritual growth.

Having thus established an understanding of spirituality; considered the scholarly framework in which the empirical component of the current research sits, and having highlighted relevant findings from within it, the paper will now move on to consider the most suitable methodological tools for the gathering and analysis of study-data.
Chapter Three
Accessing the Spiritual 1
Narrative Knowing

3.1 Introduction

The undertaking of empirical research in the field of human spirituality necessarily relies on the transferring of deep personal knowledge and understandings from one person to another. But before the method of transferring such information within the current research can be determined, questions that first need to be answered are, firstly, how do individuals come to know themselves in a deep and profound way; and, secondly, how can they access and articulate such information? Drawing on scholarly opinion across multiple disciplines, this chapter seeks to explore ways in which human beings come to make meaning in and of their lives, and the media through which they might express it, with a view to determining the most appropriate and effective methodology for the study.

3.2 Ways of Knowing and Understanding

3.2.1 Introduction

The rise of scientific inquiry within the Western world over the past four hundred years—and its exponential rise from the twentieth century onwards, in particular—unquestionably has added significantly to human knowledge and understanding of the world in which we live. However, the reasoned, objective, and verifiable approach taken by science, for all its undoubted strengths, is not always suited to, or, indeed, suitable for, understandings in the realm of the person—as Malcolm Hollick argues:

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1. As footnoted in Chapter One (footnote 76), this chapter is believed to be essential to this thesis, serving not only to justify the use of, and to explain the background to, the medium of narrative, but to determine the most effective way to employ narrative within the empirical study. It is advised, however, that the chapter effectively stands alone—notwithstanding some cross-referencing to it later in the paper—and so would be suitable for reading at a later stage were a reader to prefer to learn initially of the empirical study.

2. In the current study, for example, it will require the transference of such information from a participant to the researcher.
Science is a powerful tool for exploring the physical, material world. But it cannot come to grips with our inner worlds of personal experience, feelings, artistic creativity, consciousness and spirituality. These are intensely private worlds, not open to objective observations by others, and not readily communicated in words, let alone mathematics. Scientific explanations in terms of biochemistry and brain activity tell us how this inner reality works, but fail to capture the quality and significance of the experiences…and yet these are the things that are most important to us as living beings. These are the things that bring joy and meaning to life.  

So the logical and analytical approach of modern scientific methods, then, may be unable to open all windows to such knowledge of self. But if science is fallible within this domain, what might be added to it, or indeed might take its place?

3.2.2 The Dichotomy of Human Thinking

In the late nineteenth century, William James noted the existence of an apparently universally-perceived dichotomy in human thought processes:

To say that all human thinking is essentially of two kinds—reasoning on the one hand, and narrative, descriptive, contemplative thinking on the other—is to say only what every reader’s experience will corroborate.  

And in his landmark publication, Actual Minds, Possible Worlds, cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner developed the idea by positing that there are two natural forms, or ‘modes’, of thought which lead to human knowing and understanding. Both forms function as means by which individuals comprehend life-experiences and construct their reality. And both are essential components of human functioning. However, though complementary, the two modes operate on parallel, non-convergent, planes, incommutable to one another. One of these modes is reasoned, logical thought—which Bruner terms the paradigmatic, or logico-scientific mode of thought—and the other is narrative thinking.  

Paradigmatic thought, expounds Bruner, is the better known and understood of the two modes. Essentially positivist in nature, it is the abstract theoretical reasoning that sits comfortably under the intellectual umbrella of science and mathematics. It is driven by logic, and seeks general laws; consistency; congruence; and, ultimately, empirical and verifiable proof. And the reasoned and sound arguments that ultimately may be produced by this mode

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3 Hollick, The Science of Oneness, 10.  
of thought are unambiguous.\textsuperscript{6} The narrative mode of thinking, on the other hand, is open to variance; less constrained in nature, and concerned primarily with human intentions, feelings, and behaviour. It operates by constructing stories about human experience that convey potential or realized action, purpose, and goals, and the course and consequences of the journey through and beyond them.\textsuperscript{7}

3.2.3 The Storied Nature of Human Life\textsuperscript{8}

It can be seen from this that the narrative mode of thought is a potentially powerful means for communicating and understanding experience,\textsuperscript{9} and, in turn, for expressing and representing the self. French existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre takes it one step further, positing (fittingly, perhaps, within a novel) that narrative is all-embracing in human life:

This is what fools people: a man is always a teller of tales, he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through them; and he tries to live his life as if he were recounting [a story].\textsuperscript{10}

Scholar of literature, Barbara Hardy, agrees, observing that almost every moment of human life, waking and sleeping, is played-out in story form. She presents an exposition that is instantly recognizable:

It is hard to take more than a step without narrating. Before we sleep each night we tell over to ourselves what we may also have told to others, the story of the past day. We mingle truths and falsehoods, not always quite knowing where one blends into the other. As we sleep we dream dreams from which we wake to remember, half-remember, and almost remember, in forms...that are recognizably narrative. We begin the day by narrating to ourselves and probably to others our expectations, plans, desires, fantasies and intentions. The action in which the day is passed coexists with...the narrative revision and rehearsals of past and future. We meet our colleagues, family, intimates, acquaintances, strangers, and exchange stories, overtly or covertly...And all the time the environment beckons and assaults with its narratives...\textsuperscript{11}

Plainly, then, human life is lived-out in story form. But it comprises not just one story, but rather a multi-layered web of stories: a network of stories within stories, contributing to a larger story; blending to the stories of others to make-up a higher-level story, and so on. And it seems that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{6} Ibid, 11-13.
\item \textsuperscript{7} Ibid, 13-16.
\item \textsuperscript{8} This heading owes much to the title of Theodore Sarbin’s 1986 edited publication, Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct (New York: Praeger, 1986).
\item \textsuperscript{9} Anthropologist Misia Landau makes the intriguing suggestion that even scientific theory can be bound to narrative. The formation of rocks; the advancing of a disease, the growth of plants, for example, all are sequenced happenings which theoretically could be recounted in story form. Scientists themselves, however, tend to be unaware of such narrative underpinnings to their work, notes Landau. Ref: Misia Landau, ‘Human Evolution as Narrative’, 262. In American Scientist 72 (1984): 262-268.
\item \textsuperscript{11} It is noted that Sartre—writing here in the 1930’s—does not use inclusive language.
\end{itemize}
the storied nature of human life is not bound by age, place, or culture, but rather is a universal. As French literary theorist and semiologist, Roland Barthes, suggests:

[N]arrative occurs in all periods, all places, all societies; narrative begins with the very history of humanity; there is not, there has never been, any people anywhere without narrative; all classes, all human groups have their narratives...international, transhistorical, transcultural, narrative is there, it is life.

Barthes’s assertion will be explored in more detail, below.

3.2.4 Conclusion

Manifestly, the inner world of humankind—including the imagination, feelings, hopes, joys, and expectations of the individual—finds a powerful outlet in the narrative mode of thought, which, coupled with the paradigmatic mode, is intrinsic to humanity. However, unlike the latter mode of thought, narrative thinking is the prevailing cognitive tool through which individuals come to know and understand themselves. And this quest for self-understanding through narrative is believed to be universal, with human life per se lived, expressed, and understood in and through a storied world on multiple levels. These qualities unquestionably establish narrative as a medium of note and interest to and for the current research—potentially assisting study-participants in their reflections, and enabling them to convey something of their inner being—and thus this paper will now move on to explore the attributes of narrative in greater depth.

It will consider the relationship between narrative and human identity, and then will explore concrete examples from human history to examine narrative-knowing in practice. Firstly, however, common ground will be established by considering precisely what is meant by the term, narrative; what characteristics it displays, and in what forms it may be found.

3.3 Narrative: Its Meaning, Form, and Characteristics

3.3.1 The Meaning of Narrative

For the purposes of this exploration, the terms ‘narrative’ and ‘story’ will be used interchangeably. Both terms are defined in a broad sense, to mean relaying (to self or others), in any form, of a sequence of events between which there is a causal connection.

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12 Notwithstanding, participants in a culture will have their own collective narratives for which there is a shared interpretation—and the form and meaning of such narratives are important factors in the construction of cultural identity. For discussion on the cultural aspects of narrative, see, for example, Jerome Bruner, Acts of Meaning (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990).
3.3.2 Forms of Narrative

In the sense that narrative is a means by which to convey information, it can be seen to be a system of communication, or a type of language. However, though narrative exists most obviously in written and oral forms, forms of narrative language are myriad and diverse. As Barthes noted:

Numberless are the world’s narratives...Narrative can be supported by articulated speech, oral or written, by image, fixed or moving, by gesture, and by the organized mixture of all these substances; it is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, tragedy, comedy, epic, history, pantomime, painting...stained-glass window, cinema, comic book, news item, conversation.\(^{15}\)

Poetry, musical, opera, theatre, dance, anecdote, biography, allegory, joke, advertisements, popular-music video, sculpture, saga, song lyrics, journals, and dreams all can be added to the list—a list which advancing technology has made a work in progress. In the contemporary world, for example, interactive media such as computer games and virtual worlds are now eligible for inclusion.

3.3.3 Characteristics of Narrative

Narratives differ in form, then, and they also vary in content. Notwithstanding, all narratives have certain characteristics in common, which identify and distinguish them. Firstly, verbal narratives have three distinct layers, comprising:\(^ {16}\)

- Words and sentences (spoken or written)
- What is represented by the words and sentences (characters, events, etc)
- The meaning of the words and sentences (embodied concepts, values, etc)

Plainly, the latter is the most complex of the layers, in that the meaning of a narrative is not always clear—whether by design or fault—and subjective interpretation may be required. However, even if an interpretation were to be offered within a narrative, an alternative or additional interpretation may well be drawn from it by the reader or listener—a feature of narrative that will be discussed in more detail below.

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\(^{15}\) Barthes, The Semiotic Challenge, 95.

\(^{16}\) Shimon Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art in the Bible (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 197. All types of narrative will have such layers, of course; however, the layers will manifest in different forms. Within a narrative work of art, for example, words and sentences will be substituted with lines and shading, which together will form a picture from which meaning can be drawn.
Secondly, narratives share a set of features, which invariably unfold in sequential order. McAdams identifies them, as follows:¹⁷

- A setting
- Characters (human or humanlike)¹⁸
- A happening
- An endeavour (prompted by the happening)
- A consequence
- A reaction (to the consequence)

An additional feature that might be added to this list is temporality, in that narratives must relate to time—not only do they unfold with time, but time passes within them.¹⁹

Further distinguishing features of narratives are that most of them centre on issues of power and/or love²⁰ (a motivational duality alternatively termed ‘agency and communion’).²¹ And movement within them is likely to be linked to one or more of several universal themes, including the following, identified by theologian and philosopher of religion, Don Cupitt:²²

- Pilgrimage to goal
- Desire to satisfaction
- Struggle to success or victory
- Opposition to mediation
- Conflict to resolution
- Bound to free
- Lost to found
- Problem to resolution

The idea of generalized narrative themes ties-in to the argument of Herrnstein-Smith,²³ who contends that there are a limited number of base storylines through which human experience is organized and manifest. In the secular world of today, one of the best-known would be the hardship-to-happiness story of Cinderella, for example—versions of which emerge not

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¹⁸ Richert stresses that narratives are never simply a chronicle of events, or a description of things, but always centre on a person or people (or anthropomorphized figures). Ref: Alphons J Richert, ‘Narrative Psychology and Psychotherapy Integration’, 84. In *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration* 16/1 (2006): 84-110.
²⁰ McAdams, *The Stories We Live By*, 68. These are the central themes, says McAdams, because they are the primary psychological motivations in human life. Not only do we seek to enhance and extend our potency as individuals, but we seek to connect, unite, and yield to others in close and loving relationships.
inflrequently within different narrative media. Centring on core themes of both love and power, it can be seen to embrace at least three of Cupitt’s exemplars. And power-themed stories highlighting the good-versus-evil struggles of a central heroic figure emerge unremittingly in various narrative forms.

3.4 Narrative and Human Identity

3.4.1 Introduction

The narrative form exists in both real-world and fictional stories, of course, but the widespread use and popularity of fictional works may be an indication of the extent to which narrative is bound-up in human life—as Barbara Hardy’s exposition, above, highlights well. Indeed, the link is seen as so extensive by psychologist Theodore Sarbin that he has advocated for narrative’s use as a root metaphor for psychology. Narrative is of ontological status, Sarbin argues, suggesting that “the narrative for human beings is analogous to the ocean for fishes.”

3.4.2 The Personal Myth

The parallel is underscored by McAdams. We are the stories we tell, he contends. Human identity is a story: a heroic life story or ‘personal myth’ that each of us will frame in the course of a lifetime. The story originates in infancy; is actively worked-on from adolescence, and ends with a striving to generate a personal legacy. Through it, each individual endeavours to join the often bewildering and disjointed experiences of his/her life into a coherent and unified whole.

If you want to know me, then you must know my story, for my story defines who I am. And if I want to know myself, to gain insight into the meaning of my own life, then I too, must come to see in all its particulars the narrative of the self—the personal myth—that I have tacitly, even unconsciously, composed over the course of my years. It is a story I continue to revise, and tell to myself (and sometimes to others) as I go on living.

And it is plain that, forged from subjective meaning that is drawn from an unreplicable and ongoing set of events and experiences, the personal myth can be like no other. Indeed, it distinguishes every human life, says author and neurologist, Oliver W Sacks:

\[\text{Ibid.}\] The storyline of Cinderella is evident in the more recent narratives of ‘Pygmalion’ and ‘Pretty Woman’, for example. It has been disseminated in numerous forms, including as a fairytale and novel, and in theatre, pantomime, animation, and film.

\[\text{Ibid.}\] Examples from the secular world abound, and include such figures as Superman, Wonderwoman, Spiderman, Batman, Robin Hood, &c.

\[\text{Theodore Sarbin (ed.), Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct (New York: Praeger, 1986), 3-19.}\] In simpler terms, Sarbin’s argument is that “narrative is a fruitful metaphor for examining and interpreting human action”. Ibid, 19.


\[\text{McAdams, \text{The Stories We Live By}, 5 & 11.}\]

\[\text{Ibid, 11.}\]
Each of us is a singular narrative, which is constructed, continually, unconsciously, by, through, and in us—through our perceptions, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions; and not least, our discourse, our spoken narrations. Biologically, physiologically, we are not so different from each other; historically, as narratives, we are each of us unique.

Thus, narrative unites humanity on one level, but sets it part on another. Every human life itself will be transformed into a unique master story that tells the tale of who a person is, and in what he or she believes. The personal myth is the consummate story of the self.

3.4.3 The Myth as a Selective Representation

Plainly, fashioning a personal myth over the course of a lifetime necessarily must involve more omissions than it does additions, and it could be argued that in order to come to know someone, one also would need to be aware of the nature of his or her omissions, which might be said to constitute a parallel—and less idealized—story of the self. However, as Bruner—whose view is that narrative deals with the vicissitudes of human intention, rather than on the bounded and restrictive precision of actualized experience—observes, personal narratives necessarily are built on a partial and selective representation of relevant experiences, through and by which the essence of the self can be conveyed. Further, in and through the very act of telling and retelling the narrative to self and/or others, an individual will be able to organize, structure, and re/build the memories, perceptual experience, and events of his/her life to the point whereby he/she becomes the story.

3.4.4 The Sacred Story of the Self

Surely, then, these attributes make the personal myth quite extraordinary. Indeed, as McAdams notes, just as the term ‘myth’ designates a story that deals with the ultimate questions of life, conveying fundamental truths; and which, when ingrained in a culture or a religion, may be held to be sacred, so a personal myth operates in much the same way, serving the same purpose, but on an individual level. It is the sacred story of the individual, defining identity; holding meaning, and illuminating personal truths. Furthermore, the

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31 Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, 16.
33 Novelist Philip Ardagh essentially agrees with McAdams’s definition. A myth, he writes, tends not to be based on actual happenings, but, though made-up, is used as a means by which to explain natural phenomena or cultural truths and customs. It may incorporate superhuman figures. A legend is similar to a myth, but is more likely to be based on actual events and real people—notwithstanding that the story is likely to have changed and developed over time. Philip Ardagh, *South American Myths and Legends* (London: Belitha Press, 1998), 2.
34 McAdams, *The Stories We Live By*, 33-34.
personal myth serves an additional, and vital purpose in the lives of those who no longer hold to a religion, or who cannot believe in God:

[M]any of us no longer believe in an orderly universe governed by a just God. In this midst of this existential nothingness, we are challenged to create our own meanings, discover our own truths, and fashion the personal myths that will serve to sanctify our lives.  

So whatever one’s belief, the sacred story of the self holds a key to unlocking not only the meaning of a life, but the meaning of all life.

3.4.5 Conclusion

This exploration has revealed that not only does humanity live in a storied world, but that human identity itself is bound to narrative—a belief that has been shown here to be held by cross-disciplinary theorists and practitioners, both past and present, from throughout the world. Certainly, it cannot be by chance alone that the academic disciplines of Narrative Psychology and Narrative Theology now are established; that the narrative perspective is standard within the practical arenas of counselling and psychotherapy; and that the narrative approach to human understanding has been burgeoning within the social sciences—linked to cultural, developmental, personality, and cognitive psychology, among other branches—for some twenty years. And foundational in all these areas, pivotal to their being, is the intrinsic link between narrative and human meaning-making.

3.5 Narrative in Human History

3.5.1 Introduction

It is evident from this discussion that the narrative mode of thought together with the personal myth of the individual would be invaluable tools to employ within the current research. But before moving-on from the topic, the analytical process of the research may be aided by a brief examination of ways in which narrative has been employed within human history—and

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36 Narrative Psychology is an approach within psychology that, broadly speaking, is concerned with the ‘storied nature of human conduct’—a term coined by Theodore Sarbin in 1986.
37 Narrative Theology seeks to use the stories of scripture as the primary resource by which to interpret, and draw meaning from, the Christian tradition.
38 There is a known link between narrative and emotion. See, for example, John McLeod. Narrative and Psychotherapy (London: Sage, 1997), 38-44. Empirical research has shown that disclosure of traumatic events in the form of oral or written narrative can be highly therapeutic in preventing further inhibition of feelings; re-engaging the person, and allowing meaning to be made of the traumas. Ref: Kate G Niederhoffer and James W Pennebaker, ‘Sharing One’s Story: On the Benefits of Writing or Talking About Emotional Experience’, 581. In C R Snyder and Shane J. Lopez, eds, Handbook of Positive Psychology (New York: Oxford University Press), 2002, 573-583.
especially within Christian circles, in that Christian narratives will be well known to many study-
participants, and almost inevitably will form some part of the empirical-data. Accordingly, this
section will consider the beginnings of the narrative form; the use of story within ancient
civilizations, and it will conclude with an exploration into the formation, effect, and
interpretation of narrative within the Bible.

3.5.2 Humanity's earliest known story
The use of carbon-dating on cave paintings uncovered in Lascaux, France, in September
1940, led to the discovery that the many iconographs found there were Palaeolithic depictions
dating back some seventeen thousand years.\textsuperscript{40} Though predominantly simple artistic
impressions of animals—bison, stags, and horses, for example—and thus not able to be
classified as ‘narrative’,\textsuperscript{41} included among the works in one of Lascaux’s numerous
subterranean chambers is a painting known as ‘The Scene of The Dead Man’. A triptych, the
painting depicts a man (with the face or mask of a bird), in an apparently fatal engagement
with an aggressive bison, alongside a fleeing rhinoceros. As can be seen in a copy of the
painting in Figure 3.5.2, below, additional images are of a stick topped with a birdlike figure, a
spear, and entrails.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{40} See ‘Time and Space’. \textit{The Cave of Lascaux} website. Accessed 2 November 2009. Available from
\url{http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/lascaux/en/}
\textsuperscript{41} See the distinguishing characteristics of narrative, as noted in section 3.3.3, above.
Available from\url{http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/lascaux/en/} It is acknowledged that earlier-dated
cave art exists, including that found at the Cave of Chauvet-Pont-D’Arc, which is believed to be up to 31,000
years old. No depictions of humans were found among this collection, however. (See URL:
\url{http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/chauvet/en/index.html}. The earliest-known depiction of a human is
a 27,000-year-old work, discovered in November 2005, in the Vilhonneur cave, near Angouleme, France.
But this is a portrait of a human face, rather than a narrative depiction. See Adam Sage, “Cave face "the
\url{http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article671755.ece}
The precise meaning and purpose of the art cannot be known, of course, but numerous possibilities come to mind. Was it drawn by a witness to a tragedy as a warning to others, or as a lesson to the young, for example? Was it intended as a lasting memorial in celebration of a shaman or tribesman who had died protecting others? Was it the means by which significant events of the time—or, indeed, stories from the past—standardly were chronicled and preserved? Was its purpose to be decorative? Or was it drawn for recreation, and/or as a way to pass time? Whatever the purpose behind it (itself, potentially a story), the story-like nature of the painting, together with the required inclusion of a human or humanlike figure, nonetheless makes it one of the earliest-known narratives—if not the earliest known narrative—in human history.

3.5.3 Narrative in Ancient Civilizations

The dating of the Lascaux narrative shows that it emerged from one of humanity’s earliest civilizations. Later civilizations moved beyond basic pictorial means by which to tell their stories. Tangible evidence—in the form of texts, text-fragments, or artefacts—exists of

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44 As noted in section 3.3.3, above, narratives always centre on people (or anthropomorphized figures), and never simply comprise a description of things, or a chronicle of events. Ref: Alphons J Richert, ‘Narrative Psychology and Psychotherapy Integration’, 84. In Journal of Psychotherapy Integration 16/1 (2006): 84-110.

45 Inscribed musical instruments, for example.
written stories from ancient Babylonian, Canaanite, Chinese, Egyptian, Hittite, Sanskrit, and Sumerian civilizations. And one of the earliest written stories, appearing on an Egyptian papyrus\textsuperscript{46} dates to between 2000 and 1300 BCE.\textsuperscript{47} Though no physical evidence can exist for it, it seems inevitable that the origins of the oral tradition of story-telling will predate this latter work significantly. Indeed, in 1927, the English novelist, E M Forster (1879-1970), colourfully hypothesized that the oral tradition existed as far back as the time of the Neanderthals.\textsuperscript{48, 49}

Neanderthal man listened to stories, if one may judge by the shape of his skull. The primitive audience was an audience of shock-heads, gaping around the camp fire, fatigued with contending against the mammoth or the woolly rhinoceros, and only kept awake by suspense. What would happen next?\textsuperscript{50}

Less speculative evidence, however, is available in the form of ancient stories that have survived to be passed down the ages, including the well known Greek epics, the \textit{Iliad} and the \textit{Odyssey}.\textsuperscript{51} Predating both, and one of the oldest surviving written stories known to humanity is that of the \textit{Epic of Gilgamesh}, a mythical poem from Sumeria about Gilgamesh, king of Uruk (in Babylonia)—a figure both human and divine—and the heroic deeds he undertakes in an ultimately unsuccessful quest for immortality. A copy of \textit{Gilgamesh}, written in cuneiform script,\textsuperscript{52} and set on a dozen clay tablets, was unearthed in Nineveh, Iraq, in 1872.\textsuperscript{53} The oral form of \textit{Gilgamesh} is believed to date back to the third millennium BCE, while the earliest extant written form has been dated c1750 BCE.\textsuperscript{54} However, the individual folktales that together constitute the original source material are said to have begun to spread in written

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{46} Namely, the Westcar Papyrus.
  \item \textsuperscript{47} Anne Pelowski, \textit{The World of Storytelling} (New York: HH Wilson, 1990), 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{48} E M Forster, \textit{Aspects of the Novel} (London: Penguin, 1990. Orig pub. 1927), 42.
  \item \textsuperscript{50} Forster, \textit{Aspects of the Novel}, 42. It is noted that Forster—writing in 1927—does not use inclusive language.
  \item \textsuperscript{51} Both works are epic poems traditionally attributed to Homer. They are believed to have emerged in the oral tradition. The older of the two works, the \textit{Iliad}, is thought to date back (in oral form) to between 750 and 850 BCE. Ref: David Leeming, "\textit{Iliad}" \textit{The Oxford Companion to World Mythology}. Oxford University Press, 2004. \textit{Oxford Reference Online}. Murdoch University. Accessed 3 November 2009. Available from \url{http://0-www.oxfordreference.com.prospero.murdoch.edu.au/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=1208.e762}.
  \item \textsuperscript{52} Cuneiform is an ancient form of picture writing in which a triangular stylus was used to make wedge-shaped strokes on clay tablets. Ultimately, it comprised some 500 characters, most of which stood for words. It is known to have been being used in Mesopotamia by c3000 BCE. Ref: "cuneiform", \textit{Philips' World Encyclopedia}, 2008. \textit{Oxford Reference Online}. Oxford University Press, Murdoch University. Accessed: 2 November 2009. Available from \url{http://0-www.oxfordreference.com.prospero.murdoch.edu.au/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t142.e3002}.
\end{itemize}
form relatively soon after the invention of cuneiform, c3000 BCE making *Gilgamesh* a story that may have begun circulating some five thousand years ago.

Notwithstanding, the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is a narrative that is noteworthy for far more than simply its early dating. As noted above, the term ‘myth’ designates narratives that deal with the ultimate questions of life, conveying fundamental truths—and this certainly appears to apply to *Gilgamesh*. Indeed, the literary quality and depth of human understanding evident within the poem is remarkable, notes Bernd Jager:

> Even the oldest fragments of the Gilgamesh poem are lacking neither in subtlety of style nor in the grandeur of their vision. At every turn we find revealing descriptions of the human condition and astonishing insights into the human soul. These descriptions and insight appear as relevant today as no doubt they were at the time they were written...they have lost none of their power to move and transform the human heart and soul. [The poem] can be understood as an exploration of the mysterious paths that lead mortal human beings from infancy to maturity and from savagery to civilization... 

In its way, then, the myth as-a-whole might be said to be a narrative investigation into human spiritual growth and development.

### 3.5.4 Narrative and the Bible

#### 3.5.4.1 Narrative in the Old Testament

It is notable that the *Epic of Gilgamesh* includes within it the story of a devastating flood, similar both in outline and in many minor details to the later-written biblical story of *Noah and the Ark*. And, though other comparable flood stories existed in nations of the ancient Near East, it is now known that the version relayed in *Gilgamesh* provided the basis for the biblical account. Such a parallel between biblical and non-biblical material of the ancient Near East was far from unique. The creation narrative of Genesis 1, for example, draws on the antecedent Babylonian story of *Enuma Elish*; and the story of *Joseph and Potiphar* in Genesis 39 draws on the earlier-written (c1300 BCE) Egyptian *Story of Two Brothers*. Thus, Old Testament authors—who were numerous, and known to have been writing at different times...
and from different places over the course of some one thousand years⁶⁰—can be seen to have adopted and adapted cultural myths for their own purposes. Indeed, a common thread linking these stories with all other narrative material⁶¹ in the Old Testament is that every one of them was written (or spoken) with the bias of its respective author/s. As Gabel and his colleagues note:

[N]one of them was ever composed in the first place merely to preserve knowledge that certain things happened. All the Old Testament stories are tendentious…⁶²

This factor is all the more significant in that narrative is the predominant literary form of the Old Testament,⁶³ comprising more than one third of its material.⁶⁴ It points to a purpose for narrative that moves it beyond the world of factual and literal understandings.

Shared sources and parallels between the works notwithstanding, philologist Erich Auerbach posits that there is a profound difference between the nature and purpose of the epic myths of the ancient Near Eastern civilizations and those of the Old Testament. While the former clearly endorsed a noble path in life, and qualities and values that were seen as desirable culturally, nonetheless they permitted readers/listeners to interpret the story in their own way, in light of their own experience. The narratives within the Old Testament, on the other hand, claim absolute authority; complete truth, and to be representing universal history⁶⁵—claims that Don Cupitt suggests essentially would classify the Old Testament as a meta-narrative. Paraphrasing and drawing-out Auerbach’s distinction between the two genres, Cupitt writes:

The Odyssey⁶⁶...is a book to enjoy for the way it allows one to enter an enchanted world...It is an escape, a book that lets you forget your cares. In complete contrast, the Old Testament is an imperious work that drags the reader into its world and seeks to constrain him to situate his own life within its master narrative. It is authoritative and revelatory: you the reader experience it as making you part of its plot. Scripture scripts you. Where the Odyssey is recreation, scripture is re-creation...Live punctiliously by the Book, and you live the life pre-scribed for you. You get life right.⁶⁷

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⁶⁰ Ibid, 8-9. Here, Gabel et al note the significance of the name, ‘Bible’, which derives from the Greek, ta biblia, meaning ‘the books’.

⁶¹ For example, stories telling of origins; birth narratives; miracle stories, and heroism accounts. Ref: Ibid, 19.

⁶² Ibid, 18.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art in the Bible, 9.

⁶⁵ Erich Auerbach, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953), 14-16. The work was written by Auerbach between 1942-1945.

⁶⁶ The ‘Odyssey’ is used by Auerbach (and, in turn, Cupitt) here as an example of an epic myth—it is a work in the same genre as the ‘Epic of Gilgamesh’.

⁶⁷ Cupitt, in What is a Story?, 86 (citing, expanding, and paraphrasing Auerbach, Mimesis, 14-15).
Thus, this view holds that the Old Testament is not just a book, but the Book. And it is clear that comforting certainties and guidance about life and how to live it would fall upon anyone who chose to live by (what they deemed to be) such a meta-narrative. Though arguing vigorously against the idea that the Old Testament should be read as a meta-narrative, Cupitt nonetheless suggests that the Old Testament provides a supreme example of the notion of the meta-narrative.

Clearly—setting aside any constraints placed on an individual by any relevant religious, social, and/or cultural authority—the interpretation of, and understandings drawn from, such material on the part of a reader/listener is paramount in determining whether or not a particular narrative serves as a meta-narrative. Gabel et al tease-out this idea in their exploration of the Bible as a literary corpus. They suggest that, for all the diversity of literature within the Bible, a factor uniting its constituent works is that every one conveys a subject rather than an object. This is the case because, before an author can transfer an object—in other words, anything that is external to him/herself, whether material or abstract—into a verbal (written or oral) form, the object under consideration first must undergo a transformation into perceptual form within the author. At this point, the object has become subjective to the author, existing only in his/her consciousness, where it is open to any number of modifications according to the author’s knowledge and experiences. The object then undergoes a second transformation from its state as a perceptual concept into the form of words (written or oral), set within the bounds of whatever literary device the author deems most fitting in the situation. Thus, in order to learn about the object that is being read/heard about, it is futile for a reader/listener to ask questions of the object (especially if, as is now the case with biblical objects, it cannot be known at first-hand). Rather, suggest Gabel et al, it is

68 Ibid.
69 This may go some way to explaining the surge in interest in fundamentalist forms of religion that is evident within the contemporary Western world.
70 Cupitt, What is a Story?, 87. See discussion in Ibid, 86-96.
71 It might be argued that the psychoanalytic; cognitive, and behavioural grand theories of human development of the twentieth-century—though not strictly ‘narrative’ in form—also are/were meta-narratives in that they too influenced and guided human thinking in much the same way.
72 Gabel et al, The Bible as Literature, vii. The authors stress that, though they see the Bible as “a fascinating document of enormous importance to the culture and history of the modern world”, their publication comes from a neutral starting point in that it is not written as a commentary, nor seeks to impose or endorse any particular moral, religious, or interpretative point-of-view of or onto the Bible. Ibid.
73 Literary forms found within the Bible include poetry, parables, short stories, genealogies, laws, letters, decrees, prayers, proverbial wisdom, prophetic messages, tribal lists, historical narratives, building instructions. Ref: Gabel et al, The Bible as Literature, 2.
critical to ask questions instead of the subject—in other words, the inner and outer world of the author.7475

It could be argued from this, then, that the extent to which such subjective questioning of a narrative is undertaken by a reader/listener—or, indeed, by any religious, cultural, or other social body—might help to determine the extent to which the story holds authority over that individual (or grouping).76 And if a narrative holds authority over an individual to a significant extent, it seems feasible to suggest that that narrative might then be drawn into, and form part of, the personal myth of the individual. Another pertinent issue raised by this same phenomenon relates to the dichotomy-of-thinking thesis expounded by Bruner,77 and is the question of whether or not some individuals might have a tendency to prefer the paradigmatic mode of thought over the narrative mode. If so, might such individuals have a greater affinity to the more positivist, prescriptive, and authoritative approach of the meta-narrative, than those who either did not favour either mode or were more drawn to the narrative mode? And would the former grouping be the more prone to adopt fundamentalist forms of spiritual or religious expression? These questions are outside the scope of the current research in a direct sense, of course, but they are germane nonetheless in that they have a clear bearing on human spiritual formation. And the approach to understanding and interpreting narrative works that has been discussed above is apposite to the research not only in terms of planning the most effective design for the study, but also as a concept for consideration during analysis.

3.5.4.2 Narrative and the New Testament

There is no question that the New Testament differs profoundly in nature from its canonical counterpart, but whether or not it too may be classified as a meta-narrative is open to the same line of reasoning: the meaning drawn from it, and the authority given to it, once again a matter for the reader/listener to determine. Nonetheless, additional insights into the use and power of narrative in human life are able to be drawn from the New Testament, which is richly imbued with narrative: the story of Jesus’ birth; the ministry of Jesus, and the establishment of the early church among its many stories. These accounts, together with the narratives of the

74 Ibid, 3-5.
75 Gabel et al suggest that this means also is the surest to understanding and resolving apparent anomalies within the Bible—for example, the existence of the two apparently-conflicting creation stories within the Book of Genesis (Genesis 1.1-2.4a and 2.4b-2.25). Ibid, 4.
76 It is acknowledged that social and cultural considerations have a significant bearing in this area.
77 See section 3.2.2, above.
Old Testament, are known and shared by members of the Christian tradition throughout the world, and such common knowledge serves a purpose in and of itself, highlighting a further function of the narrative genre. Theologian George W Stroup observes:

The identity of a community like that of a person requires the interpretation of historical experience, and narrative seems to be the appropriate literary genre for articulating the past. Narrative embodies the shared memory and communal history which binds individuals together into a community.  

Indeed, such shared knowledge and understandings could be said to be a requisite of belonging *per se*; imperative to membership of any human grouping—as narrative psychotherapist John McLeod suggests:

Membership of a family, social group or a culture depends on knowing the stories that carry the traditions and values of that particular set of people. Each story that is constructed draws on a huge stock of pre-existing stories.

Without doubt, among the most widely known of the narratives of the Christian ‘set of people’ are the parables of Jesus: stories within stories that have been described as “gems of articulation about life and God.” The parables are of immeasurable importance, posits Klyne Snodgrass, who describes Jesus as “the master creator of story.” And it would seem that the setting of the parables within the contextual framework of the Gospel narratives was a masterstroke, with Stroup noting that it serves a twofold, and mutually beneficial, purpose. Firstly, the presence of the parables within the Gospels elucidates and heightens the meaning of the Gospels. In turn, the placement of the parables within the Gospels serves as a clear guide to their interpretation; and turns them from simple maxims into stories of substance.

Though framed some two thousand years ago, the parables remain among the world’s most valued stories, and though, strictly-speaking, they do not convey universal truths, knowledge and appreciation of them now extends far beyond their early-Christian roots, both

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81 Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 1. Snodgrass acknowledges that the parables of Jesus came into the public domain indirectly via the early church and the gospel evangelists.
82 Strictly-speaking, not all the parables of Jesus are narratives. For example, using the given criteria for a narrative in section 3.3.3, above, the parable of The Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30-32; Matthew 13:31-32; Luke 13:18-19) neither has the required sequential plot, nor a central human or humanlike figure. Nonetheless, it can be said that all the parables are expanded analogies of a rhetorical nature, and all use the literary tools of comparison and contrast with which to illustrate and/or teach. Ref: Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 2.
83 Stroup, *Narrative Theology*, 145.
84 Rather, they have specific teaching purposes in line with Jesus’ ministry—principally, to alter behaviour and to form disciples. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 20.
in terms of time and place. The simplicity of the parables may go some way to explaining their compelling nature and prevailing draw, with Snodgrass noting that the parables:

- are brief and straightforward
- are marked by simplicity and symmetry
- focus on humans
- describe everyday life
- are engaging
- build, so that the critical part is left to the end

Furthermore, the parable does not seek to threaten or impose, and allows readers/listeners to draw their own conclusions:

A good parable creates distance, provokes and appeals. By creating distance it gives the hearer/reader space to reconsider; one has no sense of needing to defend one’s turf. By provoking, the parable requires new channels of thought, and by appealing the parable seeks decisions that bring behavior into line with the teller’s intent.

And it is notable that the parables share the features, characteristics, and themes of modern-day stories, as outlined in section 3.3.3, above—plainly, a timeless narrative framework.

3.5.5 Conclusion

This albeit-brief exploration into the use of narrative in early human history manifests the extent to which human life has been bound-up with story since time immemorial—from a simple wall painting in the caves of Lascaux; the mythical epics of the ancient Near East; the potential meta-narrative of the Old Testament anthology, and the simple but effective parables of Jesus. Each story (or collection of stories) was produced for a purpose—no longer patent in every instance—and it is evident that, in addition, each served to bond and form part of the identity of the community in and for which it was written. Notwithstanding, invariably the importance and ultimate purpose of the stories in question lay not in their construction or dissemination, but rather in the meaning that was drawn from them by listeners and readers—a subjective and complex endeavour, which would not necessarily align the reader/listener’s

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85 Ibid, 1.
86 The following list has been drawn from the comprehensive eleven-point list given by Snodgrass, in Ibid, 17-21.
87 Sometimes this is done by means of a question (the answer to which is the key to the interpretation of the parable); and sometimes by introducing an element of surprise (subverting social norms—for example, by describing a righteous tax collector, rather than a righteous Pharisee). Ref: Snodgrass, Stories with Intent, 18-19.
88 Ibid, 21. Snodgrass notes that the first sentence of this quotation is not original to him; however, he has been unable to source the quote.
89 This remains the case for biblical stories, of course. As noted above, for discussion on the cultural significance of narratives see, for example, Bruner, Acts of Meaning, 1990.
interpretation with that of the storyteller. And (of relevance to the current research, at least potentially), it has been seen that the passing of time further complicates the process by de-contextualizing stories; and in some cases, readers or listeners choose to relinquish interpretative authority, interpreting a story from the past either on a literal level or in a way that has been prescribed.

Together, the stories that have been examined here demonstrate a selection of narrative genres, but it is remarkable that, though both the forms of narrative and the media by which they are disseminated have increased significantly in recent times,\(^\text{90}\) the features, characteristics, and uses of narrative essentially have remained constant. Indeed, Dan McAdams’s contemporarily-written summary on humanity’s use of story appears to apply as much to times gone by as it does to now:

> Stories entertain us, make us laugh and cry, keep us in suspense until we learn how things will turn out. Stories instruct. We learn how to act and live through stories; we learn about different people, settings, and ideas…Stories help us organize our thoughts, providing a narrative for human intentions and interpersonal events that is readily remembered and told…\(^\text{91}\)

This constancy across time and peoples goes at least some way to endorsing Barthes’s observation, cited above, that narrative is a human universal, present in "all periods, all places, all societies."\(^\text{92}\) And, more importantly, it signals that the narrative form is an intrinsic medium of communication, fundamental to human life.

### 3.6 Conclusion

This chapter set out to investigate ways in which human beings come to deep self-knowledge and understanding, and how they might articulate such information, with a view both to determining an appropriate methodology for the empirical component of the current research, and to informing the research in more general terms. The exploration uncovered a dichotomy in human thinking—two natural modes of thought by which humans comprehend experiences and construct reality. Though both essential and complementary modes of cognition, one of them, narrative thought, is believed to be the better suited to ‘inner world’ understandings of human feelings, intentions, and behaviour. In addition, and more fundamentally, the narrative mode is employed not only to make sense of, and relate, everyday events and experiences to

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\(^{90}\) See section 3.3.2, above.

\(^{91}\) McAdams, *The Stories We Live By*, 31.

\(^{92}\) Barthes, *The Semiotic Challenge*, 95. See section 3.2.3, above.
oneself and others, but ultimately to turn every human life itself into a story. The ‘personal
myth’, or ‘sacred story of the self’, it has been argued, goes on to become one’s identity. We
are the stories we tell, argues Dan McAdams.

A key factor that has emerged from this multi-disciplinary investigation—in which
fictional narrative, bound to human emotion, was seen to have much in common with the
internal narratives of the self—is that there is an intrinsic link between human meaning-making
and narrative. Story is the primary medium by and through which humans can explore, find,
and make meaning in and of their lives. Indeed, as Cupitt contends: “Meaning depends on
narrative. So to give human life meaning, we must start telling stories about it.” Thus,
narrative would appear to be a medium of supreme importance to employ within any empirical
study of spirituality. The methods and means by which to do this within the current research
will be discussed in Chapters Five and Six, below.

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93 Both terms introduced by Dan McAdams, in McAdams, The Stories We Live By, 11 & 34.
94 Ibid, back cover.
95 Cupitt, What is a Story, 98-99.
Chapter Four: Accessing the Spiritual 2

Accessing the Spiritual 2
Musical Knowing

4.1 Introduction

For Henri Nouwen, relationship with “the broader, deeper and higher reality” in which all human relationships are embedded, and from which they are vitalized, is the most important dimension of human spiritual being; and—as has been seen—nurturing the relationship with the Divine constitutes the most critical movement of the spiritual life. It is important, Nouwen suggests, for us to verbalize this relationship in order to stay in touch with the core of our being, yet it is so close to us that it is hard to grasp, and even harder to articulate; making it a likely target for trivialization. He observes:

Newspaper interviews with monks who have given their life to prayer in silence and solitude out of a burning love for God, usually boil down to silly stories about changes in regulations and seemingly strange customs. Questions about the ‘why’ of love, marriage, the priesthood or any basic life decision usually lead to meaningless platitudes, a lot of stuttering and shaking of shoulders. Not that these questions are unimportant, but their answers are too deep and too close to our innermost being to be caught in human words.

So if talking about that which is so close and fundamental to human being is difficult even for those who have dedicated themselves to the spiritual life, how can an academic study in spirituality, to be undertaken predominantly with those who have not dedicated themselves in this way, hope to get close to understanding this most profound of realities? It has been established, of course, that the narrative mode of thought is a means through which humans can express meaning, and undoubtedly it will assist in this endeavour; but is there a medium that first could help participants to enter into the deepness, bringing them closer to their spiritual core to a degree that would allow them to articulate at least something of it? Informed by, and drawing on, an earlier empirical research study undertaken by the researcher, this chapter will argue that music—if used with caution and understanding—has the power and

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1 Please see Chapter One, footnote 76, regarding the reading of this chapter.
2 See Chapter Two, section 2.5.2.4.
3 Nouwen, Reaching Out, 105-107.
4 Ibid, 106.
potential to be that medium.\(^5\) And, were music to be successfully utilized to this end, ultimately it would serve to help maximise the accuracy and validity of the research-findings overall.

As will be seen, the application of music of a particular type, and employed in a particular way, went on to form a fundamental part of the design of the current empirical research, and its use is believed to be unique in a practically-based study of spirituality such as this. Hence, an in-depth examination of the rationale behind its use must be given; and this chapter is dedicated to that end. And, just as Chapter Three sought to establish the worth of narrative as a medium by examining its use in history, so too there is need to look to history to examine the meaning, purpose, and use of music in human life, past and present. The chapter will begin by considering music’s origins and evolution; its link with spirituality in times past; and its use within the Christian Church. A selective exploration of the psychology of music then will be undertaken, including cultural considerations; the relationship between music and human emotion; the effects of music on the human body, and the link between music and the sacred.

### 4.2 The Evolution and Function of Music

#### 4.2.1 The Origins of Music in Human History

There is no question that music is a long-established part of human life and history. Archaeological discoveries provide tangible if not irrefutable evidence that our human forebears have been making music in every place in which they are known to have settled\(^6\) for many hundreds of centuries, and perhaps for more than 50,000 years, to the days of pre-human Neanderthals.\(^7\) Such evidence comes in the form of flutes made from bird bones dating back up to 36,000 years,\(^8\) and, more controversially, an artefact resembling a flute arguably

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\(^6\) Daniel Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music* (London: Atlantic, 2006), 256.

\(^7\) See discussion in Steven Mithen, *The Singing Neanderthals* (London: Phoenix, 2006), 222-246. The Neanderthals (*homo neanderthalensis*) existed in Europe some 250,000 years ago, becoming extinct between 28,000 and 30,000 years ago. Humans (*homo sapiens*—meaning wise or intelligent persons)—a related though separate species of the *Homo* genus to which the Neanderthals also belonged, and the only surviving species of the genus—are believed to have evolved in East Africa c200,000 years ago, entering Europe some 40,000 years ago. Ref: Ibid.

\(^8\) Numerous bone flutes have been uncovered within caves in mainland Europe (among other places). Radiocarbon-dating has assessed one—found in Geissenklösterle cave in Germany—to be approximately 36,000 years old. This is the oldest undisputed bone flute so far to have been discovered. Ref: Drago Kunej and Ivan Turk ‘New Perspectives on the Beginnings of Music’, pp235-268. In Nils Wallin, Björn Merker, and Steven Brown (eds), *The Origins of Music* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2000), 235.
fashioned from the leg of a cave bear, dating back between 50,000 and 35,000 years to the Paleolithic era: the earliest period of human development.\(^9\) The latter finding was uncovered in 1995 in Slovenia, Europe, by archaeologist Ivan Turk.\(^10\)

Both Turk and other interested academics\(^11\) agree that, while Paleolithic bone flutes provide concrete evidence for human music-making, the number of findings is unlikely ever to be able to reflect accurately the extent of that music-making. This is because some flutes will have been made from biodegradable materials such as wood, bamboo, and other plant stems, which will not have survived the ravages of time. Moreover, of course, music-making does not require the use of musical instruments, and, if only from a practical perspective, it seems reasonable to suppose that singing will have pre-dated (and, indeed, outnumbered) musical activity employing crafted instruments. Not surprisingly, little tangible evidence is available to substantiate this. However, the oldest-known artefact of relevance—a 3,400-year-old song written on clay tablets, found in Syria in the mid-twentieth century—shows not only that human forebears sang, but that they sang in harmony using the seven-note diatonic scale which remains the primary scale of contemporary western society.\(^12\)

### 4.2.2 The Function of Music in Human Life

Plainly, then, given the ongoing and universal use of music across generations and cultures, music has been with us for a long and significant period of time. What is not known, however, is why that is so. Is music simply a pleasant cultural artefact, without biological foundation? Or might the making and use of music be innate, once critical to human survival, and evolutionary in origin—and, if so, might it remain an inherent tool for living, affecting how we communicate?

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\(^10\) The supposed flute was found in the *Divje babe 1* cave site in Slovenia. It is now housed in the National Museum in Slovenia. Controversy exists over whether the finding intentionally was crafted into a musical instrument by human forebears, or whether it simply was a bone that had been chewed by carnivores into an object resembling a flute. A detailed description of the find itself, co-written by Ivan Turk, together with an argument in favour of its intentionally having being fashioned as a flute, can be found in Drago Kunej and Ivan Turk ‘New Perspectives on the Beginnings of Music’, in Wallin et al (eds), *The Origins of Music*, 235-268. For an argument against its intentional crafting see, for example, Steven Mithen, *The Singing Neanderthals*, 243-4.

\(^11\) Drago Kunej, Steven Mithen, and David Huron, for example.

\(^12\) The finding was of a complete cult hymn, believed to be the world’s oldest preserved song with notation. Until this find, the origins of the western diatonic scale were believed to have originated 2,000 years ago—the time of the Ancient Greeks. Ref: Robert Fink, ‘Evidence of Harmony in Ancient Music’. Accessed 9 January 2008. Available from [http://www.greenwych.ca/evidence.htm](http://www.greenwych.ca/evidence.htm). See also Robert Fink, *On the Origin of Music: An Integrated Overview of the Origin and Evolution of Music* (Saskatoon: Greenwich, 2003).
and respond in certain situations? In order to establish a link between music and human spirituality, such questions regarding the evolutionary significance of music need to be addressed.

Evolution, of course, refers to the gradual (over many millennia) shaping by natural means, of traits of both body and mind, which are inherited and passed-down through generations. The linked concept of *natural selection*—a term coined by Charles Darwin, and defined by him as the "principle by which each slight variation, if useful, is preserved"—holds that those best adapted to the environment in which they live are the most likely to survive, thrive, and reproduce. Therefore, an increasing number of people in subsequent generations will inherit the most useful traits, eventually bringing about adaptations that are better suited to the environment. It is notable that, while arguably few would question music’s worth and value in enhancing human life past and present, in contrast to a long and healthy debate on the evolution and function of language, sustained academic interest in the evolution and function of music has been slower to develop. The reasons for this are beyond the scope of this project, and so cannot be investigated at length here. However, Mithen suggests that it may be due in part to the origins of music being more challenging to address than the origins of language, with the latter having a more obvious role as a transmitter of information. Suffice to say, a resurgence of interest in musical origins is now underway, and with an interdisciplinary flavour. Current avenues of research embrace both sciences and humanities, and include archaeology, aesthetics, anthropology, neuroscience, musicology, linguistics, and several branches of psychology. Scandinavian biomusicologists Steven Brown, Björn Merker, and

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14 An exception to this can be found among those with Asperger autism disorder, for many of whom music appears to have little or no value. For discussion, see David Huron, ‘Evolutionary Adaptation’ in Robert J Zatorre and Isabelle Peretz (eds), *The Biological Foundations of Music* (New York : New York Academy of Sciences, c2001), 54-55.

15 For discussion on similarities and differences between language and music, see, for example, Mireille Besson and Daniele Schön, ‘Comparison between language and music’, in Zatorre and Peretz (eds), *Biological Foundations*, 232-259.


17 For further reading, see Wallin et al, *The Origins of Music*; and Mithen, *The Singing Neanderthals*. Conferences on the issue include, for example, the European Science Foundation’s exploratory workshop on *Music, Language and Human Evolution* held at the University of Reading from 28 September-1 October 2004. Co-operative publications include Wallin et al, *The Origins of Music; Zatorre & Peretz* (eds), *Biological Foundations*.

18 The term biomusicology is a term that was coined by Nils L Wallin, director of The Institute for Biomusicology at Mid Sweden University. Essentially, it is a field of academic inquiry into the origins and use of music in human life, and it assumes music’s origins to be located at the core of human origins. Biomusicology encompasses three branches: evolutionary musicology (concerning musical origins); neuromusicology (concerning the processing of music in terms of human cognitive functioning);
Nils Wallin suggest that such a renaissance is wholly fitting not only for its own sake, but given the major contribution that music can make to the study of human origins per se. The origins of music, they say, are foundational to the origins of humanity, offering important insights in at least three principal areas: human cultural behaviour (including—pertinently for the current research—behaviours such as healing, praying and meditating, story-telling, courtship and marriage, and death rituals, etc); language development, and patterns of cultural interaction.  

The evolutionary origins and function of music thus are under investigation. And it is notable from the literature that provocative—if openly speculative—comments made by cognitive scientist, Steven Pinker, in his 1997 book, How the Mind Works, have been catalytic to the debate. Pinker writes:

> As far as biological cause and effect are concerned, music is useless...[It] could vanish from our species and the rest of our lifestyle would be virtually unchanged. Music appears to be a pure pleasure technology, a cocktail of recreational drugs that we ingest through the ear to stimulate a mass of pleasure circuits at once...I suspect that music is auditory cheesecake.

An indictment of ethnocentricity has since been levelled at Pinker’s argument, but, in deeming music to be hedonistic, without biological foundation, and serving no practical function, Pinker threw down the gauntlet to other researchers: a challenge which, quite clearly (given the ubiquity with which his argument is cited within the literature), was accepted. And, today, while there is an emerging sense in favour of music’s being adaptive and of evolutionary origin—it has been acknowledged that Pinker’s charges have not yet been answered fully, and that questions remain over the way in which music evolved, and if and how it better equips humans for their environment. Furthermore, researchers are far from being of one mind, with David Huron noting three hypotheses that have emerged:

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19 Wallin, Merker and Brown, The Origins of Music, 4-5.
21 Pinker is not alone in his viewpoint. Those supporting it include D Sperber and J D Barrow, for example. For comparative discussion, see Ian Cross, ‘Music, Cognition, Culture and Evolution’, in Zatorre and Peretz (eds), Biological Foundations, 35-36.
22 Ian Cross, ‘Music, Cognition, Culture, and Evolution’ in Zatorre and Peretz (eds), Biological Foundations, 36. Cross suggests that Pinker’s argument focuses solely on the use of music by the individual in Western society; overlooking its use in other cultures.
23 See, for example, Michael Balter, ‘Evolution of Behavior: Seeking the Key to Music’ in Science 1 306/5699 (2004): 1120-1122. Here, reporting on an international university workshop on the evolution of music and language, Balter quotes Cambridge University anthropologist, Robert Foley, as saying that current evidence is sufficient to indicate that “an adaptive model for music should be the default hypothesis”. Further, University of Montreal neuroscientist, Isabelle Peretz, acknowledged the general consensus that music did indeed have biological foundations. Ibid, 1120.
24 Ibid.
Music is linked to human wellbeing and survival, evolutionary in origin
Musical activity once was adaptive, but now is redundant
Music has no survival-value, and is merely for human pleasure

The latter school-of-thought, of course, essentially is that fronted by Steven Pinker. However, just because an activity is pleasurable does not mean that it is otherwise useless to humanity. Indeed, the reverse tends to be the case, notes Huron,\(^\text{25}\) in that the brain has evolved to encourage useful behaviours such as eating and sexual intercourse, for example—essential to the continuance of the human species—by allowing them to be experienced as enjoyable. However, those same brain mechanisms, once in place, can be used to experience pleasure from activities not linked to survival—drug and alcohol use, for example—which are known as non-adaptive pleasure-seeking, or NAPS, behaviours. In terms of evolution, NAPS behaviours tend to be ephemeral in that they are more likely than adaptive behaviours to be harmful and so will hinder successful reproduction among those displaying them. In this way, over time, natural selection will divest humanity of its non-adaptive pleasure-seeking behaviours. This being the case, music is unlikely to be a NAPS behaviour, as Huron argues:

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\text{[I]f music is nonadaptive, then it must be the case that music is historically recent; otherwise music lovers would have become extinct some time ago...[T]he archaeological evidence indicates that music is very old...and this great antiquity is inconsistent with music originating as a nonadaptive pleasure-seeking behaviour.}^{26}
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Certainly, music's longevity in human and, indeed, prehuman life, as highlighted in 4.2.1, above, mitigates against its being a non-adaptive pleasure-seeking behaviour.

Set against the NAPS theory of music is Huron's second hypothesis regarding musical origins; namely, that music is a now-redundant product of evolution. This argument holds that, while music once was adaptive, it no longer offers any survival advantage and has become superfluous. Plainly, however, if the NAPS theory has been ruled-out, there is an inference, by extension, that those who engage in musical activity essentially are gaining nothing from their pursuit—a factor that sits uncomfortably with the ubiquitous nature of musical activity in societies past and present. But, needless to say, the hypothesis cannot be disproven without

\(^{25}\) David Huron, ‘Is Music an Evolutionary Adaptation?’ In Zatorre and Peretz (eds), Biological Foundations, 45-46.
\(^{26}\) Ibid, 46.
first uncovering the survival advantages that it supposes once were afforded by music. Thus—and conveniently—it can be examined alongside the third hypothesis: that music has evolutionary origins, and is adaptive.

An important and pertinent study in this latter area comes from Iain Morley, whose 2003 doctoral dissertation investigated the evolutionary origins and archaeology of music. In it, Morley examines musical usage by four hunter-gatherer peoples. It is notable that, despite the respective groups living in diverse habitats across three continents, Morley found “fundamental similarities” in the music-making and musical usage of Blackfoot and Sioux native Americans of the central plains of North America; Aka and Mbuti pygmies of the African equatorial forests; Pintupi Australian Aborigines of the Western desert, and Yupik and Inuit Eskimos of Southwest Alaska and Canada. All four peoples, he reports:

- Gather with fellow communities during their hardest season of subsistence, at which time there is an increased use of music (and rhythmic dancing) for ceremonial and social purposes.
- Invariably use music in a communal way.
- [Having strong links to the land] employ music in efforts to control their respective environments.
- Use music (predominantly vocal, with percussive accompaniment) on occasion purely for purposes of communal enjoyment.

Furthermore, song is used within more than one of the groups both for passing down tribal information and as a mnemonic device.

Given the diversity of the peoples in question, which are “united only in their humanity and subsistence strategy”, Morley concludes that the finding of such musical parallels implies convergent development of the musical behaviours; a common cultural heritage of the groups, or, indeed, both. Convergence, he argues, would indicate that an innate evolutionary force—born either from a common method of subsistence, or from common biological factors—was

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29 Ibid, 29.
31 Morley defines convergence as “the situation whereby different species or genera (or, by extension, communities) develop the same physical or behavioural adaptation to a selected pressure under different circumstances”. Ibid.
driving the behaviours; while, given the 50,000-year-plus time-span that separates the communities, a shared heritage would suggest that such musical traditions were very old.\(^\text{32}\)

And, though not claiming that a direct comparison can be made with early hunter-gatherer communities (which would strengthen the case in favour of music’s being of evolutionary origin), he suggests that there may be similarities:

Although modern hunter-gatherers are not to be considered to be a direct analogy for Palaeolithic humans, their subsistence methods may be similar. These define lifestyles to a large degree, so the contexts within which musical behaviours are undertaken may be similar. Furthermore, the tools and raw materials which they have available to them for the creation of instruments often resemble those available to early humans.\(^\text{33}\)

Significantly, perhaps, a number of Morley’s findings regarding the shared musical behaviours of the hunter-gatherer communities under investigation are to be found among general theories that have been put forward by researchers advocating an evolutionary origin for music.\(^\text{34}\) These hypotheses encompass both individual and group origins for music, and can be summarized under eight main headings, as shown in Table 4.2.2, below:\(^\text{35}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.2.2: Hypotheses Regarding the Evolutionary Origins of Music(^\text{36})</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theory</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social unity</td>
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<td>Mate selection</td>
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<td>Group endeavour</td>
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<td>Perceptive-skill proficiency</td>
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<td>Motor-skill proficiency</td>
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<td>Discord reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe pastime</td>
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<td>Information transfer</td>
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\(^\text{32}\) Ibid, 31.
\(^\text{33}\) Ibid, 14.
\(^\text{34}\) Researchers who consider music to be adaptive include Morley, Zatorre, Peretz, and Huron.
\(^\text{35}\) This summary of some of the possible evolutionary roles of music has been drawn from David Huron, ‘Is Music an Evolutionary Adaptation?’ In Zatorre & Peretz (eds), Biological Foundations, 46-47.
\(^\text{36}\) The information in this table has been drawn from David Huron, ‘Is Music an Evolutionary Adaptation?’ In Zatorre & Peretz (eds), Biological Foundations of Music, 46-47.
4.2.3 Music: Innate To Humanity

It is beyond the requirements of this thesis to investigate research in each of the tabulated areas more fully, of course, but, while the question of an adaptive function for music in human life remains open in general terms, there appears to be foundation to the idea that music is encoded within humanity. Neuroscientist Daniel Levitin, for example, notes that centres for processing different aspects and features of music are spread throughout the brain, engaging almost all the brain’s regions and neural subsystems. And Sandra Trehub’s extensive work with infants has shown that, though cultural preferences for music begin to surface from the age of twelve months, younger babies have culture-general predispositions for certain types of music which appear to be biological. She has observed, for instance, that mothers and caregivers throughout the world speak to pre-linguistic infants in common melodious tones, and sing lullabies that are instantly recognizable across cultures—marked out by repetition, simple contours, and a narrow pitch range. And the music-perception skills of pre-linguistic infants have been found to be not dissimilar to those of others who have had years of informal exposure to music. Trehub’s findings further show that, in common with adults, infants as young as two-months show a clear preference for consonant over dissonant musical intervals (features of musical processing that appear to be universal); and that, while four-month-old babies will happily listen to unfamiliar folk tunes, they show signs of distress when consonant intervals within the music are replaced by dissonant ones. Such findings have led Trehub to the conclusion that humans are born as musical beings, predisposed to the contours of sound sequences, and that “the rudiments of music listening are gifts of nature rather than products of culture”.

4.3 Music and Spirituality in Human History: A Selective Overview

4.3.1 Introduction

The question of music having survival-value in human life, then, remains open, but music is nonetheless known to have longevity, pre-dating humans; is highly valued in human life, and appears to be innate to our species. But in what way, if at all, does it engage with, affect, or

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37 Levitin, This is Your Brain on Music, 85-86.
39 Ibid, 670. Trehub acknowledges that, in principle, parallel results might be expected as a result of pre- or post-natal exposure to ambient music, especially in that infants are known both to be sensitive to regular auditory input and to have long-term memory of musical pieces. However, she argues that there are no signs that any such pre- or post-natal input enhances sensitivity to universal features of musical structure.
promote, human spirituality? A selective overview of music’s link with spirituality at pertinent times in history now will be explored—and, as will be seen, music and spirituality have an enduring and intrinsic bond.

4.3.2 Music and Spirituality in Early Hunter-Gatherer Societies

In pre-scientific ancient and primitive civilizations—dating back at least two-and-a-half million years, to the Paleolithic, and spanning to c200 CE—it was the supernatural qualities of music that not only dominated cultural beliefs and practices, but heralded the advent of music’s widespread and ongoing use as an agent for therapy and healing.⁴⁰ Plainly, such societies existed before scientific knowledge could shed light on the origin of illness and disease, so all but the most obviously-caused forms of sickness and disability were attributed to the supernatural. Not surprisingly, then, supernatural remedies were sought to cure them.⁴¹ The central figure in such situations invariably was the shaman or medicine man or woman;⁴² and shamanism itself, suggests Hollick, is the earliest known form of human spiritual practice:

Shamanism was the earliest expression of spirituality, and appears to have emerged with the evolution of humanity itself. It perceives every rock, mountain, tree, river, animal and Nature herself as imbued with indwelling spirits. Shamanism aims to contact and experience the spirit realms which are the abode of totem animals, spirit guides, the spirit of tribal ancestors, and other spirit beings. The Shaman communicates and identifies deeply with the natural world, mediates between his or her tribe and the spirits, and makes the world sacred through ritual.⁴³

Ritualistic practices varied according to culture, but inevitably employed music—together, indeed, with dance—in some form. In African and American-Indian tribes, for example, shamanistic solutions to illness included the use of special healing songs; rhythmic rattling, and drum beating. Where musical instruments were made of the bones or bodies of animals, belief was that the instrument itself housed the soul of that animal, which was called upon to assist in the healing process.⁴⁴ Elsewhere, in Ancient Egypt, surviving medical papyri provide tangible evidence that chanting was used in healing rituals: rituals that were intended to be a

⁴² In contemporary Western thought, shamanstend to be stereotyped as male (see, for example, West, ‘Music Therapy in Antiquity’, p51). However,archaeologicalfindings suggest that some of the earliest-known shamans—dating to the Upper Paleolithic era (the last division of the Stone Age)—were women. See Barbara Tedlock, The Woman in the Shaman's Body: Reclaiming the Feminine in Religion and Medicine. (New York: Bantam, 2005). Shamans—both men and women—exist in the twenty-first century, practising in the more-primitive societies of the world. Ref: Piers Vitebsky, The Shaman, Voyages of the Soul: Trance, Ecstasy, and Healing from Siberia to the Amazon (Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1995).
medium through which to communicate with the gods, or aimed at inducing a trance-like state in the patient, in order to promote self-healing.  

4.3.3 Music, Spirituality, and The Ancient Greeks

The theoretical link between music and the human soul arguably has never been more pronounced than it was in the time of the ancient Greeks—a time generally held to run from the eighth century BCE to the mid-fifth century CE—which making this period of human history of particular note and import. It is perhaps fitting, then, that the word, music, derives from the classical-Greek mousikē (μουσική), for, as will be seen, the musical heritage, in both theory and practice, of ancient Greece has had a profound influence on the shaping of Western music, with numerous musical principles and understandings established at the time remaining pertinent today.

Common principles and understandings between the times notwithstanding, music had a more complex and fuller meaning to the ancient Greeks than it has to contemporary Western society. On a semantic level alone, Muse—a noun derivative of ‘music’—concerned any one of nine mythological goddesses, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosynē, who are said to have officiated over the creative arts—especially music and poetry—and, later, over intellectual activity per se. Mnemosynē, mother of the Muses, was the mythological goddess of

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48 The musical culture of ancient Greece was shaped not only in the area that is now modern Greece, but in Crete; southern Albania; southern regions of the peninsula of Italy; Asia Minor, and coastal areas of northern Africa. Ref: Thomas J Mathiesen ‘ Greece: Ancient’. In L Macy (ed), Grove Music Online. Accessed 5 February 2008. Available from http://www.grovemusic.com.
49 Varying accounts have appeared in the writings of Greek antiquity regarding the number of Muses and their parentage; but the Muses are said to have inspired artists of all kinds, and, in later mythology, were each assigned to a specific art—namely: Calliopē (chief among the Muses, presiding over epic poetry); Clio (history); Eratō (the lyre, and lyric poetry); Euterpē (flute-playing and flute-accompanied lyric poetry); Melpoménē (tragedy); Polyhymnia (sacred song; plus, later, pantomime); Terpsichorē (choral dancing); Thalia (comedy and bucolic poetry), and Urania (astronomy). Ref: ‘Muses’. In M.C. Howatson and Ian Chivers (eds), The Concise Oxford Companion to Classical Literature. Oxford University Press, 1996. Oxford Reference Online. Accessed 11 February 2008. Available from http://0-www.oxfordreference.com.prospero.murdoch.edu.au/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=9e1907.

That both music and poetry were overseen by the Muses suggests a unity between the two in Greek thought. Certainly, poetic epics such as Homer’s \textit{Iliad} and \textit{Odyssey}\footnote{It is acknowledged that, while the \textit{Iliad} and \textit{Odyssey} are attributed to Homer, stylistic differences within the works have led to one school-of-thought that they may be the work of several authors. Ref: ‘Hymn’. In T F Hoad (ed). \textit{The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology}. Oxford University Press, 1996. \textit{Oxford Reference Online}. Murdoch University. Accessed 11 March 2008. Available from http://0www.oxfordreference.com.prospero.murdoch.edu.au/views/} are known to have been delivered in either song and/or recitation. And a connection is evident within the vocabulary of the time, with the Greek word \textit{lyric} (\textit{lyrikos}), for example, meaning poetry sung to the music of the lyre; \textit{ode} (\textit{oikê}) designating a poem for singing; and \textit{hymn} (\textit{hymnos}) meaning a type of Greek poetry that was used to sing praise to gods or heroes.\footnote{Donald Jay Grout, \textit{A History of Western Music}, revised ed. (London: J M Dent 1973), 5.}

Furthermore, implicit in the verbal form of the word ‘music’, \textit{muse}—signifying deep, silent reflection—is the ancient Greek association of music to the quest for truth and beauty; a quest the Greeks linked also to poetry.\footnote{53}

Numerous insights into the nature and effect of music were put forward by Greek philosophers and theorists, including Plato (c 427-347 BCE) and his student, Aristotle (384-322 BCE), and remain relevant today. The power and influence of music on human well-being, mood, emotion, and behaviour, for example, were recognized by the ancient Greeks, prompting an (albeit cautious) advocacy of music in the education—or ‘moral improvement’, as it was known—of the young. Where education was concerned, Plato and Aristotle both espoused a binary approach in which music was employed to order the mind and gymnastics to order the body. And, while Aristotle saw fitting purposes for music beyond education—namely, as both pastime and for intellectual stimulation—Plato was stricter not only about the use of music, but regarding the particular modes, genres, and rhythms of music he saw as being suitable for the young. In addition, Plato advocated a principle of things of beauty
(including music) serving to remind humanity of divine beauty, rather than serving as a medium for individual pleasure. ⁵⁴

Both philosophers advocated a doctrine of ethos—ethos (ἐθος) meaning moral character or personal disposition ⁵⁵—in which music was held to be directly influential on behaviour and outlook. Aristotle’s correlating theory of imitation explained that certain passions to be found in music—for example, peacefulness, anger, and excitement—became mirrored within a listener such that persistent exposure to one type of music would shape that individual accordingly, for better or worse. ⁵⁶ He writes:

...there is clearly nothing which we are so much concerned to acquire and to cultivate as the power of forming right judgments, and of taking delight in good dispositions and noble actions. Rhythm and melody supply imitations of anger and gentleness, and also of courage and temperance and of virtues and vices in general, which hardly fall short of the actual affections, as we know from our own experience, for in listening to such strains our souls undergo a change. ⁵⁷

Thus, to become of better character, discernment was needed in musical-listening choices.

Informing Platonic and Aristolean thought on music were the ideas and writings of mathematician and philosopher, Pythagoras (c580-c500 BCE) and his followers, ⁵⁸ who held that numbers, and the relationships between them, were the means through which the mysteries of the spiritual and natural worlds could be understood. Pythagoras is said to have discovered that the principal intervals of the musical scale were bound by mathematical ratios, thus linking music and number irrevocably. ⁵⁹ In this way, music was of central importance, ⁶⁰ providing a knowledge-base for understanding the order of the universe. ⁶¹

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⁵⁸ West notes that it is difficult to determine which ideas were put forward by Pythagoras himself, and which by his many followers. This was because of the practice of those in the tradition, living in both early and late antiquity, of attributing their work to Pythagoras. No writings by Pythagoras himself have survived. Ref: West, ‘Music Therapy in Antiquity’, 55.


⁶⁰ Astronomy—a discipline also regulated by numerical relationships—was held to be of similar importance. Notwithstanding, much of Pythagoras’s thinking later was dismissed by Aristoxenus (c375-360BCE-unknown), a student of Aristotle, who believed that the science of music was a discipline in its own right, set
Musical theory and thought, then, were widespread and influential. In terms of musical origin and practice, Greek mythology shows music to have been intimately linked to religion rites and ceremony in that music was believed to be divinely sourced, created by deities such as Apollo and Dionysus. With Apollo the god of both music and medicine, the ancient Greeks deemed music to have supernatural powers of healing—an understanding shared not only by their hunter-gatherer ancestors, as noted above, but which continues to be reflected in the world today in, for example, the widespread use of music therapy. Few examples of ancient Greek music have survived, and those that have date to later in the period. They show that Greek music tended to be monophonic, but it is known that improvisation by instrumentalists (whose instruments included the lyre, kithara, or aulos) when playing together, or when accompanying soloists or ensemble-singing, created heterophony. The scale-system used by the ancient Greeks was highly systematized and complex, and ultimately formed the basis of the music of the early church.

4.3.4 Music, Spirituality, and The Ancient Hebrews

Music, then, was endorsed as an invaluable and powerful resource by the ancient Greeks, a civilization whose musical knowledge and theory remains influential in twenty-first century Western society. Also worthy of note is the musical thinking and practice of the ancient Hebrews, who resided in what is now known as the eastern Mediterranean area of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and part of Syria. Evidence for the musical activity of the Hebrews comes not only from archaeological remains, but especially from literature of the period, predominantly biblical, the oldest source of which, The Yahwistic material of the Pentateuch, is thought to date to the ninth (or perhaps tenth) century BCE.
Foundational to Hebraic musical culture was the music of the ancient Canaanite people, which developed in line with urbanisation of that society from c3500–1200 BCE. Primary sources, including depictions on pottery relics, show that instruments used at this time included the drum, harp, cymbals, lyre, and, later in the period, the double reed-pipe. It is known that music—often lively—was used to accompany dance; for entertainment, and in religious rites and performances. Professional musicians, both men and women, were employed to sing and play for members of the aristocracy. The art of cheironomy—a tradition of hand signs used to accompany intonations within Jewish synagogue music and melodic intonations within the Bible—was practised from c2500 BCE.

Major social upheaval from c1000 BCE—caused initially by immigration into the region; then a unifying of the Israelite tribes, and finally the later division of the people into a permanent diaspora—gave rise to sweeping cultural and political changes. The musical tradition that resulted is thought to have been a confluence of traditions of both the Canaanites and the immigrant communities, together with an emerging local culture. Little is known about the structure of music in the period other than what can be gleaned from studying biblical poetry and the Psalms (essentially, a book of hymns), but it is known that musicians were revered, and that music—both instrumental and vocal—was integral to daily life. Old Testament writings confirm the use of music for, among other things, praise and thanksgiving (see, for example, Isaiah 12:5-6); in ceremonies of send-off (eg, Genesis 31:27); accompanying prophecy (2 Kings 3:15-16), and for festive worship (eg, Isaiah 30:29).

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68 Accepted protocol for cheironomy was for practitioners to keep their right hand clean (and thus holy) for the signalling of biblical intonations. In the ninth-century CE, symbolic accents were added to the biblical writings delineating the appropriate hand gestures for cheironomy. The tradition continues to be practised within some Jewish communities today. Ref: Edith Gerson-Kiwi/David Hiley, ‘Cheironomy’. In L Macy (ed), Grove Music Online. Accessed 31 March 2008. Available from http://www.grovemusic.com.


70 The book of Psalms in its present form essentially was the hymn book of the second Temple. The Hebraic title of the book, Tehillim, translates as Praises; and it is thought that the use of the psalms in worship included singing, shouting, dancing, and instrumental music. Ref: F S Frick, A Journey Through the Hebrew Scriptures (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1995), 434-442.

71 Braun, ‘Jewish Music II: Ancient Israel/Palestine’.
A simplification of instruments and musical styles was evident during the period, not only mirroring the deprivation known to have existed in the community, but highlighting priestly awareness of the potential dangers of music in certain settings. The latter can be seen in the following texts:

Ah, you who rise early in the morning in pursuit of strong drink, who linger in the evening to be inflamed by wine, whose feasts consist of lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine, but who do not regard the deeds of the Lord, or see the work of his hands. 
Isaiah 5:11-12

Take a harp, go about the city, you forgotten prostitute! Make sweet melody, sing many songs, that you may be remembered.
Isaiah 23:16

Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the stall; who sing idle songs to the sounds of the harp, and, like David, improvise on instruments of music...
Amos 6:4-5

Such cautionary thought about the perils of music in leisure activity suggests that the ancient Hebrews had formed an understanding of aspects of the psychology of music, and were sensitive to music’s cognitive and emotional impact. Indeed, among other things—in line with their Greek counterparts—they knew music to be mnemonic, with the Deuteronomist relating God’s commanding of Moses to instruct the people in the form of a song, so that later they might remember it:

Now therefore write this song, and teach it to the Israelite; put it in their mouths, in order that this song may be a witness for me against the Israelites. 
Deuteronomy 31:19

Furthermore, they were cognizant of, and put into practice, the healing qualities of music, as evident in 1 Samuel:

Now the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him...So Saul said to his servants, ‘Provide for me someone who can play well, and bring him to me’...And David came to Saul, and entered his service...And, whenever the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand, and Saul would be relieved and feel better, and the evil spirit would depart from him. 
1 Samuel 16:1, 17, 21a, 23

It is clear, then, that music was appreciated, and its effect understood, in Old Testament times.

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72 Pottery rattles and drums, for example, were used widely. The lyre—often used by priests—was simplified by decreasing the number of its strings. Ibid.
73 These texts were sourced via Ibid.
4.3.5 Music, Spirituality, and the Christian Church

Both Greek and Hebraic musical traditions and approaches to music laid the foundation for attitudes toward music in the establishing Christian church. And the approach tended to be equivocal: music was recognized as bringing humanity closer to God and so was deemed indispensable in worship, yet its use also was seen as sinful because it was based on pleasurable and sensuous experience. This ambivalent approach was evident among the early Church Fathers—including Saints Athanasius, Augustine, and Jerome—each of whom advocated the use of music in worship, but only if employed with caution. Indeed, music for Augustine was at once “a source of great beauty and spiritual succour, and a potentially dangerous temptation from God’s path”, suggests Bicknell. Nonetheless, music has been a major part of the Christian Church throughout its history, and Table 4.3.5, below, offers an overview of its use within different periods.

| Table 4.3.5: An Overview of the Use of Music within the Christian Church |
|---|---|
| **Period** | **Use of Music** |
| New Testament Period | Music focused on praise, and the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs all noted in the New Testament. Care taken not to use instruments linked to paganism. |
| Early Christian Church to c600 CE | Singing generally seen as important in worship. Singing in unison. Mention of psalms, hymns and antiphons. Women singers banned in some places. Boy choirs. Augustine of Hippo records his deep love of music, but also considers banning it, fearing hymn-singing to be too pleasurable. |
| Middle Ages 600-1500 CE | Music central. Monasteries set the style. Plainsong popular. Singing in unison initially, but polyphonic music introduced later. |
| Reformation Period 1500-1700 CE | Explosion in music—particularly congregational singing, except in Roman Catholic and Zwinglian churches. Luther extols music, and writes hymns in the vernacular. Calvin compromises—music welcome but only if scriptural. Hymnody important to Anabaptists. Puritans restrict singing to psalms. |

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76 Jeanette Bicknell, Why Music Moves Us (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). 4. Bicknell notes that this same dilemma also was evident among mediaeval Islamic thinkers.

77 The information within this table has been drawn from James F White, A Brief History of Christian Worship (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 36-38, 70-71, 100-101, 136-138, and 172-174.
In contemporary times, music continues to play a central role in services of worship within most Christian denominations, and encompasses a mix of traditional and popular music; from sacred works to worship songs, and with accompaniments varying from pipe organs to church bands. Moreover, Christian music also is employed effectively beyond church boundaries. The BBC Songs of Praise programme, broadcast weekly in both the United Kingdom and Australia, for example, celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 2011, and is one of the world’s longest-running television programmes. Songs of Praise features well-loved Christian hymns and songs chosen by members of the community, and—of particular relevance to the current research—includes an interview detailing the story of each musical selection, and how the piece has impacted on the faith-life of the individual concerned. And, such is the popular appeal of the rock band of the Pentecostal Hillsong Church in Sydney, Australia, that it has grown to have a worldwide profile, appearing regularly in Hillsong television broadcasts that screen in more than one-hundred-and-eighty countries and territories. The group undertakes international tours, and—having produced and marketed numerous collections of praise-and-worship songs—has sold more than eleven million albums worldwide.

4.3.6 Conclusion

This brief overview has shown the importance and centrality of music in human life, and—of direct relevance to the current research—suggests that music and spirituality have been linked throughout history; used for healing; in acts of praise and worship, and in the quest for truth and beauty.

4.4 The Psychology of Music: A Selective Overview

4.4.1 Introduction

Music, then, has links to the sacred; and can be seen to have played a major role in human history across cultures. Today, the advance of digital technology means that music has become ubiquitous as never before, infiltrating human life both voluntarily and involuntarily,

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78 See also discussion at 4.4.4.7, below.
82 See also discussion in section 4.4.4.7, below.
and making it possible for people to listen to any music they choose, in any place they choose, and at any time of their choosing. Hargreaves, MacDonald, and Miell suggest that the burgeoning of the music industry is the most probable explanation for the dramatic increase in interest in the psychology of music since the latter part of the twentieth century, and note that research has branched into sub-divisions; most notably the contemporary cognitive; social, and developmental psychology of music.  

This section will draw on these branches selectively in order to come to an understanding about the known effects of music, with a view to employing music in the most fitting and effective way within the empirical component of the research project.

4.4.2 Music and Emotion

Human emotions are inextricably linked to human behaviour—affecting almost every facet of behaviour—and thus anything that can influence or affect human emotion might be said to hold immense power; for good or bad. It is salient, then, that arguably the most common agreement about music is that it engages human emotion. In the fifth-century CE, for example, Saint Augustine of Hippo reflected that “[a]ll the diverse emotions of our spirit have their various modes in voice and chant” —a theme reiterated by Martin Luther in 1538:

[W]hether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, or to appease those full of hate—and who could number all these masters of the human heart, namely the emotions, inclinations, and affections that impel men to evil or good?—what more effective means than music could you find?

And Charles Darwin later reflected:

85 See section 4.4.5, below, for discussion on ways in which music can be used to manipulate.
86 Sloboda and Juslin note that there is a sometimes-confusing overlap in use of the terms, emotion, affect, and mood in relation to music. Affect is more a general term than emotion or mood, and refers to the positive or negative effect of an emotional experience. And emotions tend to differ from moods in the following ways: (1) emotions tend to be brief, while moods last longer; (2) emotions tend to emerge as a result of an identifiable stimulus, whereas moods do not; (3) some researchers suggest that emotions trigger particular facial expressions, while moods do not. Furthermore, it has been suggested by R J Davidson, report Sloboda and Juslin, that emotions arise when some form of immediate adaptive action is required; while longer-lasting moods affect processes of cognition such as decision-making, memory, and judgement.
Music arouses in us various emotions, but not the more terrible ones of horror, fear, rage, etc. It awakens the gentler feelings of tenderness and love, which readily pass into devotion.  

With such eminent and keen endorsements, it was perhaps somewhat surprising for Russian composer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) then to deem the effect of music illusory:

I consider that music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological mood, a phenomenon of nature…[if], as is nearly always the case, music appears to express something, this is only an illusion, and not a reality.  

However, Stravinsky’s comment is in fact germane in highlighting the nature of the relationship between music and the human mind—as explained by music psychologist John Sloboda:

If emotional factors are fundamental to the existence of music, then the fundamental question for a psychological investigation into music is how music is able to affect people. Seen with the cold eye of physics, a musical event is just a collection of sounds with various pitches, durations, and other measurable qualities. Somehow the human mind endows these sounds with significance. They become symbols for something other than pure sound, something which enables us to laugh or cry, like or dislike, be moved or be indifferent.  

Music and emotion, then, are intrinsically linked—though there is a prerequisite to the relationship: for a piece of music to be able to affect an individual emotionally, it must first have been cognitively processed by the individual, and will have been reinterpreted symbolically.  

And, as will be seen, the potential of music to be transformed into something of personal significance, on a symbolic level, is of primary relevance to the current research.  

### 4.4.3 Music and the Human Body

In addition to music’s intrinsic bond with emotion, a second salient and well-known effect of music is that which it has on the human body. Foot tapping, head nodding, and walking in time to music are typical of motor responses that often are involuntarily undertaken, as recognizably—and colourfully—described here by Thomas Hardy’s *Under the Greenwood Tree* character, Michael Mail:

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89 Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (London: John Murray, 1888), 571. It is suggested, however, that music is indeed able to arouse some “terrible” feelings such as horror or fear—for example, as used in film scores.  


92 Sloboda, *The Musical Mind*, 3. Sloboda clarifies that a person can hear and understand a piece of music without necessarily being emotionally affected by it. If s/he is affected by it, however, a symbolic interpretation of the music must have been created. And the specific way in which the music is represented will determine how successfully it is remembered and responded to in future.
Once I was a-setting in the little kitchen of the Dree Mariners at Casterbridge, having a bit of dinner; and a brass band struck up in the street. Such a beautiful band as that were! I was setting eating fried liver and lights, I well can mind—ah, I was!—and, to save my life, I couldn’t help chawing to the tune. Band played six-eight time; six-eight chaws I, willynilly. Band plays common; common time went my teeth among the liver and lights as true as a hair. Beautiful, ’twere. Ah, I shall never forget that there band!\(^{93}\)

Though the evolutionary function of such evidently-pleasurable auditory-bodily synchronization has not yet been fully established (see discussion above), the effect of it is known to be universal,\(^{94}\) and begins before birth.\(^{95}\) Internal physiological reactions to music are less immediately evident, but there is now overwhelming evidence in support of their existence.\(^{96}\)

In summarizing current findings, Donald Hodges notes that, in general terms, listening to music can alter—among other things—heart and pulse rates; blood pressure; blood flow; levels of blood-oxygen saturation; breathing rate; muscular tension; rate of peristalsis; zygomaticus activity,\(^{97}\) and pupillary reflexes.\(^{98}\) And, in strictly broad terms, stimulating music tends to increase these physiological effects, while tranquillizing music decreases them.\(^{99}\)

This is not a fixed ruling, however, in that the nature of responses to music is highly individualized, dependent—as will be seen, below—on a number of factors. Notwithstanding, there is one exception: self-selected music is known to be essentially constant in its ability to elicit positive physiological responses uniformly: “The concept that personal preference is influential is firmly enough accepted to be utilized in the use of music in medical treatment”, writes Hodges.\(^{100}\)

This highlights self-selected music as potentially invaluable to the current research;\(^{101}\)

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\(^{96}\) Ibid, 125.

\(^{97}\) The zygomaticus is the facial muscle used in smiling.


\(^{99}\) Ibid, 125. Stimulating music is likely to be fast and loud, with (for example) clipped notes; while music that is sedative is more likely to be soft, slow, and smooth.

\(^{100}\) Ibid.

\(^{101}\) A further study of potential significance was undertaken by Japanese researcher Hajimi Fukui. Fukui found that listening to music of all kinds caused testosterone levels to decrease in men, but to increase in women. And—notably—in general terms, these effects were most pronounced when the music being listened to was favourite music. Fukui’s research was being undertaken with a view to determining the evolutionary origins of music, and he posited from the study that music’s purpose may have been to control sexual and aggressive behaviour, by (among other things) relieving tension, stress, and anxiety. It is suggested that, were favourite music indeed able to help decrease such potentially debilitating states of unease, it could be
and the following section will explore this idea, examining what leads people to favour certain pieces of music over others.

### 4.4.4 Factors Affecting Musical Choice, Engagement, and Response

#### 4.4.4.1 Introduction

The way in which people engage with music varies, then, and individuals can be drawn to a piece of music for any number of factors, which, in some instances, have nothing to do with characteristics internal to the music—the listener’s culture, age, gender, personality, and level of musical training, for example. A selective sample of what are seen as some of the most relevant processes of engagement will be explored in this section.

#### 4.4.4.2 Musical Acculturation and Familiarity

Familiarity with a particular piece of music or a musical genre is one reason for people being drawn to music for its intrinsic properties. Levitin notes that the auditory system of the human foetus functions from approximately twenty weeks after conception, and he reports on research that has shown that one-year-old infants show a clear preference for music to which they were constantly exposed while in the womb. But such prenatal experiences influence rather than determine musical preferences with other factors too playing their part. Culture, in particular, is critical, with acculturation occurring over an extended period from infancy, and leading to individuals showing a clear preference for the music of their own culture over that of others.

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102 All of these variables are known to impact musical preferences to at least some degree—though research in some of the areas is limited. See discussion on musical taste and preference in Adrian North and David Hargreaves, *The Social and Applied Psychology of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 75-142.

103 Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music*, 223-224. Levitin draws here on an oral presentation of a research paper given in 2001 by Alexandra M Lamont, of Keele University.

104 Ibid, 230. Levitin suggests here that musical acculturation takes place from two years of age; though— as noted in section 4.2.3, above—Trehub times it earlier, at just twelve months. Ref: Trehub, ‘The Developmental Origins of Musicality’, 669.

105 Schmidt Peters explains that, just as different cultures have their own languages and patterns of speech, so different cultures use their own instruments, scale patterns, and symbols in music. These factors mean that people from different cultures may find it very difficult to appreciate or understand the music of one another’s culture. Ref: J Schmidt Peters, *Music Therapy*, 55.
Music as an Expression of Identity

A second motivational draw to certain types of music concerns personal loyalty and desired identity. Cultural differences in music, and the linking of specific pieces of music with certain countries or groupings—national or sporting anthems, for example—can be used by individuals or groups to portray their allegiance and identity. However, the widespread availability of music and the pervasion of often-diverse musical genres offered in the twenty-first century enables many to use music as a means by which to create a personal identity, and through which to express a particular outlook and attitude. Nicholas Cook notes that music was pivotal in creating the youth culture of the 1960’s, representing values and behaviour that set apart the younger generation from older generations; but he considers that, today, the situation is more diverse, with society fragmenting according to numerous, often overlapping, musical subcultures, each representing a particular identity. “In today’s world, deciding what music to listen to is a significant part of deciding and announcing to people not just who you ‘want to be’...but who you are”, he posits.

In line with church-music scholar Erik Routley’s observation that “the dividing line between what is thought of as secular and what is judged sacred has been totally obliterated”, there is no doubt that differing musical identities are evident within religious communities too. For example, in terms of congregational singing, it is evident that traditional hymns are favoured by some churchgoers, while newer worship songs and choruses are favoured by others; and it is suggested that, in some cases at least, these preferences may also reflect differing spiritual approaches.

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109 Erik Routley, A Short History of English Church Music (London: Mowbray, 1998), 107. Routley deems this to be a positive shift, but argues that it is nonetheless essential to distinguish between church music that is “excellent” and that which is “vulgar”. It is posited, however, that making a distinction between the two essentially is a subjective exercise—see discussion at 4.4.4.9, below.
110 This is not inevitable, however; and, plainly, many potential factors—such as age, socialisation, and familiarity—will be influential in determining such preferences. See related discussion on the contrast between Pentecostal and traditional church expressions of music in section 4.3.5: Music, Spirituality, and the Christian Church, above.
4.4.4.4 Music and the Regulation of Moods and Emotions

Certain pieces of music can be liked for their internal qualities, to which many people will instinctively be drawn—and, indeed, some individuals may use their knowledge of the effect of certain pieces of music to regulate their own moods, emotions, and behaviour.\textsuperscript{111} Research undertaken by Sloboda has uncovered several structural characteristics of music that are linked to unmistakable expressions of emotion such as bodily ‘shivers’, tears, or heart reactions.\textsuperscript{112, 113} And studies have shown that, in general terms, there can be consistency and agreement among listeners about the essential emotional expression of music.\textsuperscript{114} For example, Sloboda and Juslin report on research that required participants to match pictures of different facial expressions with certain pieces of music, and found that children as young as three-years were able to identify emotions such as joy, sadness, anger, and fear within music to some degree of accuracy. Moreover, the researchers suggest that the specific emotions implicit in certain types of music form part of the reason that musical preferences can change over the course of a lifespan. The sexuality, rebellion, and anger implicit in rock music, for example, can be a draw for teenagers, who are at a time of life when they may connect with these particular emotions.\textsuperscript{115}

4.4.4.5 Music and Expectation

Musical expectations too can be an important factor in determining musical likes and dislikes. John Booth Davies posits that, when listening to music, individuals unconsciously endeavour to predict what note is likely to follow its predecessor.\textsuperscript{116} If a musical sequence is not according to expectations, information is received, but, if it is as expected, no information is received. Hence, pieces of music which violate expectations are more informative to the listener than those which do not. And, suggests Davies, an individual is likely to become bored by music

\textsuperscript{111} Hargreaves, Miell, and MacDonald, ‘What are Musical Identities, and Why Are They Important?’, 1.
\textsuperscript{112} These include musical constructs such as melodic appoggiaturas; melodic and harmonic sequences; melodic or harmonic accelerations to cadence; enharmonic changes, and syncopations—all of which are related to aspects of musical expectations (see section 4.4.4.5, below). Sloboda, Exploring the Musical Mind: Cognition, Emotion, Ability, Function (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 210.
\textsuperscript{113} Sloboda suggests that such physical reactions must be closer to actual emotions than verbal expressions of emotion in that they are universal; are not subject to rationalization, and do not rely on vocabulary. Sloboda, Exploring the Musical Mind, 209.
\textsuperscript{114} Sloboda and Juslin, ‘Psychological perspectives on music and emotion’, 94.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{116} This may either be a learnt response or a response that is based on a more primitive level of perception, suggest Sloboda and Juslin. Ibid, 92.
that offers no new information, but may be unsettled by a piece which offers too much.\textsuperscript{117}

Thus, in general terms, people will be drawn to pieces of music that balance these extremes:

On the whole, people will like pieces of music which provide them with information, and which consequently reduce their uncertainty about events. However, they will not like tunes which, either because of insufficient, or too much, information, do not reduce their uncertainty about events. We would predict, therefore, that people will prefer pieces of music which for them, contain an intermediate amount of information, i.e. neither too much nor too little.\textsuperscript{118}

So a person is most likely to embrace types of music with which he or she is, at least to some degree, familiar. However, while ‘information theory’, as Davies calls it,\textsuperscript{119} explains why individuals may struggle to appreciate the music of other cultures, but can readily engage with unfamiliar pieces of music within a known genre,\textsuperscript{120} it does not explain why people can enjoy re-listening to music with which they are highly familiar—which, plainly, provides them with no new information. Music’s enduring link with emotion presents an answer—for, as noted above, people are known to use their awareness of the effect of certain pieces of music to regulate their moods and emotions.\textsuperscript{121} Furthermore, as Juslin and Sloboda note:\textsuperscript{122}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Just as people may enjoy re-watching a favourite film—even though the ending is known—so too they can appreciate revisiting a musical narrative
  \item It is a fundamental principle that familiarity with something can increase liking of it up to a certain point.\textsuperscript{123}
  \item It is not inconceivable that some musical processing is hard-wired and based on “perceptual primitives”. And, if the relevant processor were systemically detached from others processors, emotional responses to these particular stimuli always would be as they were in an initial hearing of the music.\textsuperscript{124}
\end{itemize}

Moreover, in some cases, individuals respond to music in the way that they expect to respond to it. Titles of tunes, or words accompanying melodies, for example, can arouse a certain kind

\begin{footnotes}
  118 Davies, \textit{The Psychology of Music}, 90.
  119 Both David Huron and North & Hargreaves credit musicologist Leonard B Meyer for the initial conceptualization of this theory—as presented in Meyer’s publications of 1956 and 1967. Meyer argued that listeners learn through culture in what way a piece of music is most likely to develop; and that the violating of these musical expectations by composers is what gives rise to emotional responses within a listener. Refs: North and Hargreaves, \textit{The Social and Applied Psychology of Music}, p133; David Huron, \textit{Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation} (Cambridge Mass & London: MIT Press, 2007), 2.
  120 See also discussion in sections 4.4.4.2 and 4.4.4.3.
  121 Sloboda and Juslin, ‘Psychological perspectives on music and emotion’, 92.
  122 Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
of expectation that may be mirrored in a listener’s subsequent emotional reaction.

4.4.4.6 Music and Past Experiences

It was suggested earlier that the potential of music to be transformed into something of personal significance, on a symbolic level, was of particular significance to the current research—a suggestion informed by the findings of an empirical study undertaken by the researcher in 2004. This latter research—undertaken with eighty-nine churchgoers aged sixty-years and over—found overwhelming evidence of the triggering of positive-affect emotions and feelings, together with memories, thoughts, and visual images of people, places, and/or events, in response to the singing of a personally-selected favourite hymn. The finding can be seen to relate, broadly-speaking, to Aristotle’s laws of association, which, among other things, hold that two events will become connected in the mind if they are experienced at much the same time. Davies confirms this effect with other types of music too, and—in what he imaginatively calls the ‘Darling, they’re playing our tune’ phenomenon—notes that the circumstances surrounding the hearing of a piece of music may lead to it becoming permanently associated with a particular emotional event for the individual concerned.

Ongoing research continues to endorse music’s worth in the field, with Sloboda noting in 2005 that “[t]here has now accumulated a significant body of data which confirms that music is a particularly powerful evoker of other times and other places”. Specifically:

Music has a particular power to remind us of important past events in our life, and the profound feelings which accompanied them. This can lead to celebration, joyful remembrance, or the revisiting of pain and suffering. It can lift us out of our current preoccupations and refocus our attention on the wider landscape of our lives. By bringing together in our consciousness events which may be distant in time, it can help to get a better sense of the cradle-to-grave continuity and unity of ourselves as persons.

125 Davies, The Psychology of Music, 72.
126 Sloboda confirms that, in general terms, music tends to make people feel more positive and aroused. Sloboda, Exploring the Musical Mind, 335.
127 Joy, happiness, calmness, feeling at peace, thankful, uplifted, comforted and elated, for example, Nicol, The Language of Music.
129 Notwithstanding, cultural norms can establish a connection between certain kinds of music and a certain kind of event. Davies, The Psychology of Music, 69.
130 Sloboda, Exploring the Musical Mind, 348. Sloboda observes that guests on the longstanding BBC Radio 4 programme, Desert Island Discs, appear to have little difficulty in selecting pieces of music with which to illustrate their respective life stories. (Note: The weekly broadcast, Desert Island Discs, was created in the UK in 1942. A different guest features each week, asked to select and discuss eight pieces of music that s/he would wish to take with him/her if stranded on a desert island. Ref: BBC Radio Four: Desert Island Discs. Accessed 9 September 2010. Available from http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qnmr.
131 Furthermore, reporting on part of an ongoing research project being undertaken by The University of Sussex (The Mass Observation project), Sloboda notes that the use of music as a memory cue to valuable past events was found to be by far the most common use of music, across all ages and genders. Sloboda, Exploring the Musical Mind, 324.
132 Ibid, 349.
And, while acknowledging that there are other ways through which to draw-out such memories, music’s inherent ability to trigger strong emotions makes it supremely suited to the task, suggests Sloboda.¹³⁴

Music, then, can hold the key to unlocking aspects of individual human life; providing an important reminder of significant experiences, times, people, or places. In this way, it might be said to be symbolic of what McAdams calls ‘the sacred story of the self’¹³⁵—a function which makes it potentially invaluable as a medium in the current research.

4.4.4.7 Music, Beauty, and the Sacred

Many emotional responses to music arise simply because the music is perceived to be beautiful: a response which Juslin and Sloboda suggest can occur within the listener on each hearing of the music.¹³⁶ And perceiving the beautiful in music, and responding to it, would be of particular relevance to this research were it able to open listeners to the divine—a premise indirectly supported by Leo Tolstoy in his definition of beauty as “something having an independent existence (existing in itself)...one of the manifestations of the absolutely Perfect, of the Idea, of Spirit, of Will, or of God.”¹³⁷

The perception of beauty in music also relates to music’s ability to trigger intense, ecstatic, or ‘peak’ experiences, which are known to be of intrinsic human value. The term, ‘peak experience’ was created by Abraham Maslow to signify “moments of highest happiness and fulfilment”;¹³⁸ and such moments are always intensely positive; invariably engender feelings of awe and wonder, and may trigger physical responses such as tears, shivers, and changes in both breathing and heart rate. Moreover, a peak experience will produce a heightened sense of well being, and other therapeutic effects which will last beyond the experience itself.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ Ibid.
¹³⁵ McAdams, The Stories We Live By, 34. See Chapter Three, section 3.4.4.
¹³⁶ Sloboda and Juslin, ‘Psychological perspectives on music and emotion’, 92.
It is generally agreed that music is a primary medium through which such experiences are generated; and, as Whaley, Sloboda, and Gabrielsson note, peak experiences can be classified to the realm of the spiritual:

Musical peak experiences are a significant component of the lives of many people. They are powerful, valued, have lasting effects, and—for some—are a reason for continued engagement with music. They involve elements of life that could be described as transcendent, transformative, even spiritual. Indeed, it is no surprise that music has been such an essential part of many religious traditions and rituals.

And the Anglican Dean of Perth, in Western Australia, John Shepherd—a skilled musician and scholar of sacred music—agrees, suggesting that music “of quality” within worship serves as a powerful channel to the D/divine. In an article in the *Times Online*, he argues that the D/divine is to be found in a realm beyond ordinary human experience and understanding; and, in that the path toward this “exalted ‘ecstasy’” requires entering imaginatively into the dimension of mystery and the unknown, it is a journey beyond words.

The intensity and intangibility of this experience can only be expressed through the arts. This is why music of quality is a critical element within the life of the Church. It is a necessity, not a luxury...Music of quality, in the context of worship, does not entertain or divert. It reveals. By means of evolving harmonies, rhythms, textures, modulations, orchestrations, melodies, counterpoints, imitations, this rich art form has the potential to create an aural environment which enables us to contemplate the mystery of God...Any work of art...whose implications are immediately obvious and can instantly be grasped can never enlist our imagination, and so cannot equip us for mystery; and what cannot equip us for mystery cannot equip us for God...True art transcends the ordinary. It invites us to contemplate a presence beyond itself. It entangles us in the divine web of ultimate reality, and so creates an aural environment in which we can experience, in the words of Anselm of Bec, the presence of “that than which nothing greater can be thought”.

Shepherd exhorts the use of “music of quality” over the “basic” and the “banal” within the liturgical setting as being essential to this sacred endeavour, and his argument is persuasive in principle. Notwithstanding, research has found that musical peak experiences do not depend either on place or context of hearing, or on any particular genre of music—though, critically, the perceiving of the music as being of aesthetic value is known to be instrumental to the experience. However, as discussed above, the beauty, draw, and/or effect of a particular

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140 See discussion in *Ibid*, 452-454. Other potential triggers, the authors note, include art, religion, and sex.
144 Shepherd, ‘Credo’.
piece of music are not exclusively bound to the internal qualities of the music itself, but, rather, can result from any one of a number of possible factors—including powerful associations and memories, and the framing of personal identity. Hence, what constitutes 'music of quality', and the effect of the music, appear primarily to be subjective. This might explain why contemporary church bands such as that of the Pentecostal Hillsong church¹⁴⁷—whose worship songs seem unlikely to meet all of Shepherd's musical criteria¹⁴⁸—not only have a widespread following, but, more significantly, generate music that can have an apparently-profound effect on many listeners. Nonetheless, whether or not this genre will endure as a conduit to the personal-sacred is not yet known, for, as psychologist Sloboda observes, music of the present day has yet to stand the test of time:

History has a refining effect. By and large, what survives from ages past is the interesting and unusual rather than the trite. Contemporary music, on the other hand, contains much which is of little value, precisely because history has not yet been able to weed out that which people do not value. I am convinced that many of the value judgements about genres suitable for worship are based on average 'triteness' ratings on the pieces of each genre known to an individual. On these grounds, the average pop track is bound to be triter than the average sixteenth-century anthem. So, also, I have to say, is the average piece of music especially written for church use in the twentieth century.¹⁴⁹

Thus, contemporary music may be both of value to, and able to trigger intense or peak experiences within, some members of current generations, but it remains to be seen whether its effect will be the same for generations of the future.

4.4.4.8 Conclusion

This discussion has shown that there are a number of sometimes-complex and often interacting factors behind musical choices, and the way in which individuals engage and react to music. People are most likely to be drawn to music of their own culture, and to music with which they are, to some degree at least, familiar. Some music will be liked for its internal qualities; and music may be used to regulate moods and emotions. Music can act on a symbolic level as a powerful reminder of significant people, experiences, and events; and music that is perceived to be of value aesthetically may be able to trigger powerful experiences that can open the individual to the realm of the sacred.

¹⁴⁷ See section 4.3.5, above.
¹⁴⁸ Namely, "evolving harmonies, rhythms, textures, modulations, orchestrations, melodies, counterpoints, imitations". Ref: Shepherd, 'Credo'.
¹⁴⁹ Sloboda, Exploring the Musical Mind, 357.
4.4.5 Musical Manipulation and Negative Effects of Music

Before concluding this discussion on relevant aspects of the psychology of music, a brief note of caution must be introduced regarding potentially-negative uses and effects of music. It has been established that music is predominantly associated with positive responses. However, the innate draw of music, its link with emotion, and its effect on physical and physiological structures mean that it is relatively easy to use music to manipulate the feelings and behaviour of others. Such manipulation is clearly apparent in the world of film and television, for example, where background music is used readily and regularly to establish the desired tone, mood, and even scope of a film or programme. Further, background music can cause audience-members to identify with certain characters, and be out of sympathy with others—without the need for words. It can give clues as to the emotions supposedly being felt by characters on screen, and can regulate the emotions that are expected of the viewer. And it can act as a swift and helpful reminder of critical earlier events or characters. For the most part, this kind of emotional control is harmless, and even beneficial to the viewer/listener. However, when music is used in the commercial world, the advantage invariably is being sought by those employing the music. For example, music can be used successfully to affect the speed with which people shop; the amount they spend, and it can even influence what products are bought. It can be used in restaurants to affect the speed at which people eat; how affluent they feel (and, therefore, how much they will spend or tip); and how long they will remain. And music used in advertising can, among other things, link positive-affect emotions with certain products, creating a liking for a product by-association.

Frivolous though these examples may seem in the present context, they are relevant insofar as they demonstrate the immense power and potential of music to influence the

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150 Refs: (1) Annabel J Cohen, ‘Music as a Source of Emotion in Film’. In Justin and Sloboda (eds), Music and Emotion, 249-272 (especially, 263-264); (2) Scott D Lipscomb and David E Tolchinen, ‘The Role of Music Communication in Cinema’. In Miell, MacDonald and Hargreaves (eds), Musical Communication, 383-404.


153 Refs: (1) Adrian C North and David J Hargreaves, ‘Musical Communication in Commercial Contexts’. In Miell, MacDonald and Hargreaves (eds), Musical Communication, 405-422; and (2) Adrian C North and David J Hargreaves, ‘Music and Consumer Behaviour’, 481-490 (especially 482 & 486-489).
emotions and behaviour of others—and, in doing so, highlight the importance of employing music responsibly and with understanding. Furthermore, it is salient—and of relevance—to note that the benefits derived from the use of music in commercial settings are known to be overturned completely if customers actively dislike the music that is being played (for any or all of the reasons given earlier in this section). As North and Hargreaves observe: “music that is liked is commercially ‘better’ than no music, whereas music that is disliked is commercially ‘worse’ than no music”.¹⁵⁴

For the purposes of the current research, then, it may be concluded that the only ‘safe’ and positively-effective use of music would be to employ music that is known to be liked by the listeners in question.¹⁵⁵ Thus, in a study in which such information about participants could not reasonably be expected to be known by the researcher, the use of self-selected music would appear to be essential.

4.4.6 Conclusion

It has been established that music’s intrinsic link with emotions, which are the driving force behind human behaviour, makes music a powerful motivational force in human life. A complex mix and interaction of factors determine musical likes and dislikes, but music is primarily associated with positive-affect emotions, and with generally-therapeutic physical and physiological effects. And music held by the listener to be of aesthetic value has the potential to open the individual to the Divine. These factors together not only make music a popular and attractive medium, but give music a strong hold on humanity—which means that music can be used readily to manipulate, and therefore must be utilized with care and understanding.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to examine the suitability and effectiveness of music as a medium that might assist participants of the empirical component of the current research in moving closer to their spiritual core to a degree that might allow them to articulate at least something of it. In and through an examination of the purpose and use of music since pre-history; an

¹⁵⁵ It is acknowledged, however, that, in certain circumstances, even the use of a person’s favourite music cannot rule-out the emotional manipulation of that individual—for example, were such music to be deliberately linked to a particular person, event, or experience, and/or a desired action or outcome.
exploration of the link between music and human spiritually, and an investigation into relevant aspects of the psychology of music, it has been determined that music—if employed responsibly—would indeed be effective in this way, but also may be of benefit in other ways too. Specifically, it is the potential of music, firstly, to open the individual to events of his/her past (the sacred story of the self); secondly, to encourage positive-affect emotions (which are likely to help alleviate stress and anxiety); and, thirdly, to open the individual to the realm of the sacred that together hold the most promise. And it has been determined that the type of music most likely to elicit any or all of these effects would be self-selected music that is held by the individual to be of aesthetic value.
Chapter Five
Planning the Theoretical Framework

5.1 Introduction

The explorations of the foregoing two chapters have uncovered several and various strengths of both music and narrative; highlighting the relevance and potential value of both to the current empirical study, and setting the scene for a theoretical framework to be developed in which both music and narrative might be utilized effectively as research tools in the collection and/or analysis of data. The empirical framework for the study was devised with these, among other, aims in mind; and this chapter will detail the theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods that ultimately were seen as the most fitting for the study. ¹

5.2 Primary Planning Considerations

As noted elsewhere in this thesis, and for reasons set-out in Chapter One, the vision for the current research was to create a theoretical model charting contemporary spiritual development across the life-span. Plainly, the ability not only to realize this aim, but to do so in a way that would achieve the most accurate and valid outcome possible within the parameters of the research-project overall were the issues at stake in selecting both methodology and methods for the study. Further, in that the study sought to gain insight into human spirituality as it manifests in present-day society specifically, a framework was needed that, rather than confirming, falsifying, or comparing existing hypotheses, would allow freshly-gathered data to generate and build theory. And integral to both these ends was the need to gain access to the spiritual make-up of the individual participants coming forward for the study—an endeavour that was thought unlikely to be automatic, not least because arguably few people within Western society are well versed in articulating their innermost, most sacred, thoughts and feelings to others, much less articulating them to a researcher within a study environment.

¹ The specifics of the research design—including sampling and data collection procedures and strategies, and techniques of data analysis—are detailed in Chapter Six.
These, together with the findings of the earlier explorations into narrative and music, were the primary planning considerations for the study. They led, ultimately, to the selection of a predominantly qualitative approach to data collection; using the methodology of constructivist grounded theory; the method of semi-structured interviewing, and the medium of music: a combination of research tools that was deemed most likely to produce accurate and valid data. Each of these tools will be examined in more detail below for its suitability and potential worth in the study.

5.3 The Qualitative Approach

The desire to encourage use of the narrative mode of thought, and story-telling in at least some form, among participants of the study made the choice of qualitative inquiry as the overall approach to data-collection relatively straightforward. However, the attributes of this mode of inquiry are many and varied, and an overview of the background to, and characteristics of, qualitative inquiry follows in order to provide an understanding of the approach; differentiate it from quantitative inquiry, and, in turn, endorse its suitability for use within the current research.

5.3.1 Qualitative Inquiry: An Overview

Qualitative research is the umbrella term for a mode of inquiry which crosses multiple study-areas within the human disciplines in its quest to make sense of the world in which we live, its meanings, and its human expressions. It aims to do so from the perspective of those who participate in the research investigation in question, embracing subjective experience, views, perspectives, and behaviour as valid and important paths to knowledge and understanding. The importance that the qualitative approach places on subjective experiences of reality means that its investigative arena tends to be in natural—as opposed to contrived or experimental—contexts and settings, with the researcher endeavouring to meet the participant

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2 Specific information in the following overview of qualitative research has been referenced standardly. General factual information has been sourced from several publications, to which I am indebted. They are: Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S Lincoln (eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, second ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000); Victor Minichiello, Rosalie Aroni, Eric Timewell, and Loris Alexander. *In-Depth Interviewing: Principles, Techniques, Analysis*, second ede (Melbourne: Longman, 1995); Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, second ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

3 The grounds for this are discussed in Chapter Three, above.
in the latter’s world. This emphasis is clear in the broad definition of qualitative research offered by Denzin and Lincoln:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. These practices...turn the world into a series of representations...[Q]ualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach...This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.4

This definition also highlights the critical role of interpretation in the research process. Indeed, interpretation of gathered or observed information—which predominantly will be in verbal form, but may also be in other forms, such as in images or behaviour—by the researcher/s is a key component of contemporary qualitative research.5

5.3.2 The Background of Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative inquiry has a history in its own right within each discipline, method, and methodology, and even within each country in which it is practised.6 However, the foundations of the approach per se can be traced back to fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe, when it emerged in the form of scholarly accounts examining the impact and implications of discoveries being made by venturers such as Columbus, which were challenging incumbent, biblically-based understandings of human origins.7 8 Thereafter, it was not until the early twentieth century that significant advances were made in qualitative techniques. Nevertheless, as empirical practice escalated, the research field came to be dominated by positivist3 quantitative strategies—a situation which continued until the 1960’s, when the positivist approach began to be challenged. From this time, the most relevant progressions from the standpoint of the current research have been the understanding, from the mid-1980’s onward, that demographic variables such as gender, race, and class are powerful and important lenses

5  It is acknowledged, however, that this would not be the case were a positivist approach to be taken.
6  America and Germany, in particular. For a comparative overview of the development of qualitative research in these two countries, see Flick, An Introduction to Qualitative Research, 7-10.
7  Refs: Arthur J Vidich and Stanford M Lyman ‘Qualitative Methods: Their History in Sociology and Anthropology’ in Denzin & Lincoln (eds), Handbook of Qualitative Research, 37-84; and Flick, An Introduction to Qualitative Research, 7-10.
8  This form of qualitative inquiry is known as ethnography—essentially, descriptive, evaluative accounts of humanity, its culture, and ways. Vidich and Lyman define ethnography as "a social scientific description of a people and the cultural basis of their peoplehood". Ref: Vidich & Lyman, ‘Qualitative Methods’, 38.
9  A clear and helpful definition of positivism is offered by Bryant and Charmaz. Positivism, they suggest, is "an epistemology that subscribes to a unitary scientific method consisting of objective observation and experimentation in an external world. The goal of positivistic inquiry is to discover and to establish general laws that explain the studied phenomena and from which predictions can be made." Antony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz, ‘Discursive Glossary of Terms’, 603-612. In Antony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz, (eds), The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory (London: Sage Publications, 2007), 609.
through which people interpret and understand their world;\(^\text{10}\) and—from the early 1990’s—that the person of the researcher is integral to the research process rather than being a wholly objective and passive observer. A further pertinent development has been the increasing use of narrative and storytelling in data collection—a factor which surely serves to underline the appropriateness not only of encouraging use of the narrative mode of thought, but, in turn, of employing a qualitative approach to data collection.\(^\text{11, 12}\)

### 5.3.3 The Complementary Nature of Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

It is clear even from this brief overview that qualitative research has much to commend it as a suitable mode of inquiry for the current study. Notwithstanding, though qualitative and quantitative approaches differ in what they set out to do,\(^\text{13}\) there is now a growing awareness among empirical researchers of the potential for both modes of inquiry to be used in harmony. Indeed, this is seen to be increasingly important in the pluralistic world of the twenty-first century in which burgeoning change and diversity have given rise to previously unknown issues and problems. As Uwe Flick observes:

> Rapid social change and the resulting diversification of life worlds are increasingly confronting social researchers with new social contexts and perspectives. These are so new for them that their traditional deductive methodologies—deriving research questions and hypotheses from theoretical models and testing them against empirical evidence—are failing in the differentiation of objects…\(^\text{14}\)

This situation clearly demands new ways of understanding, and has led to the two approaches increasingly being seen as complementary rather than in opposition. And ‘triangulation’ measures—which enable data to be viewed from at least two separate angles, including, where appropriate, the use of both qualitative and quantitative measures\(^\text{15, 16}\)—are being

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\(^\text{10}\) This is relevant to the current research not only in terms of general awareness, but also as a factor to be considered in data analysis.


\(^\text{12}\) It is noted that no one, all-embracing, history of qualitative inquiry has been written. Denzin & Lincoln’s history is specific to North America, but the effects of globalization, including the widespread dissemination of academic material, mean that progressions in other English-speaking, Westernized countries are likely to have followed a similar pattern. Differences are inevitable from country to country, however, particularly from the latter half of the twentieth century. For the purposes of this paper, it was not thought necessary to go into further detail than is given here; but, for a comparison, see, for example, the progression of qualitative research in German-speaking countries as set-down by Flick in *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 7-10.

\(^\text{13}\) See Table 5.3.3, below.

\(^\text{14}\) Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 2.

endorsed as beneficial and effective means by which to gain the most comprehensive insight. Flick posits:

[T]he use of the triangulation of perspectives to disclose as many aspects as possible, increases the degree of proximity to the object in the way cases and fields are explored. This process may also enable the opening up of new fields of knowledge.

Table 5.3.3, below, highlights the essential nature, concern, and characteristics of both qualitative and quantitative inquiry.
### Table 5.3.3: Comparing qualitative and quantitative approaches to research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Qualitative Approach</th>
<th>Quantitative Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guiding theoretical perspective</td>
<td>Socially constructed. Fluid. Individual.</td>
<td>Fixed, able to be measured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher’s aims</td>
<td>Includes constructivism, interpretivism, inductionism.</td>
<td>Positivism or realism mostly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Researcher may not be clear at outset precisely what is being looked for.</td>
<td>Researcher in no doubt about what is being sought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling method</td>
<td>Mostly experimental. Include structured interviews with closed questioning—e.g., surveys, questionnaires.</td>
<td>Generally, strictly random selection within population/s of interest. Often with control group/s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant input</td>
<td>Various. Participants need not be randomly selected.</td>
<td>Specific detail only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Naturalistic, open ended. Include in-depth interviews, observation, biographies, texts, etc.</td>
<td>Non-numerical. Emphasis on ‘qualifies’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>Various. Participants need not be randomly selected.</td>
<td>Numerical. Emphasis on ‘quantities’—for example, amount, frequency, intensity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal use</td>
<td>Various. Participants need not be randomly selected.</td>
<td>Statistical procedures and numerical comparisons. Detached writing-up (in third-person).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The researcher</td>
<td>When little is known about the subject in question. When more needs to be known about an aspect of reality. When explanations are needed to help interpret statistical material. For theory generating.</td>
<td>When more is known about the subject in question. For testing/verification of existing theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The participant</td>
<td>Active and important part of the research process. Researcher’s intuition and subjective (though controlled by method and awareness) interpretation of data valid and worthwhile.</td>
<td>Unbiased, passive, and strictly objective. The researcher simply the operator of these devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of study</td>
<td>When little is known about the subject in question. When more needs to be known about an aspect of reality. When explanations are needed to help interpret statistical material.</td>
<td>Central to the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency of study</td>
<td>Deep and rich in detail. Detailed descriptions appropriate. Can provide detailed information on a small number of participants.</td>
<td>The supplier of data requested by the researcher. No other input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability of study</td>
<td>Methods and analytical processes demanding and time-consuming.</td>
<td>Quicker and more efficient (relatively at least—may involve substantially more participants).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitable study size</td>
<td>Can be adapted to suit situations and individuals. Flexible, less standardized approach.</td>
<td>Fixed research design. Rigorous scientific approach. Strictly standardized procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalizability of findings</td>
<td>Unbiased, passive, and strictly objective. The researcher simply the operator of these devices.</td>
<td>Suitable to small scale, or localized, studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticisms</td>
<td>Active and important part of the research process. Researcher’s intuition and subjective (though controlled by method and awareness) interpretation of data valid and worthwhile.</td>
<td>Unbiased, passive, and strictly objective. The researcher simply the operator of these devices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, the two modes of inquiry differ substantially. From the perspective of the current study, quantitative inquiry alone would not allow insight into the world in which people live, nor accommodate the input of those living in it, in terms of their experiences, thoughts, feelings, meanings, interpretations, and ideas. However, such rich detail is required of the study if it is to meet its objectives of building theory, and coming to an understanding of individual spiritual development. Thus—despite the down-sizing in terms of participant numbers that inevitably would follow, and, with it, the loss of statistical reliability—qualitative inquiry was seen to be the more fitting primary approach: an appropriation endorsed by Christian-spirituality academic, Janet K Ruffing:

[Qualitative studies] enable the researcher to go beyond his or her own limited perspective yet draw on the researcher’s empathic understanding and insight as they emerge in the process of the study. Although the results of such studies do not yield statistically reliable data, they do produce new insights about a broad range of human experiences which may be infused with the sacred, and are thus an appropriate method of research for scholars in Christian spirituality.  

A further specific endorsement—this time relating to research in the field of human development—comes from developmental psychologist Kathleen Stassen Berger:

…the complexity of a human life is easier to comprehend through the rich, qualitative, or descriptive, information…than through a study involving sheer numbers, even though statistical significance depends on such quantitative, or numerical, data.

Berger, like Flick, however, supports the worth of both approaches, and particularly when the two work in harmony.

NOTE: As will be seen in Chapters Six and Seven, a predominantly qualitative approach was taken within the current study, with some quantitative measures introduced within the analytical process in order to broaden and develop findings. This brought a new and additional perspective to the analysis, at which point further qualitative measures were utilized in order to gain deeper and richer understandings.

5.3.4 The Qualitative Researcher

It has been established that qualitative research extols subjective experiences of reality, and strives to make sense of—or interpret—the world, its meanings, and its human expressions

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21 Nonetheless, Berger acknowledges the worth of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, and particularly when the two work in harmony. Ref: Kathleen Stassen Berger, The Developing Person through the Life Span, fifth ed. (New York: Worth, 2001), 26.
22 It should be noted that, in this instance, Berger is commenting specifically on the qualitative method of the case study, Berger, The Developing Person, 26-27.
from the perspective of the other.\textsuperscript{24} And detached objectivity on the part of the researcher, as he or she sought to uncover an existing and real truth, once was the preferred theoretical stance in qualitative inquiry.\textsuperscript{25} However, American philosopher and psychologist George H Mead appears to have been ahead of his time when he posited, more than eighty years ago, that “[w]hat a thing is in nature depends not simply on what it is in itself, but also on the observer”.\textsuperscript{26} Contemporary researchers Denzin and Lincoln agree. Understandings are indeed framed in the space between the observed and the observer, they suggest:

\begin{quote}
[T]here is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. There are no objective situations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of—and between—the observer and the observed.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

And, far from these collaboratively-derived observations being a problem to be purged within a research-study, they are to be embraced, say Flick, von Kardoff, and Steinke:

\begin{quote}
[T]he reflective capability of the researcher about his or her actions and observations in the field of investigation is taken to be an essential part of the discovery and not a source of disturbance to be monitored or eliminated.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

The emergent view here, then, is that the researcher and his or her interpretations are integral to qualitative research, and invaluable in the construction of meaning. As qualitative researcher Kathy Charmaz summarizes: “we stand within the research process rather than above, before, or outside it.”\textsuperscript{29}

This understanding of the place of the researcher will be assumed in the current research.

\textsuperscript{25} See, for example, Denzin & Lincoln, ‘Introduction’, 18-19.
\textsuperscript{27} Denzin & Lincoln ‘Introduction’. In Denzin & Lincoln (eds) \textit{Handbook of Qualitative Research}, 19.
\textsuperscript{28} Flick, Kardoff and Steinke, ‘What is Qualitative Research?’. In Flick, Kardoff and Steinke (eds). \textit{A Companion to Qualitative Research}, 8.
\textsuperscript{29} Kathy Charmaz, \textit{Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis} (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 180. Charmaz’s italics. Charmaz is referring specifically here to those working here within the qualitative-methodology of grounded theory—the methodology selected for use within the current research. Nonetheless, it is suggested that the comment applies equally well to present-day qualitative-research practitioners \textit{per se}. 
5.4 The Methodology of Grounded Theory

In many ways, the argument in favour of taking a predominantly qualitative approach to the current study cannot be separated from that in favour using a grounded-theory methodology since the latter is a respected and firmly-established methodology within the qualitative arena. Numerous qualitative strategies exist, of course, but the one that fits most closely with the outlook and aims of the current research was deemed to be constructivist grounded theory. The constructivist approach, as used within this study, will be discussed below. Firstly, however, an understanding of the meaning of grounded theory will be offered, together with a brief exploration of the background to, and development of, the methodology.

5.4.1 What is Grounded Theory?

Its title notwithstanding, grounded theory is not a theory in and of itself, but rather the outcome of a methodical process, involving the systematized collection and analysis of (mainly qualitative) data, through which theory ultimately is formed. A theory resulting from the processes of the grounded-theory methodology, then, can be said to be ‘grounded’ in its data, and will be unique—relating directly to the population and situation in which the research process has been undertaken. Such a theory will be able to explain what has taken place with respect to the area of research-interest within its situated population, and, in turn, may be able to offer insight into what might be expected to take place in future. The form ultimately taken by a grounded theory is independent of the research process that led to its construction, and the grounded theory may be presented in whatever way is deemed most fitting by the researcher in question.

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30 Specific information on grounded theory within this section has been referenced individually. General information has been derived from the following sources to which the researcher is indebted: Charmaz, Constructing Grounded Theory; Antony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz (eds), The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory (Los Angeles and London: Sage Publications, 2007); Glaser and Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory.

31 For example, ethnography, case studies, life histories, participant observation.

32 Though predominantly linked with qualitative data, the methodology of grounded theory also is able to be used with quantitative data. Nonetheless, though endorsing this, the founders of grounded theory suggest that qualitative data often proves to be a better provider of the type of information required to generate (as opposed to verify) theory. Ref: Glaser & Strauss, 17-18. See also Charmaz, Constructing Grounded Theory, xi, and Bryant and Charmaz, 'Introduction: Grounded Theory Research, Methods and Practices'. The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory, 2.

33 Colloquially, however, the term grounded theory has taken-on a dual meaning, and invariably refers not only to the outcome of the process, but also to the method itself—a practice which, for the sake of simplicity, will be adopted within this paper. Ref: Bryant and Charmaz, ‘Introduction: Grounded Theory Research, Methods and Practices’. In Bryant and Charmaz (eds), The Sage Handbook, 3.

5.4.2 The Development of Grounded Theory

Grounded theory today is the most prevalent and popular qualitative research methodology being used within and across numerous academic fields and disciplines. It was introduced in 1967, when it was put forward by Barney G Glaser and Anselm L Strauss as a counter to the prevailing social-research arena of the time, which was dominated by quantitative, positivistic research, squarely focused on the testing and verification of existing ‘grand theories’, rather than on generating theory. An inductive methodology, grounded theory sought to right this imbalance, aimed, in the words of Glaser and Strauss, at the “discovery of theory from data—systematically obtained and analysed.”

In the decades following the conceptualization of grounded theory, the methodology gained ground exponentially, coming to be used across subject areas and disciplines. The academic collaboration of Glaser and Strauss, however, began to fracture as the two diverged in their thinking, each taking the method in a somewhat different direction. Glaser sought to uphold the original concept, continuing to advocate grounded theory as a means of discovery; placing the researcher as an unbiased, objective performer, and stressing the essentially non-prescriptive nature of the methodology. Strauss, together with incoming co-author, Juliet Corbin, began to shift grounded theory more into the arena of substantiation, and developed operational guidelines and practical procedures for the methodology (a move vehemently opposed by Glaser, who argued that, among other things, Strauss and Corbin’s approach served to force data into categories that were predetermined, and, thus, went against the very principles of grounded theory). In line with Glaser, Strauss and Corbin also promoted

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35 Stefan Timmermans and Iddo Tavory, ‘Advancing Ethnographic Research through Grounded Theory Practice’, 493-512. In Bryant and Charmaz (eds), The Sage Handbook, 494. Timmermans and Tavory undertook a keyword search in databases holding sociological publications to establish the relative popularity of grounded theory. They say that grounded theory became the dominant qualitative methodology in the late 1980’s.


37 Grand theories are overarching perspectives on human behaviour and development that dominated twentieth-century thinking and practice for many decades. Examples are the Freud-initiated Psychoanalytic Theory; Behaviourism (later known as Learning Theory), and Piaget’s Cognitive Theory.


40 Kathy Charmaz, Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis (Sage Publications: London, 2006), 8. For a more detailed discussion of the respective differences in position...
objectivity on the part of the researcher, but it is notable that the latter pair’s given definition of objectivity implies both awareness and acceptance of the inevitability of at least some degree of interpretative input on the part of the researcher.\textsuperscript{41}

5.4.3 The Contested Status of Grounded Theory

Given the rise and ongoing popularity of the methodology, it is perhaps not surprising that the conceptual difference between Glaser and Strauss has not been the only challenge to have been made to the original framework of grounded theory. Setting aside the increasing number of researchers, who, Hood observes, misappropriate the term, grounded theory,\textsuperscript{42} Bryant and Charmaz argue that the modifications in theory and practice that have been put forward by numerous advocates as new circumstances and understandings have arisen, have given rise to significant disagreement as to the very meaning of the term, grounded theory. This has given the methodology the status of a contested concept.\textsuperscript{43} Nevertheless:

\ldots we argue that its contested nature does not detract from its value and contribution. On the contrary, it accentuates the ways in which the method has redrawn the methods map, brought to the fore some of the central practical and philosophical methods issues, and initiated a flourishing interest in methods enhancement and development.\textsuperscript{44}

Indeed, the contested nature of grounded theory, they suggest, might more helpfully be viewed as a ‘family of methods’, with similarities and relationships metaphorically akin to those of members of a family.\textsuperscript{45}

5.4.4 Features Common in all Approaches to Grounded Theory\textsuperscript{46}

Methodical differences notwithstanding, it is notable that several of the basic practical underpinnings of grounded theory have remained stable and constant in and across

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\textsuperscript{41} Strauss & Corbin’s definition of objectivity is as follows: “The ability to achieve a certain degree of distance from the research materials and to represent them fairly; the ability to listen to the words of respondents and to give them a voice independent of that of the researcher”. Ref: Strauss and Corbin, Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory, Second ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1998), 35.

\textsuperscript{42} Many researchers, notes Hood, use the term grounded theory when in fact they are simply employing a generic inductive methodology using qualitative data and/or using a coding method. Ref: Jane C Hood, ‘Orthodoxy vs Power: The Defining Traits of Grounded Theory’, 151-164. In Bryant and Charmaz (eds), The Sage Handbook, 152.

\textsuperscript{43} Bryant & Charmaz, ‘Introduction’. 3. Bryant and Charmaz note they have based their classification of grounded theory as a contested concept on the criteria for an ‘essentially contested concept’ as laid-down in 1956 by W B Gallie.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, 4.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, 11. Bryant and Charmaz acknowledge that here they are drawing on the philosophical ideas of Ludwig Wittgenstein, as penned in his 1953 publication, ‘Philosophical Investigations’.

\textsuperscript{46} General information in this section has been drawn from the following sources: Glaser & Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory; Bryant & Charmaz, ‘Introduction’; Charmaz, Constructing Grounded Theory.
constituent members of—to borrow Bryant and Charmaz’s metaphor—the grounded-theory family of methods. Among these constant features is that of the goal of the methodology—namely, to create a sound and credible theory to explain the phenomenon under investigation.

As Phyllis Stern argues, a true grounded theory must make sense:

[Put simply, the reader will have an immediate recognition that this theory, derived from a given social situation, is about real people or objects to which they can relate. Furthermore, it must be clear that the developed theory comes from data rather than being forced to fit an existing theoretical framework.]

And the theory that ultimately is developed from the data may be either substantive or formal, say originators Glaser and Strauss. A substantive theory is that which is created for a particular bounded or empirical research inquiry (such as in the current study); and a formal theory is that which is developed for a conceptual, and thus more abstract, field of inquiry.

Over and above these features, additional core components by which a grounded-theory inquiry may be identified are ambiguous. Jane Hood, for example, highlights three only: theoretical sampling; the constant comparison of data to theoretical categories, and a focus on the development of theory via theoretical saturation of categories, as opposed to substantive verifiable findings. Cathy Urquhart posits a set of five guidelines essential for applying grounded theory. And Carolyn Wiener expands the number still further, citing eight basic tenets. It can be seen from this, then, that though grounded theory unquestionably presents a systematic approach to building theory from data, in practical terms, the methodology now enjoys a high level of versatility and flexibility, which may account in part for its growing popularity among qualitative researchers. In fact, such versatility was built into the

48 Glaser & Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory, 32.
49 Glaser and Strauss define theoretical sampling as “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his [sic] data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges”. Ref: Glaser and Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory, 45.
50 Glaser and Strauss define theoretical saturation of categories as the point during the joint collection and analysis of data at which “no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category”. Ref: Glaser and Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory, 61.
51 Hood, ‘Orthodoxy vs Power’, 163.
methodology from the outset, with Glaser and Strauss stressing that their methodology amounts to “suggestions” rather than a prescriptive formula:

Our suggestions…should not curb anyone’s creativity for generating theory; in contrast to the ways of verification, they should encourage it…Our suggestions…allow, even demand, room for including both propositions and the richness of information leading to them…Our principal aim is to stimulate other theorists to codify and publish their own methods for generating theory.\footnote{54}

And in the introductory chapter of her 2006 publication notably presenting not the but “a way of doing grounded theory”\footnote{55}—namely, constructivist grounded theory—Kathy Charmaz takes-up the invitation, noting:

In their original statement of the method, Glaser and Strauss (1967) invited their readers to use grounded theory strategies flexibly in their own way. I accept their invitation…I view grounded theory methods as a set of principles and practices, not as prescriptions or packages…I emphasize flexible guidelines, not methodological rules, recipes and requirements.\footnote{56}

An exposition of Charmaz’s “flexible guidelines”—to be employed, flexibly, within the current study—follows, below.

\section*{5.5 Constructivist Grounded Theory}

\subsection*{5.5.1 Constructivism Explained}

Glaser and Strauss’s pioneering methodology was pitched against the positivist leanings of its time. However, somewhat ironically, it has been argued that the pair’s advocation, firstly, of theory as able to be ‘discovered’\footnote{57}—in other words, theory as an external, existing truth waiting to be uncovered—and, secondly, of achievable objectivity (albeit, ultimately, to varying degrees between the respective authors) on the part of the researcher, are themselves positivistic stances.\footnote{58} As noted in section 5.4.2, above, shifts in thinking now have outlawed this mode of thinking to a great extent, with Charmaz asserting:

\footnotesize

\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{54} Glaser and Strauss, \textit{The Discovery of Grounded Theory}, 8.
  \item \footnote{55} Charmaz, \textit{Constructing Grounded Theory}, 9. Charmaz’s emphasis.
  \item \footnote{56} Ibid, 9.
  \item \footnote{57} Glaser & Strauss, \textit{The Discovery of Grounded Theory}, 1.
  \item \footnote{58} See discussion in Charmaz, \textit{Constructing Grounded Theory}, 9. It might be argued that Strauss and Corbin’s later acknowledgement of the importance of including the voice and perspectives of those studied moves their perspective into that of the post-positivist paradigm. This paradigm holds, among other things, that there is no one single reality. See, for example, Strauss & Corbin, \textit{Basics of Qualitative Research}, 42-46.
\end{itemize}
I assume that neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research practices.  

Thus, constructivism, in contrast to the positivist paradigm, assumes the existence of multiple realities, and that the observer and observed are co-authors in the process of meaning-making and understandings. It strives to uncover how realities are made; starting with the experience itself, and addressing how it has been constructed. Constructivists endeavour to “enter the phenomenon, gain multiple views of it, and locate it in its web of connections and constraints,” acknowledging that their interpretation in itself is a construction.

5.5.2 Constructivist Grounded Theory in Overview

Constructivist grounded theory in turn, then, allows for the construction, as opposed to discovery, of theory; recognizes the central place of the researcher (including his or her background, plus decisions made in designing the research and analyzing data); and acknowledges that the grounded-theory generated does not represent a fixed truth, but rather a particular way of viewing the situated data. For Charmaz, constructivist grounded theory:

...assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, [and] recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed...My approach explicitly assumes that any theoretical rendering offers an interpretive portrayal of the studied worlds, not an exact picture of it...I treat grounded theory methods as constituting a craft that researchers practice. Like any craft, practitioners may vary in their emphasis on one or other aspect but taken together share commonalities....

And—unlike Hood, Urquhart, and Wiener (see section 5.4.4)—Charmaz considers there to be six principal commonalities shared standardly by those practising the craft.
Chapter Five: Planning the Theoretical Framework

- Concomitant processes of data collection and analysis
- Analytical codes and categories created and developed from the data, rather than from a preconceived premise
- Development of middle-range theories\(^66\) to explain behaviour and processes
- Memo-making
- Theoretical sampling
- Postponing the literature review until after conceptual analysis of data\(^67\)

These primary components of the methodology—together with the particular emphases that mark-out constructivist grounded theory—are set-out in tabular form below. In summary terms for the moment, however, the practical process through which the goal of constructivist grounded theory (and, indeed, grounded theory per se) is realized is not linear, but rather is iterative, involving a cyclical moving back and forth between the collection of data and the analysis of data—a practice known as theoretical sampling. Categories (or themes) are identified from the data, and a comprehensive record of the researcher's reflections, observations, and hunches as they arise are kept in the form of memos. The latter hold the key to the analysis, and it is from them that the theory ultimately will be developed. In order not to influence the researcher's analysis with extant findings, the review of the literature in the specific field of the study is left until after the conceptual analysis has been developed.\(^68\)\(^69\)

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\(^66\) Glaser and Strauss define a middle-range theory as a theory (substantive or formal) that falls in the middle ground between a working hypothesis and an all-embracing grand theory. Ref: Glaser & Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, 32-33.

\(^67\) Though Charmaz views the delaying of the literature review as a distinguishing characteristic of grounded theory per se, she concedes that the timing of the literature review within grounded theory research now is disputed (Ref: Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 165). It is noted that, like Charmaz, grounded-theory pioneers Glaser and Strauss advocate delay of the literature review. Ref: Glaser & Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, 33-34.

\(^68\) Where the latter guideline is concerned—and in line with the constructivist understanding that the researcher does not (indeed, can not) come to the research as a *tabula rasa* (figuratively, 'blank slate'), it appears that, in some cases, this requirement might be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. This is because, as Charmaz points out, many experienced researchers begin with a wealth of intimate knowledge of their subject area/s and the literature in the field. Nonetheless, Charmaz argues that, if used with care, such an established disciplinary perspective is not disadvantageous, but rather can be an invaluable guiding and sensitizing tool, providing a helpful vantage point both for forming the research topic and for framing opening questions. Thereafter—and critically—however, such material should be left to "tie fallow" until after categories have been developed and the analytic relationships between them established—the point at which the emerging work can be situated appropriately within the relevant specific literature. Ref: Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 17 & 166.

\(^69\) In the current paper, Chapters Two, Three, and Four, respectively, aim to ground the study within the broad arena of relevant, but non-specific, literature. Thereafter, following analysis of the study, the findings were placed within the framework of relevant, specific literature—as detailed in Chapter Eight.
5.5.3 Constructivist Grounded Theory in Practice

The non-linear character of grounded theory notwithstanding, Charmaz helpfully sets-out her practical guidelines to the methodology in linear form, including examples and suggestions, in the following primary areas: data gathering; coding; memo-writing; theoretical sampling; and writing-up the constructed grounded theory. Table 5.5.3, below, presents an outline of some of the major practical concerns of the methodology in each of these areas, insofar as it relates to the current study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Area of concern</th>
<th>Summary of major points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting the Scene</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constructivist</td>
<td>Encourages theorizing in the interpretive tradition. Both data and analysis come</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grounded Theory</td>
<td>from the relationship and shared experiences of both researcher and participant.</td>
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<td>Interpretive theory</td>
<td>Seeks to present an imaginative understanding and interpretation of the studied</td>
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<td>process. Process aims to</td>
<td>phenomenon in order to understand it in abstract. The subjective nature of</td>
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<td>conceptualize the phenomenon</td>
<td>theorizing is acknowledged.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constructing theory</td>
<td>Constructing theory is not mechanical, and can be theoretically ‘playful’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A grounded theory (GT)</td>
<td>A GT will reflect its author’s experience, interests, ideas; historical context;</td>
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<td>&amp; the historical ideology of his/her informing discipline. It presents a version</td>
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<td>of certain aspects of a reality. It will be open to modification.</td>
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<td>Data Gathering</td>
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<td>Importance of rich data</td>
<td>Rich data allows deep insight into social and subjective life, and is the route</td>
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<td>data</td>
<td>to a strong grounded theory. The type of data used can be diverse, and more than</td>
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<td>one type can be used—determined by topic &amp; access.</td>
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<td>The research problem will shape methods chosen, and both methods and the researcher’s</td>
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<td>unique experience will influence what is seen in the data. Nonetheless, as far as</td>
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<td>possible, researchers aim to see the world from the participant’s perspective.</td>
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<td>Methods for gathering data</td>
<td>An inquiring mind, persistence, and innovative techniques are keys to gathering</td>
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<td>rich data. Quality data critical—should be rich, substantial, relevant, suitable,</td>
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<td>sufficient. Need to establish rapport with participants. Asking pertinent questions</td>
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<td>of the data will inform emerging analysis, &amp; direct future data-gathering.</td>
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<td>In-depth interviewing, with broad, open-ended questions, is a good data-gathering</td>
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<td>method. It will encourage stories. Interviewer must listen, observe sensitively,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&amp; integrate memos. Theories, ideas, and hypotheses between participant and researcher</td>
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<td>areas of power/status, race, class, gender, age, and ideologies all may affect</td>
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<td>interviews.</td>
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<td>Coding means to label segments of data in order to categorize, summarize, &amp; account</td>
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<td>for it. Defines what data is about—the first step to constructing meaning from</td>
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<td>data. Provides analytical framework for building analysis.</td>
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<td>Researcher names codes, but should stick closely to data. Must remain open to</td>
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<td>exploring. Helpful to code for actions and processes rather than topics. Gerunds</td>
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<td>useful. Speed and spontaneity helpful. Data-type and research-purpose determine</td>
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<td>coding type (eg, word-by-word, line-by-line, incident-by-incident, in vivo).</td>
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<td>Second phase. Here, coding refined by comparing data to data. More directed,</td>
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<td>focused, conceptual.</td>
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<td>Follows codes from focused coding, &amp; specifies possible relationships between them.</td>
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<td>Integrates, gives form, and may present an analytical ‘story’ that begins to shape</td>
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<td>theory.</td>
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<td>Preconceptions hard to avoid, but must earn their place in analysis. Potential</td>
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<td>problems if coding too general; out of context; or summarizes rather than analyzes.</td>
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<td>For deeper understanding, code full transcripts, not notes.</td>
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<td>For personal use only, so spontaneous and informal. Write from the outset,</td>
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<td>freewrite, and/or do whatever works. Note everything, including relevant raw data;</td>
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<td>empirical evidence to support thinking; conjectures; emerging patterns; gaps, &amp;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>remaining questions.</td>
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<td>What is coding?</td>
<td>Assess which codes best fit what is happening in the data; promote them to</td>
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<td>Why code?</td>
<td>conceptual categories, and analyse them in memo form—defining, explicating,</td>
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<td>specifying, describing, comparing, and showing. Categories should be abstract,</td>
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<td>general, analytically directed, and precisely worked.</td>
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<td>In contrast to initial sampling, theoretical sampling (TS) the later practice of</td>
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<td>adding new &amp; pertinent data to develop &amp; direct emerging theory. Elaborates &amp;</td>
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<td>refines existing categories by sampling to develop category-</td>
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<td>properties until no further emerge (category-saturation). Concerns both conceptual</td>
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<td>&amp; theoretical development (not, say, representing population, or increasing</td>
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<td>statistical reliability). Strategic, specific, and systematic.</td>
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<td>Memo-writing</td>
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<td>Pivotal stage between data collection &amp; writing drafts. Prompts early analyses of</td>
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<td>data &amp; coding. Aids abstraction. Encourages exploration and discovery in narrative</td>
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<td>form. Sparks ideas. Forms core of grounded theory.</td>
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<td>For personal use only, so spontaneous and informal. Write from the outset, freewrite,</td>
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<td>&amp;/or do whatever works. Note everything, including relevant raw data; empirical</td>
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<td>evidence to support thinking; conjectures; emerging patterns; gaps, &amp; remaining</td>
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<td>From codes to categories</td>
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<td>adding new &amp; pertinent data to develop &amp; direct emerging theory. Elaborates &amp;</td>
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<td>statistical reliability). Strategic, specific, and systematic.</td>
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<td>Due to purpose of writing-up, serves to highlight ideas and analysis, present &amp;</td>
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<td>preserve their form &amp; content. Every draft of a manuscript is an opportunity for</td>
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<td>new insights &amp; ideas.</td>
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<td>Inter-related practices that provide analytic frame for writing-up theory.</td>
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<td>Sorting memos provides logic for organizing analysis, and helps create &amp; refine</td>
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<td>links between categories. Sort by category-title; compare categories; order</td>
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<td>categories to reflect studied experience; reorder to best reflect-study experience,</td>
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<td>categories, and memo-ed statements. Diagramming memos/categories can help in</td>
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<td>providing a concrete image of ideas.</td>
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<td>Integrate memos. If theory now to be built on one major category (as it may be),</td>
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<td>consider how specific memos on this category best fit. If not, integrate memos by</td>
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<td>interpretive understanding (but can use causal relationships)</td>
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<td>The literature review is an ideological site in which to claim, locate, evaluate, &amp;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Define the GT. Used to critique and compare the most significant earlier studies in</td>
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<td>relation to the GT. Indicates how new theory fits in to or extends existing</td>
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<td>knowledge; and may then allow claims to be made about the GT.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

70 The information within this table has been drawn from Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 13-185. For clarity and conciseness, the guidelines and information have been re-ordered in part, and those believed not to be directly relevant to the current study have been omitted.
The acknowledged flexibility of the methodology of grounded theory notwithstanding, the majority of the above guidelines were employed within the current study as far as was possible and practical.

5.6 Semi-Structured Interviewing

The choice of a grounded-theory methodology for the study necessarily required a data-collection method that would lend itself to the building of theory rather than the testing of theory. Further, it has already been established in Chapter Three that our identities may be found in the stories that we tell; and, in Chapter Four, that specific pieces of music can hold part of the ‘sacred story of the self’. So a method was needed that not only would allow the sharing of such narratives, but would encourage the sharing of deep, personal information—feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and opinions—by men and women of all ages and personality-types. Plainly, interviewing techniques sit comfortably with all these requirements. Though numerous variants exist on what has been labelled the ‘interview continuum’, or the ‘verbal-data dimension’, the particular study in question, of course, must be the determining factor in selecting the type of interview. As Steinar Kvale writes:

> There is no correct or ideal interview; the appropriate mode...depends on the topic and purpose of the interview, on the interview subjects and the epistemological conceptions of knowledge sought...Interviews seeking different types of knowledge for specific purposes will take different forms.

Thus, semi-structured, in-depth interviewing, ultimately was selected as the data-collection method best suited to the topic, requirements, and goals of the current study. Within this interview model, the same questions—invariably open-ended—generally are asked of each participant. Flexibility in terms of precise question order and wording is built-in; with supplementary questions, probes, and prompts used as and when necessary. Charmaz concurs that such an interviewing style, employing broad, open-ended questions, is particularly appropriate in grounded-theory inquiries.

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71 See discussion at 5.4.4, above.
72 Minichiello et al, *In-Depth Interviewing*, 62. The continuum moves from structured interviews—the least deep; generally employing closed-ended questions, and such as might be used within a survey—at one end; to unstructured interviews—the deepest, and least controlled type of interview—at the other. Semi-structured, or focused, interviews lie in between. See Minichiello et al, *In-Depth Interviewing*, 62-65.
Interviews were to be undertaken face-to-face, as opposed to via telephone, for a number of reasons—not least, because it was deemed more fitting given the deeply personal nature of the subject-matter, but also to ensure privacy for the participants, and to facilitate a build-up of trust and rapport between the researcher and participant. Furthermore, it would enable potentially-critical non-verbal means of communication to be picked-up by the researcher.\footnote{Mehrabian has suggested that more than more than ninety per cent of conversational communication is transmitted non-verbally—communicated through body language, facial expression, eye contact, etc. A Mehrabian,\textit{ Silent Messages: Implicit Communication of Emotions and Attitudes}, Second ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1981). As cited in Elizabeth A Rider,\textit{ Our Voices: Psychology of Women} (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2000), 181.}

The planning of the specific questions, interview location, and all other considerations relating to the data-gathering arrangements for the study will be described in Chapter Six.

### 5.7 Music as a Medium

The potential and power of music in human life and expression have been explored extensively in Chapter Four, demonstrating why music is seen to be of import as a medium within the current study; and determining that the type of music most suited to the task is self-selected music held by the individual to be of aesthetic value. The particular way in which music is to be employed will be detailed in Chapter Six.

### 5.8 Conclusion

With the empirical framework—including theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods—for the study established, as above, the paper now moves on to detail the specific strategies and procedures of the research design.
6.1 Introduction

SETTING THE PARAMETERS of the theoretical framework, as set out in Chapter Five, paved the way for the particulars of the study-design to be honed. This chapter will detail these design specifics, including the scope and limitations of the study; sampling and participant-selection decisions; pre-study procedure; materials used; the study procedure, and data analysis.\(^1\) It should be noted that the final research-design for this study—as detailed here—was submitted to and approved by the Human Research Ethics’ Committee of Murdoch University, Western Australia. Outright approval—Permit Number 2006/281—to proceed with the study was granted on 12 February 2007.

6.2 Scope of the Study

In line with the cautions against taking an all-inclusive approach to the study of spirituality offered by both Schneiders and Sheldrake,\(^2\) plus a need to keep the empirical component of the current project within manageable boundaries, the parameters of the study were narrowed by limiting participant-variables to those within one Christian denomination, one culture, and one geographical location. Given this narrow focus, scope plainly exists to extend the study quite considerably in future.

6.3 Sampling Decisions

The sampling method chosen for the study was purposive and non-random; and, ultimately, participants were sought within the Perth Diocese of The Anglican Church of Australia, in Western Australia. A number of factors were instrumental in the choice of this specific population—not least practical and financial, in that this population constituted ‘home ground’, in every respect, to the researcher.\(^3\) However, a pertinent additional feature in the selection of

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\(^1\) Denzin and Lincoln suggest that the term *empirical materials* is now preferred to the traditional term, *data* (Ref: *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 25). It is noted, however, that the former term appears not to be the term of choice for all qualitative researchers, with, for example, both Kathy Charmaz in her 2006 book, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, and Victor Jupp in the *Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods*, making regular use of the latter term. For this reason, for the sake of simplicity, the term *data* will be used throughout this paper. Its meaning should be taken to be the same as that of *empirical materials*.

\(^2\) See Chapter Two, section 2.3.4.3.

\(^3\) To clarify, the researcher lives and works in Western Australia, and is an active member of a Christian parish within the Perth Diocese of The Anglican Church of Australia.
both Christian denomination and diocese was the diversity of theological-thought known to be present among Anglican churchgoers of the Perth Diocese, who have freedom to hold to a position within a relatively wide scope of belief. This freedom is clearly stated in an article posted on the Diocesan website:

Anglicans have a unique Christian culture as a result of having a contested identity. Reforming a medieval church to be inclusive of both Catholics and Protestants probably made it inevitable there would be an internal struggle over its identity...As a consequence of that internal division there has emerged a distinctive Anglican identity—of a Christian Church that is both Catholic and Protestant and which gives its members a wide latitude of belief as a consequence...Anglican Christians are free to hold to a more Protestant or a more Catholic position.4

And this position later was endorsed more informally by the Anglican Archbishop of Perth, Roger A Herft, in an interview with a local newspaper:

[Perth Anglicans] are very independent thinkers...We are a very strident Church that is welcoming of all and allows question and debate to take place. Bethlehem is an open place and the Church should always be open no matter what.5

Thus, it was hoped that the selection of study-participants from within such a relatively free and theologically-diverse church population ultimately might make the findings of the research not only more far-reaching, but of potential help and relevance beyond the study boundaries.

A brief overview of The Anglican Church in Australia shows that, nationally, it is the second largest religious grouping in Australia in terms of the stated affiliation of the country's census-population.6 Notwithstanding, and on average, only five per cent of these nominal members attend church on any given week.7 Affiliation to the Church is in decline, along with active membership8—a situation that is (and will continue for some years to be) exacerbated by the Church’s ageing profile, in that the membership mortality-rate exceeds its birth-rate.9

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7 This compares, for example, to seventy-three per cent attendance by those affiliating to the Pentecostal Church, and fifteen per cent by nominal Catholics. Ref: Brighton et al, ‘Book 3A SCGS Report’, 117.
9 This rate of decline is greater than that of the national population. Ibid.
A distinct gender imbalance is evident in the Church, with women attendees outnumbering their male counterparts by a ratio of almost two to one; though women are dropping out of the Church at a marginally higher rate than men.  

6.4 Participants

6.4.1 Participant Numbers

In its purest form, the grounded-theory methodology selected for the study dictates that data-collection—to be gathered, in this case, through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews—ceases only when a point of theoretical saturation is reached (ie, at a point when it can be seen that subsequent interviews are adding no new information to the theory that is emerging). For that reason, precise numbers of participants could not be planned in advance of the data-collection process, though it was estimated that forty to fifty participants might be required. As will be seen, the complexity of the subsequent analytical process created time constraints that did not allow theoretical saturation to be reached, and, ultimately, forty-seven people participated in the study.  

6.4.2 Participant Selection

In line with the initial aim of the research to create a theoretical model of Christian spiritual development across the life-span, participants of all ages needed to be sought for the study, even if the theoretical model that emerged proved not to be of a maturational nature. Children were (and, indeed, are) believed to be vital to such a model. However, although the researcher’s intention was to include children within the project, the approval granted by the Human Research Ethics’ Committee of Murdoch University was for the study to proceed with adult participants only. The researcher considered the option of creating separate research-designs suitable for children of different ages, and submitting these for subsequent approval, but practicalities—predominantly time-related—prevailed, and the research ultimately...
proceeded with adult participants only.\textsuperscript{13} Hence, seven age-groups were drawn-up to cover the adult age-range, and it was hoped that a relatively even spread of participants, both male and female, could be found within them. Designated groups were for those aged:

1. 18-29 years
2. 30-39 years
3. 40-49 years
4. 50-59 years
5. 60-69 years
6. 70-79 years
7. 80 years or more

Stipulations made for the study were that participants should not include anyone who had experienced recent (in the twelve months preceding the study) bereavement or major trauma; and that all participants should be of sound mental health.\textsuperscript{14} State of physical health was deemed not to be an issue in the selection of participants, however. This was because participants were to be volunteers who—as will be seen—had been invited to participate by their own parish priests (in liaison with the researcher), and it was thought unlikely, firstly, that a priest would suggest a parishioner he or she knew to be in debilitating ill health, and, secondly, that anyone in such ill health would agree to participate.

In order to achieve a good cross-section of participants, those who met the foregoing criteria were sought from parishes situated in suburbs perceived, from a socio-economic perspective, to be a spread of advantage and disadvantage. Further, as far as possible, participants were sought in like numbers from parishes in which the researcher was known and had established links, and from parishes in which the researcher was unknown. The reason for seeking this latter mix was that it was surmised that those who knew and trusted the researcher might feel better able to share the type of deep, personal information that was being sought, leading to a more accurate and valid study. However, should that supposition prove incorrect, the inclusion of a similar number of participants who did not know the researcher might balance any negative effect.

\textsuperscript{13} It is acknowledged that children would need to be included in any future extension of the current research.
\textsuperscript{14} These stipulations aimed principally to ensure the wellbeing of study-participants, but also aimed to ensure that the data emerging from the study would not be unduly and unfairly influenced by factors outside the control of the participants.
6.4.3 Participant Demographics

In the event, study-participants were spread across a number of demographic variables—differentiated by, among other things, age, gender, parish grouping, place of birth, level of education, parenthood-status; and according to whether or not they lived with a spouse/partner. Details of the breakdown of participants according to these variables are given below.

Figure 6.4.3a, below, shows the spread of participants by age-decade—roughly in line with the seven designated age-groups shown in section 6.4.2, above.

![Figure 6.4.3a: Spread of Participants by Age Decade]

As can be seen, each of the designated age-groups was represented among the participants, though numbers in each were not spread uniformly. Notwithstanding, when viewed in ascending order of age—see Figure 6.4.3b, below—it can be seen that there was a reasonably robust spread by age, with participants ranging in age from twenty-five to eighty-eight years.
Participants were split by gender in a ratio of some two to one, female to male—see Figure 6.4.3c, below. It is notable that this is roughly in line with the gender-divide apparent within The Anglican Church of Australia.
Participants constituted six separate groupings—five parishes from within various socio-economic areas of The Anglican Diocese of Perth, Western Australia, and one group (Group 1) of separate individuals from different parishes selected by the researcher. Those within this latter grouping formed an equal part of the research, but served also as a control group. As can be seen in Figure 6.4.3d, participant-spread by grouping was uneven, ranging from four per cent to thirty-eight per cent of the sample.\(^{15}\)

When considered by place of birth, almost two-thirds of the participants were born in Australia or New Zealand,\(^{16}\) and almost one-third in the United Kingdom. Four per cent only (two participants) were born elsewhere. See Figure 6.4.3e, below.

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\(^{15}\) This relates to the recruitment method—please see section 6.5.1, below.

\(^{16}\) Australia and New Zealand have been linked principally for the sake of simplicity, given their geographical proximity and cultural similarities. Participants from these countries were represented in the study in the ratio of approximately 13:1 (equating, in real terms, to twenty-eight Australian-born and two New-Zealand-born participants).
Beyond these differentials, seventy-seven per cent of participants were tertiary educated, and twenty-three per cent, secondary-school educated. Further, almost four-fifths were parents as opposed to non-parents (81% to 19%); and some seventy per cent of participants lived with a spouse/long-term partner, while thirty per cent did not.

6.5 Pre-Study Procedure

This section will outline measures that were taken to set-up the study. It will include the method by which participants were recruited for the study; arrangements for interviews, and measures for pastoral-care.

6.5.1 Recruitment of Participants

Parishes were approached to participate in the study one at a time only—in line with the requirements for theoretical sampling within the chosen grounded-theory methodology.\(^\text{19}\)

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\(^{17}\) This uneven split was not entirely unexpected in that research undertaken by team-members of the National Church Life Survey found that members of The Anglican Church of Australia (and, indeed, other Australian Protestant denominations) tend to be more highly-educated than society as a whole. Ref: P Kaldor, R Dixon, & R Powell, *Taking Stock: A Profile of Australian Church Attendees* (Adelaide: Openbook, 1999), 20.

\(^{18}\) Not all non-partnered participants lived alone, however. Some, for example, were young people who lived at home with other family members.

\(^{19}\) As noted in 6.3, above, the sampling method for the study was purposive and non-random. Thus, the group of parishes ultimately approached to participate were those whose members, taken together, were deemed...
In every case, with the exception of Group 1 participants (who were drawn from different parishes—see section 6.4.3, above), once a parish had been identified for the study, its parish priest was approached in writing by the researcher, with the approach followed-up by telephone. Once in-principle approval for the parish to participate had been given, arrangements were made for the researcher to meet with the priest in person. At this meeting, the study was detailed; questions about it were invited and answered, and written information was provided—to be used by the priest as a resource on which to draw, as required.

Thereafter, individual parishioners who met the criteria for the study (see section 6.4.2, above) were identified and approached by their parish priest. In this situation, it was felt that a degree of flexibility must be afforded to the priest regarding method of contact. Thus, those identified as potential participants could be approached either in person, or by telephone call, letter, or email—according to the preference of the priest—and the priest outlined the study in accordance with the oral and/or written information furnished by the researcher. If an individual was interested in participating, s/he was asked either to advise the priest, who would then pass on his or her contact details to the researcher, or to contact the researcher directly by email. Thereafter, the prospective participant was telephoned directly by the researcher, who re-iterated the background to the research; detailed the interview procedure, and invited and responded to questions, before the participant was asked whether or not he/she would like to participate.  

Every effort was made throughout this process to lessen the likelihood of any individual feeling pressured into participating.  

**Note:**

20 In the event, all those to whom the researcher spoke agreed to participate in the study.

21 Notwithstanding, it is acknowledged that some individuals can feel under pressure to defer to authority figures, and that a parish priest may be seen as such a person of authority. It is relevant to note, however, that though the initial approach in the current study was made by the relevant parish priest, significantly more participants (85%) were recruited from parishes where the approach was made by letter or email (where there was no requirement for a response from the recipient), than in those where the approach was made in person or by telephone (15%). Thus, the issue of power-imbalance is not believed to have been a major factor in recruitment for the study.
individual's thoughts and feelings; in turn, diminishing the accuracy and validity of the study's findings.

6.5.2 Interview Arrangements

An interview date, time, and venue were arranged with each participant during his/her telephone conversation with the researcher. Where possible, these were of the participant's choosing; although, for practical reasons, venue-choice was limited by the researcher to either the participant's home or his/her church (the latter option provided following the agreement of each parish priest).\(^{22}\) Giving the participant freedom to choose these meeting-details was an active measure of the research design, in that it was hoped that an ideal date, time, and place would allow the participant to be as relaxed and comfortable as possible in the interview situation.

6.5.3 Arrangements for the Provision and Use of Music

Also at this time, the participant was asked to consider and select a piece of music (eg, a song—either secular or sacred—hymn, or orchestral piece) that was both loved by, and of some spiritual significance to, him/her; and, if possible, to bring a recording of this music to the interview. The latter request was in order to ensure that the particular arrangement of the music was one that was acceptable to the participant. If this was not possible, the participant was asked to advise the researcher in advance of the interview, and the researcher would then endeavour to find and provide a recording of it.\(^{23} \quad ^{24}\) The participant was advised that the interview would begin with the playing of this piece of music, and that s/he would be asked to talk about the musical choice, and about what the music meant to him/her.

6.5.4 Confidentiality Measures

Participants were assured of confidentiality regarding the information they would be supplying, and that the utmost care and attention would be taken to ensure that they could not be identified in any subsequent use of this information. A further assurance was given that no

\(^{22}\) In the event, 85% of participants chose to be interviewed in a home venue; 11% in a church setting; and, by special arrangement, one participant was interviewed in a university setting and one at a workplace venue.

\(^{23}\) In the event, only one participant was unable to supply a copy of his/her choice of music, but a suitable recording of the music was found by the researcher.

\(^{24}\) The use of music was seen as critical to the study. Therefore, stand-by arrangements were in place in the event of it not being possible to find a recording of the participant's favoured music (for example, if the music had never been recorded, or was unobtainable). In this instance, the participant would be asked either to suggest an alternative piece of music, or—if sheet music of the original choice could be found—to opt for an amateur recording of it by an organist or pianist. The latter option would be organized by the researcher.
identifying information would be added to either the digital voice-recordings or any subsequent transcript of the interview; and that these would be accessed by the researcher alone and held under secure conditions. These measures were—and, indeed, will continue to be—upheld by the researcher.

6.5.5 Pastoral-Care Measures

It was not anticipated that the study would affect participants adversely, but nonetheless the researcher was aware of the possibility that some participants might be emotionally affected by the experience of listening to a loved and moving piece of music, and/or of reflecting on and talking about the deeper issues of life which were at the heart of the research. Therefore, the following pastoral-care measures were put in place, to be activated if or when required:

- The relevant parish priest was asked in advance of the study to provide support for any participant from his/her parish who might require it.
- If such an assurance of support could not be given (for example, in the case of holidays on the part of the priest), a stand-by arrangement was made with another local priest.
- In the event of a participant becoming adversely affected during the interview, s/he would be counselled that, should s/he wish to, s/he could contact the parish priest for pastoral care and support.
- Alternatively, if requested by the participant, the researcher would undertake to contact the priest on behalf of the participant.

In the event, the above process did not need to be activated in that no participants required pastoral support.

6.5.6 Materials for Data-Collection

All necessary materials were provided by the researcher. The relatively straightforward nature of data-collection for the study—namely, the undertaking of one-to-one interviews—meant that materials were minimal. They comprised:

Indeed, it was hoped that many, if not most, of the participants would enjoy the experience of reflecting on, and talking about, their spirituality—an area of the self that, under normal circumstances, few have the opportunity to share—and that all would gain from it in some way in terms of self-understanding and knowledge. This was especially so in that all participants were to be volunteers who would be fully aware of what was entailed prior to volunteering for the study. Steinar Kvale posits that while an interview experience may be anxiety-provoking for some, most interviewees tend to enjoy the interest that is being shown in their experiences and views. Furthermore, if an interview is well-conducted, “[it] may be a rare and enriching experience for the subject, who may obtain new insights into his or her life situation...In practice, it may sometimes be difficult to terminate a qualitative interview, as the subjects may want to continue the conversation and explore further insights in their life world brought about by the interview”.

Ref: Kvale, Doing Interviews, 14. It was encouraging to note that almost all participants of the current research volunteered either positive or highly positive comments on the experience to the researcher.
Battery-operated digital voice-recorder, with microphone attachment
Portable compact disc/tape player
Participant consent form (plus duplicate for participant)\textsuperscript{26}
Participant demographic form (for researcher’s use)

In addition—as noted above—in cases where a participant was unable to provide a recording of his/her chosen piece of music, the researcher provided a recording of it.

\textbf{6.6 Study Procedure}

The principal procedure to which participants were subject was a digitally-recorded, one-to-one, semi-structured interview with the researcher. A ten-step format for the interview was followed, as detailed in Figure 6.6, below:

\textsuperscript{26} A copy of the consent form can be found in the Appendices.
Table 6.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure Followed for Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 The researcher began the session with an informal preamble, reiterating the background to and purposes of the study as given to them as part of the recruitment procedure; outlining the interview procedure, and inviting and answering any questions from the participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The participant was asked to read and sign a formal consent form acknowledging his/her understanding of the study, and giving his/her consent to participate. A duplicate of the form was given to and retained by the participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The participant was advised that, once the research project has been completed, a written outline of principal findings would be available to him/her if s/he wished to have a copy—in which case, s/he was asked to supply an address for the purpose, and assured that the address would not be linked at any time to the data supplied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The participant was asked to provide (orally to the researcher) the following demographic details: age, place of birth, family situation, primary occupation, level of education, state of health, brief church-going history. These demographics were deemed necessary to allow appropriate analysis of the interview, but it was also hoped that the informality of this part of the proceedings would serve to help relax the participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The participant was asked to describe how, in general terms, he/she had been feeling in the days leading-up to the interview. This was in order to establish an emotional starting-point, and to gain understanding of any external factors that might be influencing the participant and, in turn, his/her responses. If necessary, these would be taken into account in the subsequent analysis of that interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 The participant was asked to attach the microphone for the voice-recorder to his/her outer clothing, although the voice-recorder was not turned on at this time. It was explained that the microphone was being attached in advance of the interview in order not to disrupt the beginning of the interview, and risk disturbing any thoughts and feelings that the participant might be experiencing as a result of hearing his/her music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 The recording of the participant’s chosen music was played, following which the compact-disk/tape player was turned off and the voice recorder turned on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 The participant was encouraged to share the personal story behind his/her nomination of this music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 After this, the remaining interview questions, in turn, were put to the participant (please see Table 6.7, below).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 The formal interview ended at this point, and the voice-recorder turned off.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Invariably, an informal debriefing or conversation ended the session.

6.7 The Interview Questions

A key stage in planning the research design was that of framing the interview questions. It was critical to consider carefully not only what questions were to be put to participants, but how to word the questions effectively in order to maximise the quality and validity of the emerging data. Plainly, awkward or inappropriate questions at best might confuse participants, and at worst might influence answers and so bias the emerging data. Moreover, the questions needed to be relevant, effective, and clear; make no assumptions, and be worded in such a way as to be suitable for participants of all ages and backgrounds.

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This procedure is a standard requirement of Murdoch University Human Research Ethics’ Committee, and integral to the study-permit. A copy of the consent form can be found in the Appendices.
Chapter Four of this thesis has highlighted the role and importance of the ‘narrative knowing’ mode-of-thought in the field of human spirituality. Thus, the need to tap into the stories of participants in at least some way was influential in shaping some of the questions—which, in colloquial terms, aimed to encourage the sharing of ‘heart’ rather than ‘head’ information. But there were other considerations too, including a recognized need for the wording of the questions to be broad, open, and non-content-specific, in order:

- not to ‘lead’ the participants in their answers
- to make no assumptions about belief or faith among the participants
- to encourage the idiosyncratic vocabulary of each participant
- to be suitable for use in any later research with people in the secular world, and across faiths and cultures.

Further, in order for the participants to remain focused without become fatigued, the interview was planned to be of a reasonable length—ideally, no more than an hour.

The interview questions ultimately were framed to adhere to the above factors. Moreover, the extensive examination of general literature within the field of human spirituality that had earlier been undertaken—the results of which are given in Chapter Two, section 2.5 (and summarized in Figure 2.5.4)—had highlighted the type of information that needed to be sought, and the questions were devised with a view to drawing-out this information in specific terms.

With the exception of Question 1—concerning participants’ musical choices—questions were not given to the participants in advance of the interview. This was in order to deter answers from being over-thought and intellectualized; or from being discussed with other participants. However, integral to the research design was for the researcher not to push the participants beyond their comfort zone, and to allow them the option of omitting any question.

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28 As will be seen, at least three of the interview questions directly invited the use of ‘story’. Some participants, however, illustrated their answers to other questions with the use of narrative.

29 As noted elsewhere, in line with grounded-theory practice, this examination consciously excluded a review of existing models of spiritual development in order not to bias or influence the researcher’s analysis of the study data.

30 It is acknowledged that this latter possibility could not be ruled-out completely, however.
they preferred not to answer.\textsuperscript{31} It was hoped that these latter measures would allow the participants to feel comfortable and unpressured in the situation.

The interview questions, prompts, and participant instructions are given in Table 6.7, below. It should be noted that, during the interview, the precise wording of questions was adjusted, as deemed appropriate, according to the needs, situation, background, age, and/or personality of each individual participant.\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\small
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Question & Prompt \\
\hline
\hline
1 & Do you agree with the statement \ldots \\
\hline
\hline
& \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Interview Questions and Prompts}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{31} In the event, one participant only took up this option, preferring not to answer one question.

\textsuperscript{32} As noted in Chapter Five, section 5.6, such flexibility in terms of question-wording is integral to the semi-structured interviewing method selected for the study.
Table 6.7: Interview questions, prompts, and participant instructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Related prompts and instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **The first question was asked following the playing of the participant’s chosen music:**  
Please tell me about your piece of music.  
What is the story behind it for you? | Why did you choose it?  
What does it mean to you?  
*If necessary, the participant also was prompted to talk about emotions, thoughts, images, memories, and associations that arose for him/her while listening to the music.* |
| What are the most important things in your life?                          | What are the things that truly matter?                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| What kind of person do you strive to be?                                 | How would you describe yourself?                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Are you aware of having changed inwardly over the years?                 | If yes—in what way/s?  
How do you know that you have changed (eg, behaviour)?  
What do you feel may have brought-about those changes in you?                                                                                                                             |
| When you go through the more difficult times in life, what helps you to get through them? | What sustains you?  
What do you draw on?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Looking back over the significant milestones/experiences of your life, please choose one of them and tell me about it.  
What was the experience?  
What did you learn from it?  
How do you feel that it has shaped you? | The participant was advised that the experience s/he chose could be either a positive or a negative one, but that if s/he chose to share a difficult experience, s/he should make it an experience that s/he had fully come through, and could look back on without undue anxiety. |
| When you are feeling at your happiest—your most contented, most at peace, most fulfilled—what might be happening for you?  
Please tell me about an experience that has actually taken place in your life that made you feel that way; or imagine a situation in which you had all the things that you need to make you feel that way. | Who might be there?  
What might be happening?  
Where might you be?                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| People undoubtedly define spirituality differently, but, to you, what does it mean to be spiritual?  
What is spirituality to you? | What does it mean in a person’s life, and in their way-of-being?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Would you say that, in your life today, you have time to nurture your spirituality; your inner being?  
Either fully, or at least to some extent?  
If YES: What sort of practices help you?  
What do you find most helpful/nourishing?  
If NO: What constraints are on you that stop you doing so? | YES: Is there anything that can get in the way of your spiritual practice/s?  
NO: Would you say that you are negatively affected because of this?  
Ideally, what would you like to be able to do?  What might help you? |
| What are your biggest questions about life?                              | If you could ask any questions at all about life in-general, or about your own life, what might they be?  
What would you most like to know?  Is there anything that has always intrigued you?                                                                                                                                                 |
| Do you have any other reflections?  
Is there anything else you’d like to share? | Either further reflections about something that we have discussed already; or anything else that you’d like to talk about or comment on.                                                                                                                                                     |
| How did the piece of music that we listened to at the start contribute to your reflections today, do you think? | Was the music of assistance to you?  
If so, in what way?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
6.8 **Data Analysis**

The analysis of data from this study was in line with the methodology of grounded theory, as highlighted in Chapter Five, with adaptations to fit the specific needs of the study. Initially, use of the qualitative-research coding-software, *NVivo*, had been planned to assist in the process, but ultimately was not used; and all coding and analytical work was undertaken by the researcher personally.33 The analytical process is detailed in Chapter Seven.

6.9 **Conclusion**

The current study was undertaken according to the planned procedures of the research design as noted in this chapter. The paper now moves on to offer an in-depth discussion of the research findings.

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33 Bryant and Charmaz note that, while an increasing number of grounded theorists are now using such support software, its use is contentious. They caution against reliance on it, observing that the researcher him/herself needs to remain in control of the research process. Ref: Bryant and Charmaz, ‘Introduction—Grounded Theory Research: Methods and Practices’, 24.
Chapter Seven
Findings

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will chart the findings of the empirical study, using the analytical methods outlined in Chapter Six. The grounded-theory methodology chosen, coupled with the research-goal of creating a model of contemporary spiritual development, demanded that the exploratory process be undertaken in increments, before the strands of information could be assembled into a creative whole. The increments will be reported here in order; and, as will be seen, the analytical process proved to be multi-layered and complex, including the development from the data of an investigative tool that not only was used to help analyse the data, but that became a finding in and of itself. Furthermore, a method was developed by which to measure and model the spirituality of the individual—another finding that has potential to stand alone in future.

Numerous analyses were undertaken in the course of this inquiry. These included a scrutiny of the responses of participants to each interview question put to them; the identifying and comparing of themes across and between participants, plus the documenting and examining of observational material such as aspects of body language, speed of talking, et al. However, the findings of some of the processes—though instrumental in guiding the direction of this research in terms of information-gathering and understanding—ultimately were not directly relevant to the final outcome. For that reason, they have become superfluous to this reporting. Notwithstanding, findings thought to have potential to assist in other research projects have been included in the Appendices.¹

It should be noted that, for ease of evaluation—and unless otherwise indicated—all diagrams included in this chapter that compare two or more sets of data have been charted proportionally.

¹ Most notably, findings relating to the use of music within the study.
7.2 Charting the Spirituality of Individual Participants

A starting point for the analysis of data came from the recognition that a judicious move in creating a developmental model of spirituality based on an empirical study using live data would be to compare and contrast the spirituality of individual study-participants, and then group or order them accordingly. At this stage, of course, it could not be known whether the model that would emerge would be predominantly maturational or constructivist in nature, and thus the factors on which any such ordering or grouping might be based also were unknown. Nonetheless, it was plain that an effective first step might be for the spirituality of each first to be comprehensively understood, and then measured and charted in some way. For that reason—and in accordance with the methodology of grounded theory—each interview was examined closely, and notes made both of emerging themes and observations specific to the individual.²

7.2.1 Coding the Data

In the course of this process—and prompted by the particular interest of this study in the relational nature of spirituality, and the associated ideas of Henri Nouwen—it became apparent that it would be possible, using a qualitative approach, to classify every word of each interview text into one of three major relational categories. The categories of this triad concerned the participant’s relationship with (a) his/her own inner being, (b) humanity and the world, and, (c) whatever s/he held to be D/divine.³ They were given the respective titles:

(a) The Solitary Self
(b) The Humanity-related Self
(c) The Divine-related Self

² This is an approach to human development that essentially is age-related, having to do with normal growth. It is also known as ‘psychosocial’ (encompassing both psychological and social aspects of development).
³ Also known as structural or cognitive-structural. This approach assumes that changes occur in and through the response of an individual to new experiences or situations, and is concerned with the development of forms of thinking/knowing/valuing that are not specifically related to age.
⁴ Observational analyses included considering the participant’s speed of talking; pitch, tone and intonation of voice; body language; evident level of introversion or extroversion (scaled from 1 to 5); level of comfort in the situation; eye-direction tendency; level of reflectiveness, level of enthusiasm to participate.
⁵ See Chapter Two.
⁶ What constituted the ‘D/divine’ differed from person to person. For example, some participants made no mention of God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, but talked of being affected profoundly by the natural world, music, etc.
To facilitate this process, a second copy was made of each interview-transcript, from which the researcher’s words were removed. This left only the words of the participant in each case (the ‘data’), on which an intensive coding process was undertaken. Using different font- and text-styles\(^7\)\) to differentiate visually between the categories, every word of data was classified and coded initially into one of seven categories—seven categories allowing overlaps between the three primary categories to be taken into account. And, throughout the process, care was taken to ensure that words were kept in context in order to retain their meaning, and so facilitate accurate classification. All coding was done by the researcher alone, not only for ethical reasons but primarily in an endeavour to achieve uniformity of coding. And, to that same end, the researcher re-read several transcripts on which the coding had been completed before beginning a new coding-session.\(^8\)

The abbreviation letters for the coding categories, and examples of the type of text that was classified into each, is shown in Table 7.2.1, below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding Category</th>
<th>Abbreviation of Category</th>
<th>Example of Type of Text in Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
In some instances, the category or categories in which to situate a piece of data was not immediately clear, and, in these cases, the researcher’s observations of the participant and recollection of his/her interview played a vital part in the coding process. This was especially so in instances where classifications to the Divine-related (D) and/or Humanity-related (H) selves were concerned. For example, one participant talked of his deep appreciation and love of works of classical architecture; particularly those he had visited in southern Europe. Taken on face value, using the interview transcript alone, such reflections might have been classified only into the H category (works of architecture being human creations, of course). However, the participant’s deeply reverential demeanour; the sense of awe and wonder evident in the tone and intonation of his voice, plus the welling of his eyes as he recalled the effect on him of these works, provided critical strands of evidence which together made it clear that the beauty and magnificence of such edifices were in fact, part of this participant’s ‘divine’—and needed to be categorized as such.\(^9\) Similarly, for other participants, the Divine-related Self ultimately was held to be the most fitting category, or co-category, into which to place other human creations—pieces of music, and works of art, for example. Thus, it can be seen that the complexity and idiosyncratic nature of human spirituality meant that the coding process required far more than a simple analysis of words on paper, and could not be bound by an immoveable set of rules. Furthermore, it demanded due consideration, and a good visual memory on the part of the researcher/coder.\(^10\)

Once the coding process had been completed on a participant’s text, the words classified into each of the seven categories were summed. Thereafter, the total number of words present in the four dual or multiple categories (namely, SH, HD, DS, and SHD) were added to those in both or all of the singular categories (S, H, and D) to which they related.\(^11\) This reduced the number of categories from seven to three, and gave a total number of words relating to The Solitary Self (S); Humanity-Related Self (H); and Divine-Related Self (D) for the participant concerned. At this

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9 In this instance, a dual categorization (HD) was deemed the most fitting.
10 This was helped by the study having not too large a population, and by the researcher’s undertaking the coding process in incremental stages, soon after each round of interviews had been completed.
11 For example, the number of words found to be in the SH category of a text were placed into both the Solitary Self and the Humanity-related Self categories; and the number of words in the SHD category were added into the Solitary Self; Humanity-related Self, and Divine-related Self categories.
point, it was then possible—by proportioning the three totals to 100%\(^{12}\) within a bar graph—to chart the percentage of text that had been spoken by the participant in each of the three relational-self categories, S, H, and D. This gave an instant picture of the degree of focus that had been given by a participant to each area of the relational-self, and identified immediately any dominant—or, conversely, minor—self or selves.

### 7.2.2 Construction of the Relational Triad

The pictographic triad that emerged from the proportioning of the three relational-selves in this way has been named—and will be referred to hereafter—as the *relational triad*. Figure 7.2.2, below, gives an example of a relational triad charted visually—here, representing a participant whose spoken words proportioned as follows: 28% relating to the Solitary Self (represented by the pink-coloured column); 43% to the Humanity-related Self (orange column), and 29% to the Divine-related Self (yellow column).

![An Example of a Relational Triad](image)

*Figure 7.2.2: An example of a relational triad, depicting the proportional breakdown of the three relational-selves—S, H and D—found within a participant’s text.*

\(^{12}\) This was done by totalling the number of words that were in all three categories \((n)\); dividing the number of words in each of the three separate categories \((x, y \text{ or } z)\) by \(n\), and multiplying by 100. Thus, the formula used was \(\frac{x}{n} \text{ or } \frac{y}{n} \text{ or } \frac{z}{n} \times 100\).
It can be seen that the number of words spoken by the participant on humanity-related matters was greater than those spoken in either of the two other relational-self categories. This makes the Humanity-related Self the dominant self of the triad in this participant’s case. Thereafter, an almost even spread is evident between the Solitary Self and the Divine-related Self.

### 7.2.3 Construction of The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality

The concept of the relational triad proved to be an invaluable and effective working tool in many of the analytical processes of the study, as will be seen. However, it was the first step only in the construction of what the researcher later named *The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality* (which, for conciseness, also will be referred to as *The Relational-Self Model*)—a presentation model that enables the spirituality of the individual to be measured and charted in terms of his/her relationships with self, others, and that which s/he holds to be divine. The second step was to create the model in a form which not only allows each area of Self (S, H, and D) to be displayed proportionately, but which portrays the following aspects of the spirituality of the individual:

- Spiritual vocabulary
- Concerns, reflections, and qualities in each area of Self
- Concepts of the divine

Further ideals in the conceptualization of the model were that, in order to reflect and represent the nature of human spirituality, the model should convey visually a sense of wholeness and completeness, while at the same time suggesting the possibility of growth and movement. And, on a practical level, if the model were to have potential for use in future, it needed to be able to be replicated by others with relative ease.

With these ideals in mind, the following customized design (Figure 7.2.3) depicting *The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality* was created by the researcher. It should be noted that the central circle in the model represents aspects of the individual relating to all three of the relational-selves (S, H, and D). Further—although intentionally not demonstrated on this particular model for the sake of clarity—any concerns, reflections, and/or qualities that overlapped between two of the relational selves ordinarily would be sited on the dividing line between those two selves.
Chapter Seven: Findings

I try to keep money in perspective.

I am passionate about nature and outdoors. It calms and uplifts me.

Music is very important in my life. It calms me, and puts me into another world. It helps me reflect.

My faith in God, and my church, sustain me.

I have times of doubt. Is there really a God? Why isn’t my faith as strong as that of others?

To me, the spirit of a person is the person. But to be whole involves knowing a higher power.

I try to help and make a difference in the world in my own small way.

My close family are the most important thing in my life. Their happiness and safety is my priority.

My priorities have changed. I no longer want to be so busy planning for the future.

I am calmer and more at peace these days.

Having children was the biggest milestone of my life. It’s made me less selfish, and more loving and tolerant.

I strive to be kind, loving, and compassionate. I am respectful of others, and am more accepting and less critical than I used to be.

I know that good can come from life’s hardships.

I have a ‘big picture’ perspective on life.

I try to keep money in perspective.

I am now much more committed to what’s important.

Why is life so inequitable? And why is human wealth so unfairly distributed?

Divine vocabulary/concepts:
Faith in God; sustained by God and church; seeing Christ in others; higher power; meditation; passionate about and uplifted by nature; calmed and transported by music.

Figure 7.2.3: Example of the Relational-Self Model of Spirituality

Participant details:
Female. Age group: 50-60 years
This presentational-version of *The Relational-Self Model* was created using the widely-known and readily-available software programme, *Excel*. Within it, the ratio between the three relational-selves is clearly visible—and, indeed, is emphasized with the addition of the relational triad—highlighting any dominant self or selves. The circular shape and shading aim to give the model (and, more specifically, the human spirituality that it endeavours to represent) the look of being a whole and complete entity, but one that is open to movement and growth concomitantly. A colour has been added to symbolize the gender (female) of the participant—but alternative colours could be used as necessary to distinguish any salient or pertinent feature across or between individuals. Further, the design allows for the spiritual vocabulary of the individual to be featured by means of the inclusion of short statements—primarily, and where possible, in the first-person and verbatim to the participant—conveying spiritually-based thoughts, reflections, concerns, and qualities in each area of self. Inevitably, for practical reasons, only the primary concerns and reflections were able to be included on the model, but this did not (indeed, *could* not), of course, negate the use of all available data-material in ongoing analysis. Concepts of the D/divine as articulated by the participant have been highlighted separately on the model.

### 7.3 The Relational Triad as an Investigative Tool

The conceptualizing and prototyping of both *The Relational-Self Model* (Figure 7.2.3), and its component relational triad (constituent to Figure 7.2.3., but standing alone in Figure 7.2.2) provided two visual and focusing media through which the spirituality of participants could be examined and comprehended, before being compared and contrasted. Thus, dedicated versions of both models were generated for every participant.

Plainly, because the reflections and concerns of each individual were to be charted as far as possible verbatim on *The Relational-Self Model*, that particular component of the *Model* could not be disputed. However, before further use could be made of the concept of the relational triad, especially in terms of its proportioning the relational-selves of a participant, the following question needed to be addressed:
How accurate could the relational triad be, if it were modelled—as it has been here—on data gathered from one interview only?

Certainly, the research design—as discussed in Chapter Six—had put numerous measures in place in an endeavour to aid the participants in their reflections and to help them to feel as comfortable as possible in the interview situation. These measures, in turn, aimed to maximise the accuracy and validity of the data. And some of these measures—such as the use of music and ‘story’—had been externally and extensively validated. But, in the event, how successful had they been? And how precise was the resulting data—the coded version of which was the basis for the relational triad—in giving a true reflection of the breakdown of the selves for the individuals concerned?

7.3.1 Testing the Effectiveness of the Relational Triad

The uniqueness and complexity of the individual spiritual being, of course, is such that no means exists by which to answer these questions accurately. Certainly, it is acknowledged that a series of interviews with each participant might have improved the accuracy of the data not only by enabling an average measure to be taken for each individual, but by lessening the impact of any factor that may have affected or influenced participants adversely on the day of their respective interviews. However, this ideal was prohibited by the logistics of the research project, most notably in terms of its limited time-frame and fixed funding. Nonetheless, it is believed that the data does in fact reflect the life and being of the individual participants to some degree at least. And, if this is the case, it seems reasonable to suggest that, by extension, both the relational triad and The Relational-Self Model subsequently charted for each participant may provide a similar degree of precision in measuring and charting the spirituality of the individual.

For discussion, please see Chapters Three and Four.
This cannot be known for certain, of course. While additional interviews may have had some advantages—creating the possibility that the participant would be more familiar with, and therefore more relaxed in the company of, the researcher, for example—there would have been disadvantages too. For example, the musical component of the interview, if used a second or even third time, is likely to have had less impact on the participant. If it were not used, however, the advantages self-selected music is known to bring (see Chapter Four) would have been lost to the situation. Further, participants of any follow-up interview would have had a reasonable idea of the type of questions that were to be asked, and may (intentionally or not) have planned answers in advance—running the risk of ‘intellectualizing’ the data.
The grounds for this supposition came from the results of a series of tests undertaken to examine the effectiveness of the relational triad as a tool for investigation in the study. These tests considered the average\textsuperscript{15} relational-triad breakdown for participants who had been grouped according to several known demographics. Not all demographic characteristics of the participants were used here, however.\textsuperscript{16} In some instances, this was because the likely impact of some—gender, for example—was deemed too complex to be able to draw any reasonable conclusion, at least within the scope and framework of the current research. In other cases—the participants’ church-going history, for example—the nature of the demographic made it seem unlikely that it would be able to manifest itself visually on the model in question. Other known demographics, however, appeared to be better suited to the task, and five ultimately were chosen for the purpose.

The results of these tests, and what they suggest, are given below.

Firstly, however, a control against which to measure the results—namely, the relational triad averaged across all participants of the study—appears in Figure 7.3.1, below.

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{15}{The word ‘average’ used in this context—both here and throughout this paper—refers to an arithmetic mean.}
\footnote{16}{Most of the demographics were charted for examination in other ways, however. These charts can be found elsewhere in this chapter.}
\end{footnotesize}
This chart shows that the relational-self breakdown, when averaged across all participants of the study, was in the ratio of 24: 44: 32. On average, the Humanity-related Self clearly was the dominant Self, followed by the Divine-related Self. The Solitary Self, at just under twenty-five per cent, emerged as the lowest point of focus.

7.3.1.1 Examining the Relational Triad by Place of Birth

The first test to be undertaken was an examination of the average relational triad charted according to the birthplace of participants—see Figure 7.3.1.1, below. Five countries only were represented—Australia; New Zealand; the United Kingdom, and two non-Western countries. The geographical closeness and cultural similarities between Australia and New Zealand were deemed such that participants from these two countries were charted together.\(^{17}\)

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\(^{17}\) Also instrumental in this decision were the fact that two participants only were born in New Zealand, with a contrasting twenty-eight born in Australia. Thus, even if a significant cultural difference were to have existed between these two groups, the relatively small number of New Zealand-born participants (circa 7% of all Australian- and New Zealand-born participants) included in the triad was not likely to skew the result to any great degree.
Viewed from left to right, the bar-triads in the chart highlight the relational-self breakdown, firstly, for those born in Australia or New Zealand (comprising approximately two-thirds of the study-population); secondly, for those born in The United Kingdom (approximately one-third of the study-population), and, thirdly, for those born elsewhere. Clearly, the two triads representing those born in Australia/New Zealand and the United Kingdom are identical to all intents and purposes. Given the cultural similarities between the nations in question—with all three housing individualistic societies—plus the fact that all the UK-born participants now live in Australia (most having done so for many years), this result is exactly as might have been expected. Indeed, it would have been surprising had a result other than this emerged. The distinctive triad to the right of the chart represents participants who were born in countries other than the above-named. It may well reflect inevitable cultural differences between the participant-groups—and so help to validate the model—but, in that it represents two participants only, it is unreliable for the purposes under discussion. Notwithstanding, even setting this triad aside, the overall results suggest that

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18 The percentage breakdown of the number of participants in each of the birthplace-groups is as follows—64%: 32%: 4%.
the relational-triad model accurately reflects similarities between participants according to their place of birth—a robust finding that holds up despite the significantly different sizes of the groups concerned. This demonstrates that the relational triad is not a random gauge that has no correlation to the life-situation of the participants.

7.3.1.2 Examining the Relational Triad by Parenthood Status

A second measure—as seen in Figure 7.3.1.2, below—compares the breakdown of selves according to whether or not the participant was a parent.

![The Relational Triad According to Parenthood Status](image)

Figure 7.3.1.2: The relational triad according to the parenthood status of participants

It can be seen here that there is relatively little difference between the Divine-related Selves (also called the D-reading) of the two groups, but a salient difference according to the Solitary and Humanity-related Selves (also called the S-reading and H-reading, respectively). On average, those who are parents have a higher H-reading, and a lower S-reading than those who are not. Given the additional focus that parents—and, indeed, grandparents—invariably place on their children and grandchildren, often at the expense of a focus on the Solitary Self, it is suggested that
this result might indeed reflect at least something of the respective positions held by this demographic.¹⁹

7.3.1.3 Examining the Relational Triad by Partnership Status

In a similar way, Figure 7.3.1.3, below, shows the average relational-self breakdown according to whether or not a participant was living in a partnership situation—either married or de facto.²⁰

![The Relational Triad According to Partnership Status](image)

Figure 7.3.1.3: The relational triad according to the partnership-status of participants

Again, it might be expected that the H-reading of those living with a partner would be higher, and the S-reading lower, than for those living with no partner. And that outcome is clearly evident here, with a finding even more robust than that for the parenting demographic. It suggests, once again, that The Relational-Self Model is able to reflect the reality of life across various demographic groups.

¹⁹ A marginal difference between the two groups also is evident in the D-reading, and—in the absence of specific analysis—the reasons for this are uncertain. An analysis was not undertaken on this in that it was likely to have proved prohibitively time-consuming for a result that may well have been inconclusive.

²⁰ Seventy-per-cent of the study-population were partnered, and thirty-per-cent non-partnered. For the purposes of this exercise, those who had been widowed or divorced were included in the non-partnered group.
7.3.1.4 Examining the Relational Triad by Focus on the Divine

Two final measures focus on a disparity in the average D-reading between two specific demographic groups and their respective control groups—comprising the remainder of the study-population in each case. Firstly, Figure 7.3.1.4a, below, compares the average relational-self breakdown of participants who have had formative training for the ordained priesthood, or similar vocational calling,\(^{21}\) with that of lay people who have not.

![The Relational Triad Comparing Priest and Lay Participants](image)

*Figure 7.3.1.4a: The relational triad according to the priesthood status of participants*

Secondly, Figure 7.3.1.4b, below, compares participants who freely and voluntarily identified themselves in their interviews as ‘born again’ Christians—each of whom also described having had a life-changing conversion-experience—with all other participants.\(^{22}\)

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\(^{21}\) Fifteen-per-cent of the study-population were in this category. They included (male and female) active, retired, and trainee priests; a former nun, and a school chaplain.

\(^{22}\) Nineteen-per-cent of the study-population were in this category. It is stressed that no participant was asked for this information, but some volunteered that they were (metaphorically) ‘born again’, ‘saved’, or ‘Spirit-filled’. Other study-participants also may have been in this category, of course, but, for the purposes of the exercise, no assumptions were made, and thus the variable triad in Figure 7.3.1.4b includes only those who openly identified themselves in this way.
These charts show that, on average, the D-reading for the two variable groups—namely, priest and ‘born again’ participants, respectively—is significantly higher than that for the rest of the study-population in each instance. Given the relatively greater level of focus on D/divine-related matters that both variable groups might reasonably be expected to have—not least because of their formative training and conversion experiences, respectively—the result appears to be congruent with the likely reality of focus for both.23

7.3.2 Conclusion

These five simple tests highlight well the interplay between the three relational-selves for different demographic groups. Though plainly not in-depth analyses, and acknowledging that other factors too may have contributed to the outcome in any or all cases,24 it is clear that, when the average relational triad for each variable-group—generated, as it was, from data drawn from one interview

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23 Plainly, Figure 7.3.1.4a and, more notably, Figure 7.3.1.4b also highlight differences in and across all three areas of the relational self. The reasons for this are likely to be numerous and complex, but an in-depth investigation into them was deemed unwarranted at this point in the research. Notwithstanding, this appears to be a significant area for further research in future.

24 Illness or incident in the days up to and including the interview, for example, may have shifted the participant’s normal focal-spread to a specific area of Self.
only with each group-member—was compared to that of its control group/s, the result was as might have been expected. No sweeping claims can be made as a result of this, of course, but, in that the relational triad appears to show a measure of accuracy when averaged across various demographic groups, a similar degree of precision should be present when the triad is plotted across other participant groups within the study.

Undoubtedly, there will be exceptions to this rule where the relational triad for individual participants is concerned. A memorable or affective incident in the life either of a participant or of a member of his/her close circle, in the days preceding the interview, for example, may have shifted that participant's normal focal-spread to a specific area of Self. Nonetheless, if the supposition of there being a higher degree of accuracy when the triad is averaged-out across a number of individuals is correct, it signals that, in overall terms, the proportional-breakdown of selves within individual triads is indeed reflective of the life-focus of many if not most of the participants. And by extension then, *The Relational-Self Model* subsequently charted for each participant should hold a similar degree of accuracy in measuring and charting the spirituality of the individual.

It should be noted at this juncture that the outcome of this study ultimately hinged more on the plotting of data across and between groups of participants than on the plotting of data across and between individuals. Moreover, the need to validate the study-data—and, in turn, the study's primary investigative tools—ultimately may not be critical to the overall value of this paper in that the concept that emerges, rather than any specific outcome, may be seen to be the most fundamental element being presented.

### 7.4 Comparing and Contrasting the Participants

Having established at least something of the worth and validity of the relational triad—and, indeed, *The Relational-Self Model*—then, the way was paved for moving forward in the process of developing a model of spiritual development. Plainly, *The Relational-Self Model*, if charted at intervals—say, of five or ten years—had the potential to monitor the spiritual growth and
development, and any shift in focus, of the individual on an ongoing basis, but it was not in itself a model of spiritual development across or between groups or individuals. Thus, the next step was to compare and contrast, and, thereafter, order or group the participants in some way.

It was recognized from the outset that this part of the analysis was likely to prove one of the most time-consuming parts of the study. For that reason, the relational triad was used as the initial tool of investigation in the hope that it might expedite the process by providing an early indication of appropriate groupings into which the participants might be placed, for further investigation by qualitative means. Various demographics were used to this end—the charts for some of which have appeared in section 7.3, above. Others follow below.

7.4.1 The Relational-Triad According to the Gender of Participants

Figure 7.4.1, below, highlights the relational triad when averaged according to the gender of participants.

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25 Namely, place of birth; parenthood status; partnership status; priest/lay status; ‘born-again’/other status.
26 As noted in Chapter Six, female participants outnumbered their male counterparts by a ratio of more than two to one (68%:32%).
It is plain that there are marginal differences only between the relational triads when charted according to gender—a finding which, for the time being at least, ruled-out gender as a suitable measure by which to group or order the participants.

7.4.2 The Relational-Triad According to the Age of Participants

The age of participants, on the other hand, had a clear effect on the relational triad. Figure 7.4.2a, below, shows not only distinctive differences when the triad was averaged according to the age-decade of participants, but also unmistakeable trends in all three relational-selves.

Setting aside for the moment the triad for those aged in their eighties—and keeping in mind the uneven spread of participants according to age-decade—it can be seen here that the S-reading (represented by the pink-coloured bar) forms something of an inverted bell-curve when viewed across the age-groups. It drops steadily from its highest point among those in their twenties;

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As detailed in Chapter Six, the percentage of participants in each age-decade ranged from six-per-cent (those aged in their eighties) to twenty-one-per-cent (in two age-decades: the forties and the sixties). It should be remembered, however, that this charting has been presented proportionally.
reaches its lowest point with those aged in their fifties, and then rises steadily once more to reach a second peak for those in their seventies. And this configuration is reversed, roughly-speaking, for both H- and D-readings.

The complexities in the make-up of the D-reading for each participant make the span of movement evident in this component of the relational-self impossible to interpret from quantitative information alone. However, where the remaining two components are concerned, the greater attention to the Solitary Self afforded by the youngest participants might be explained by it being a time of life when, in general terms, there are fewer responsibilities of care for others. And, conversely, the low S-reading but high H-reading of those in their fifties might be explained by it being a time of life in which others—including children and grandchildren—may figure more prominently, coinciding with a reasonable level of both personal fitness and energy that might allow active engagement. These suppositions were clarified by means of qualitative analysis on the data concerned.

On the face of it, the charting for those in their eighties was puzzling and not what might have been expected. Given the retirement status of the vast majority, if not all, of those in this demographic, together with the greater likelihood that they would be living alone—especially in light of the findings in section 7.3.1.3, above—it was anticipated that, on average, the H-reading here would be lower, and the S-reading higher. However, with only three participants (two female and one male) aged in this grouping—and thus not benefitting greatly from the refining effect of averaging-out the triad—\(^{28}\) it was plain that this finding would be understood only by qualitative means.\(^{29}\) Had the finding been as anticipated, of course, the charting would have been highly distinctive. But even setting aside the result for those in their eighties, this remained a charting of

\(^{28}\) In any small sample, it would be comparatively easy for any participant who was atypical, or who had been adversely affected on the day of the interview, to become a statistical outlier and so skew the overall result.

\(^{29}\) In this case, the two female participants of the grouping both were found to have exceptionally high H-readings (59% and 60%, respectively). Qualitative analysis showed that both—though living alone—led particularly active and busy lives in both church and community, and were regularly and extensively involved in the lives of their children and grandchildren. It cannot be known without further research how typical or atypical these particular participants are of all female members of their age-group. But there is the possibility that (as might have been the case with any or all of the participants) the distinctive attributes of these particular participants were what led them to volunteer for the study in the first place.
interest that could not rule-out age as a suitable demographic-measure by which to group or order the study-participants.

An additional measure in examining the effect of age was to chart the same information as a life-span progression—see Figure 7.4.2b, below.

This line graph highlights the dominance of the Humanity-related Self across almost all participants no matter what their age (in line with the relational triad averaged across all participants, as shown in Figure 7.3.1, above). A salient pattern is evident in which, apart from two crossover points for those aged in their forties and seventies, the H-reading emerges as the highest relational focus; followed by the D-reading. The S-reading is lowest across-the-board.
7.4.3 The Relational-Triad According to the Community-of-Origin of Participants

Community-of-origin (in other words, the parish community to which each participant belonged at the time of the study, and through which he or she was recruited for the study30) was another demographic of interest. How influential had it been in shaping of the spirituality of the individual? Chapter Six notes that the six communities-of-origin were diverse from a socio-economic perspective (furthermore, the researcher became aware of significant differences in leadership styles), so it might be expected that the average relational triad would differ, at least to some extent, between the communities (a hypothesis that will be explored in greater detail in section 7.7.2, below). In addition, depending of the extent of any such influence, similarities might be expected in the relational triad of individuals within the same community. This was indeed the case for those within certain communities-of-origin. It was notable, for example, within the largest grouping (Community 6), in which the S-reading of all but one of the eighteen participants emerged lowest on the triad; and the H- and D-readings of more than half were significantly close.

Notwithstanding, salient differences were evident across individuals in other communities-of-origin, suggesting that this demographic alone was not sufficiently robust as a measure by which to differentiate the participants.31

7.5 Grouping the Participants

The testing that had been done to this point was invaluable in providing a range of information about the participants, both collectively and individually. And some tests—such as those charted in Figures 7.3.1.4a, 7.3.1.4b, and 7.4.2a—were striking in terms of the differences they highlighted. Ultimately, however, no one measure provided the definitive answer as to the basis on which to order participants—that is, until it was recognized by the researcher that some participants were so profoundly different from others in terms of their faith that it was impossible to order the participants as one group. At that point—and before utilizing the relational triad—the participants

30 This definition applies to all communities-of-origin with the exception of Community 1. As noted elsewhere, Community 1 is a ‘community’ in name only. With one exception, its participants were not known to one another, having been selected from different parishes by the researcher. Thus, effectively, it serves as a control-group for the study.

31 A further investigation on community-of-origin appears later in this chapter.
Chapter Seven: Findings

were grouped according to the researcher’s knowledge of the faith of each individual. This endeavour utilized not only the interview material, but also a range of observations made during the interview; the researcher’s instinct, plus all understandings gained from the analytical process to that point.

Six groups of participants—of differing sizes—emerged from the exercise. When the average relational triads for these groups were plotted, a distinct pattern was evident across and between them, as can be seen in Figure 7.5, below.

![The Relational Triad Averaged Across Emergent Participant Groups](image)

Figure 7.5: The relational triad as averaged across emergent participant groups

When the H- and D-readings, in particular, in the figure are examined, it can be seen that, with the exception of the triad on the far right—representing two participants only—as the H-reading rises steadily across the groups (from left to right), so the D-reading gradually falls. This clear pattern suggests that there may indeed be a sound basis for these groupings, and one which primarily concerns the interaction between the Divine- and Humanity-related Selves.

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32 These observations included aspects of body language; evident level of reflectiveness; degree of comfort in the situation; frequency of eye contact; speed of talking; tone and pitch of voice; ease of articulation, etc.

33 For this charting, see Figure 7.7.1, below.

34 Notwithstanding, this triad, together with the others, will be examined in more depth later in this chapter.
The next step in the process was to determine precisely on what basis the groupings has been established. To this end, a qualitative approach was taken, with an examination of both *The Relational-Self Model* and, where necessary, the originating data for every participant within and across the six groups. This revealed that the principal distinction between the groups was a profound difference in the type of faith manifest by members, most notably in terms of relationship with the D/divine, belief-system, and inward and outward expressions of faith. And the type of faith to which each participant adhered necessarily shaped all three components intrinsic to his or her relational self.

### 7.6 Naming the Emergent Spiritual Types

What had emerged here, then, was a spiritual typology. Before further investigation could be undertaken on the emergent spiritual types, however, the types needed to be assigned labels to enable them to be identified with ease and differentiated from one another. This task was given due consideration in that it was hoped to devise a taxonomy using verbal nouns that not only would hold meaning in and of themselves, but that, taken together, would convey something of the non-hierarchical nature of the typology. Once again, qualitatively-derived information was used in the process. Ultimately, verbal nouns using the same leading letter were selected as the most fitting nomenclatures. The six spiritual types were labelled as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Spiritually <strong>Surrendered</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spiritually <strong>Spirited</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spiritually <strong>Serene</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spiritually <strong>Sustained</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spiritually <strong>Settled</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spiritually <strong>Sceptical</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

35 Please note that an in-depth exposition of each of the types will be given later in the chapter (see section 7.11).
Figure 7.6.1, below, links these named types with their respective relational triads.

![The Relational Triad According to Spiritual Type](image)

**Figure 7.6.1: The relational triad averaged according to spiritual type**

### 7.7 Demographic Attributes of Participants of each Spiritual Type

The next step was to examine the attributes of participants within each of the emergent spiritual types according to several demographics. The potential significance of these demographic-variables to the current research was not underestimated. However, the complexity of interaction within and between them—compounded by an uneven spread of participants by gender, age, communities-of-origin, *et al*—made the likely impact of each hard to gauge. In-depth analysis into this interaction undoubtedly would have thrown light on the situation, but, as this was outside the scope of the study, it must be deferred for future research. It is hoped nonetheless that the following overview will provide an indication of the possible effect of some of the demographics, and so highlight areas in which future research might be most profitable.
7.7.1 Percentage of Participants within each Spiritual Type

Not surprisingly, perhaps—not least, given the wide and uneven spread of participants by age and community-of-origin, among other factors—there was an irregular distribution in numbers of participants across the typology. This is shown in Figure 7.7.1, below.

![Figure 7.7.1: Percentage of participants found in each spiritual type](image)

The Spiritually Sustained clearly were the largest grouping, comprising almost one-third of the study-participants. Thereafter, The Spiritually Settled emerged as the second largest group. The Spiritually Sceptical and The Spiritually Surrendered were the two smallest groups of the typology, with only two and three participants respectively.\(^{36}\)

\(^{36}\) Possible reasons for this uneven spread across the types will be discussed later in this chapter when the nature and attributes of the types are investigated in depth.
7.7.2 Examination of Types According to the Community-of-Origin of Participants

As noted above, a contributory factor in the uneven distribution of numbers across the types might have been the equally irregular spread of participants according to their community of origin—a hypothesis that would be strengthened at least to some extent were community-of-origin to be found in any way influential in encouraging, shaping, or determining spiritual type. It can be seen from the average relational triad charted for each of the six communities-of-origin (Figure 7.7.2a, below) that there are remarkable similarities between some of the triads, but salient differences between others. The triads for Communities 2, 3 and 4, for example, are strikingly alike—at least relatively—while those for Communities 1, 5, and 6 emerge as unique configurations. From this, the possibility arises that some uniformity of spiritual type might be found among participants drawn from the former three communities, but not among those of the latter three.

![The Relational Triad According to Participant Community-of-Origin](image_url)

*Figure 7.7.2a: The relational triad charted according to the community-of-origin of participants*

These ideas are examined in greater depth in Figures 7.7.2b and 7.7.2c, below.

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37 As noted in Chapter Six, participant numbers ranged from two people from one community to eighteen from another.
This charting shows that four spiritual types only are to be found among Communities 2, 3 and 4, and that The Serene and The Settled types are common to all three. Thus, there may indeed be similarities within these three communities. However, as two types also are common to the more distinctive Communities 5 and 6, it is plain that these chartings alone provide insufficient evidence to draw firm conclusions.

Examining the communities individually, then, Community 1 can be seen to be the most diverse grouping in terms of spiritual type. This is not unexpected in that—unlike all other five communities—its constituent members do not originate from one parish community, but from several. The absence of The Spiritually Surrendered from this group potentially is relevant, in that it appears to endorse the earlier suggestion that this is a type that either is of limited spread or is idiosyncratic to certain parish communities or individuals. However, the small sample size, among other things, means that this too is not a conclusion that can be drawn categorically.

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38 As noted elsewhere, this is a grouping in name only, its participants having been selected by the researcher for the qualities that it was thought likely that they would bring to the study. Thus, effectively this group serves as a control-group for the study.
With a charting based on two participant-members only, little of note can be said of the finding for Community 5, other than that it highlights a possible compatibility of style between The Surrendered and The Sustained. Further, the dominance of The Serene among members of the considerably smaller Community 4 may not be remarkable in that it is believed to be due in large measure to the (well-intentioned) approach thought to have been made by the relevant parish priest to these specific individuals for the qualities that they might bring to the study. However, where the two largest groupings—Community 2 and Community 6—are concerned, the relative dominance of The Spiritually Settled among participants from Community 2, and The Sustained and The Spirited from Community 6, is believed to be highly significant. Both findings point toward the relevance of a parish community in determining or nurturing particular spiritual types. And the latter finding further suggests a compatibility between The Sustained and The Spirited as types, and the possibility that these are types between which there might be movement or migration.

Figure 7.7.2c, below, shows the picture from the perspective of the spiritual types, and the communities-of-origin represented within each.

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39 Specifically, Community 4 comprised four participants—three of whom (75%) were among The Spiritually Serene.

40 This action would not have jeopardized the authenticity of the study, but may have narrowed the field in terms of spread of participants.

41 Community 2 comprised eleven participants, seven of whom (64%) were among The Spiritually Settled.
Community 6 comprised eighteen participants, eight of whom (44%) were among The Spiritually Sustained, and seven of whom (39%) were among The Spiritually Spirited.

42 It is suggested that this may be an area that warrants further research in future.
Here it can be seen that two spiritual types, The Surrendered and The Sceptical, have drawn participants from two communities-of-origin only. Though both types comprised the smallest number of participants—three and two, respectively—this does not rule out the possibility that these two types might be of limited spread, and/or are idiosyncratic to particular communities or individuals. And the same might be said of The Spirited—drawn from three communities—whose numbers can be seen to be overwhelmingly dominated by participants from Community 6. The Serene, Sustained, and Settled, on the other hand, all are represented by participants from a majority of the communities. Clearly, the latter two of these types each comprise a majority of participants from a particular community—6 and 2, respectively—which might link these types too to specific communities. However, the fact that these two communities were the largest in the study raises the alternative possibility that these three spiritual types are more common types, and ones that are not necessarily born of or unduly influenced by a particular worshipping community (though they may still be nurtured and encouraged by them).

43 See Figure 7.7.1, above for comparison.
Overall, community-of-origin appears to be a demographic of interest and potential influence in determining the spiritual type of community members. There is no doubt that further research is this area is called for.

7.7.3 Breakdown of Types by Gender

Figure 7.7.3, below, highlights differences in type according to the gender of participants. Male and female participants have been charted proportionately to allow direct comparisons to be made. When viewing the chart, it should be borne in mind that the average age of male participants (58.5 years) was almost ten years older than that of female participants (49 years)—a factor which may or may not have been influential.

![Breakdown of Spiritual Type by Gender](image)

*Figure 7.7.3: Breakdown of spiritual types according to the gender of participants*

It can be seen that female participants (pink columns) could be found in every typological group, and most notably among The Spiritually Sustained and The Spiritually Spirited. In-line with their male peers, they were least well represented among The Spiritually Sceptical and The Spiritually Surrendered. Male participants (blue columns) were represented in equal and greatest number among The Spiritually Sustained and The Spiritually Settled. In this study at least, they were not
present among The Spiritually Sceptical, and were proportionately most under-represented among The Spiritually Spirited. The latter is the most notable feature of this charting, and, though other factors may have influenced the outcome,\textsuperscript{44} there is certainly a suggestion that The Spiritually Spirited may be a type that is predominantly female.

\subsection*{7.7.4 Breakdown of Types by Age}

Charting the average age of participants according to their spiritual type (Figure 7.7.4a, below) suggests that age may be a demographic of significance to this study. Certainly, an average age of 70.3-years for The Spiritually Serene is noteworthy. Further—and small type-numbers notwithstanding—the average ages of twenty-six-years and thirty-three-years among The Spiritually Sceptical and The Spiritually Surrendered, respectively, are salient. Age, therefore, may be a pointer to classification to at least some of the emergent spiritual types.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart7_7_4a.png}
\caption{The average age of participants within each spiritual type}
\end{figure}

When these same findings are rearranged in ascending order of age (see Figure 7.7.4b, below) a highly distinctive pattern emerges.

\textsuperscript{44} The older average age of male participants within the study, for example.
The incremental age-rise between types seen here is both distinctive and important. It suggests\textsuperscript{45} that this typology might provide a solid and suitable foundation on which to build a developmental model of spirituality by maturation.

### 7.8 Redirecting the Research

This point in the research proved to be pivotal in that the potential implications of the age-related finding required a decision to be made on the direction of the research. Plainly, although the building of a developmental model of spirituality was the initial vision and focus of the project overall, in-keeping with the grounded-theory methodology being used in the study, the data had given rise first to a typological model. But would this be the juncture at which it would now be appropriate to realign and move forward with the stated aim of the research? In fact, it would not. Practical issues of scope and timing were central to this decision, but, more fundamentally, it was recognized that no developmental model of worth could be built unless the typology on which it would have its foundation were first examined in depth and detail. And it would not be possible to

\textsuperscript{45} But, of course, it does not prove it.
complete these endeavours—both of which were major—adequately within the time-frame and limitations of the current project.

For these reasons, the research was refocused, now dedicated to undertaking a thorough investigation of the emergent *Typology of Relational Spirituality*. It was hoped that the insights and understandings gained from this exercise would provide a solid underpinning for a model of spiritual development to be constructed at a later date.

### 7.9 Links between the Types of the Typology

With this new focus, the first undertaking was to examine the typology in overview. Even ahead of the benefit of in-depth qualitative analysis, it was evident from comparative chartings of the relational triads of the types, that not all six were mutually exclusive. Revisiting this charting in Figure 7.9a, below, it is clear that, among things:

- The Surrendered and The Spirited are the only two types of the typology for which the D-reading emerges higher than either the H- or S-readings. Both also manifest the two highest D-readings and lowest S-readings across-the-board.

- A high degree of similarity is evident in all three sections of the relational triad for The Serene and The Sustained.

- The Settled and The Sceptical are the only types for which the S-reading is higher than the D-reading. In addition, their D-readings are lower, and their S-readings higher than that of any other types in the typology.
These similarities in the type-triads suggested that there might be solid links between pairs of types—a supposition that later was confirmed by qualitative means. Of the six types, three broad outlooks emerged—each of which manifested a unique relational focus. And, within each typological pair, one type was found to be more intense in nature than the other. The similarities and differences across and between the types are highlighted with the use of colour in the following two charts (Figures 7.9b, and 7.9c)—the darker colour of each pairing indicating a higher degree of intensity. The first chart replicates exactly the source-figures of Figure 7.9a, above; and the second rounds them to the nearest five-per cent.

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\[46\] See section 7.11 of this chapter.
**Figure 7.9b:** The relational triad by spiritual type, highlighting linked types

**Figure 7.9c:** The relational triad by spiritual type, highlighting linked types (rounded to nearest 5%)
The charting-figures in Figure 7.9c, above, have been rounded to the nearest five per cent in order to minimise the impact of any statistical vagary that may have arisen from the use of live data. Plainly, the patterns that have emerged are highly distinctive, and it will be seen from ensuing sections—which seek to explore each of the types in greater detail, using predominantly-qualitative means—that these emergent patterns have, in fact, become more accurate in their representation of the relational-self focus of each of the spiritual types in question.

7.10 Overlapping Categories and the Relational Heptagon

Before moving on to expound the particular features and characteristics of each of the six emergent spiritual types, a brief interlude must be taken in order to cover the potentially significant question of the overlapping categories that exist between the three selves (S, H & D) on the relational triad. As was noted in section 7.2, above, every word of data initially was classified not simply into these three primary categories but, rather, into seven—a configuration which, for clarity of understanding, will be named the relational heptagon. The additional four categories (SH, HD, DS, and SHD) that make up the heptagon were dual or multiple categories that took into account words and sentiments expressed by the participants that belonged equally to two or more of the three primary categories. For example, the sentence, “I see Jesus reflected in my friend”, belongs as fittingly to the Humanity-related Self (H), as it does to the Divine-related Self (D). And, similarly, the sentiment, “I want everything that I do and say to reflect my faith”, plainly belongs to all three relational categories (S, H, & D).

It was notable that some participants were more prone than others to expressing themselves in words that overlapped categories. This is clear in Figure 7.10a, below, which shows the percentage of overall data that was classified into two or more categories for each participant. Here, participants have been placed in ascending order according to the degree of overlap.
The above shows that overlapping data ranged dramatically—from a mere 3% of an interview-text to a high 86%. For purposes of comparison, it is noted that the average percentage-overlap across all participants was 33%, and the median 31%.
Figure 7.10b: Average-percentage of data overlapping into dual/multiple categories according to the community-of-origin of participants

Figure 7.10b, above, incorporates the same information as Figure 7.10a, but averaged according to the community-of-origin of the participants. It is evident from this charting that the only community-of-origin grouping with an above-average figure was Community 6, with a 51% return. Community 3 returned the lowest with 13%. Both are salient findings. A closer look—albeit in overview—at the distinctive Community 6-grouping (the largest of all the communities-of-origin within this study) reveals that the vast majority of the overlap is in the HD area. This raises a number of possibilities, not least that this is a parish community that is close and cohesive. On the face of it, were it not for the fact that Community 3 was a significantly smaller participant-grouping (and therefore not necessarily representative of the community-of-origin per se), a polar indication might have applied to Community 3.

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47 For perspective in viewing this figure, when participants from the outlying Community 6 are removed from the equation, the average overlap across participants from the remaining five communities-of-origin is 22%, and the median is 20%.

48 Extensive and time-consuming statistical analyses, outside the scope of the current research, would have been required in order to chart the relational heptagon for each participant.

49 These are hypotheses only, requiring further research. Additional factors may have affected these outcomes.
Further understandings can be gleaned when the information is charted from the perspective of the six spiritual types—see Figure 7.10c, above. Here, Type S2: The Spirited can be seen as the type most prone to overlapping text (51% on average\(^5\)); while Type S1: The Surrendered, and Type S4: The Sustained, have an equal return of 39%.

Precisely where the overlaps lie within the relational heptagon seems likely to be significant. Where individuals are concerned, a high-percentage overlap in the HD area (only), for example, might signify a member of a close-knit church community, and/or a divine-focused person with an extroverted personality.\(^5\)\(^1\) A high level of overlap in the DS area alone might indicate a spiritual seeker who does not belong to a religious community, and/or with an introverted personality. A high degree of overlap in the SH area might imply someone whose life is, in some way, integrally bound to that of others. And a high-percentage overlap in all three areas

\(^5\)\(^0\) It is noted that this average-figure for The Spiritually Spirited is identical to that found among participants of Community 6. This is coincidental, although, plainly--as can be seen in section 7.7.2 of this chapter—a significant number of participants are common to both groupings.

\(^5\)\(^1\) Indeed, all three of these characteristics were evident in the case of the participant who emerged with the highest overlap in the study (86%).
(SHD) might convey significant personal integration. Conversely, anyone found to have little in the way of overlap in any or all area/s of the relational heptagon might be a newcomer to a religious community; someone who is in a disjointed or dysfunctional religious community, and/or is a member of a far-flung or dysfunctional family-unit. Additional possibilities are that he or she may have been brought-up to be highly independent, and/or is living within an individualistic culture. And, in a similar way, any such overlap or lack of overlap, evident across and between groups of people would have their own story to tell about each grouping; the relationships between group members, and the relationship between the groups.

It is acknowledged that this is an area of potential significance in the quest to understand more about the relational nature of spirituality, and, in turn, the six types of the emergent typology. Notwithstanding, it is an area that requires much additional research, and, for that reason, has come outside the scope of the current research-project. Thus, unfortunately, it can be touched-on only briefly within the following exploration of the typology.

### 7.11 Exploring the Six Types of the Typology

This section will explore what is known about each of the six types of the emergent Typology of Relational Spirituality. The small sample-size of the current study dictates that, ahead of further research, these explorations should be read as a conceptual overview rather than as a fully comprehensive and immoveable breakdown of each type. In other words, they represent potential pointers to a type rather than hard-and-fast conclusions about a type. In each case, the first sub-section of the exploration will present statistical findings according to selected demographics, coupled with a note of any implications that are suggested by these statistics. Where necessary, these notes will address in brief the perceived likely effect (whether marginal, limited, or high) on a typing of principal demographics such as gender, age, and community-of-origin (the complex interplay of their relationship within this study notwithstanding). The second sub-section will present a pen-picture of typical attributes relating to spiritual formation and expression. It should

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52 Please note that these examples are speculative, and not comprehensive. All require further research.
be noted here that, because of the sometimes strikingly-diverse level of focus on each area of self shown across and between types, this exploration will not—indeed, can not—be presented uniformly.\textsuperscript{53} Further, the quotations used have been abridged where necessary; and minor changes made, as needed, to protect the anonymity of participants.\textsuperscript{54} Thirdly, a presentational model—utilizing the template of \textit{The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality}—will be introduced for each type. The colour of the model will reflect the apparent links of the type under review to other types—as mooted above. Finally, a comparison chart will highlight the various and differing attributes of each type.

For ease of reading and clarity of understanding within this section, a shortened form of each of the type-names has been developed and will be used intermittently hereafter. These abridgements (highlighted in bold print), and the types to which they relate, are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPIRITUAL TYPE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1: The Spiritually Surrendered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2: The Spiritually Spirited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3: The Spiritually Serene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4: The Spiritually Sustained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5: The Spiritually Settled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6: The Spiritually Sceptical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{53} For example, the emphasis of The Spiritually Surrendered on the Divine-related Self means that the Divine-related Self cannot be anything other than the dominant focus in any pen-picture of this type. Conversely, the low degree of focus on the Divine-related Self shown by both The Spiritually Settled and The Spiritually Sceptical also will be reflected in this way.

\textsuperscript{54} Notwithstanding, in cases where any such minor change was necessary, every effort was made not only to keep the quotation in context, but to retain what was believed to be its true sense and meaning.
### Type S1: The Spiritually Surrendered

#### Statistical Findings and Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE S1</th>
<th>Finding</th>
<th>Comments/Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>34 years</td>
<td>Second-youngest of the six types. Age may be of significant (and, with further research, would be in any developmental model of spirituality by maturation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age-range of participants</td>
<td>25-45 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Second-smallest grouping (5/6). May suggest limited spread of type (at least within the source-population)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of participants as percentage of all study-participants</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Comment as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>2F, 1M</td>
<td>Proportionally even F:M. Thus, gender may not be significant for this type—but inconclusive due to small sample-size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities-of-origin</td>
<td>From two: C5 (1); C6 (2)</td>
<td>C-of-O possibly significant—but inconclusive due to small sample-size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational-triad breakdown (rounded to nearest 5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Significantly low—a marker of the S1 type. Lowest S-reading of all six types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Highly dominant—the most significant pointer to the S1 type. Highest D-reading of all six types</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### The Relational Triad of Type S1

![Bar chart showing the relational triad of Type S1](image)

#### Overlap of selves (%)

| Overlap of selves (%) | 39%           | Marginally above-average percentage. HD-overlap predominant                           |

**NOTE:** The particularly small sample-size of study-participants within this type presages that the contents of the following exploration should be approached cautiously.
7.11.1.2 Pen-picture of Type S1: The Spiritually Surrendered

The most striking aspect about someone of Type S1 spirituality is that his/her life openly and wholeheartedly focuses on God and his/her relationship with God. The Divine-related Self is highly dominant, while the Solitary Self is significantly low—apparently subsumed in the former. This is a supreme example of intrinsic religious belief, in that, for S1’s, God is present in every part of their lives—the ‘all and everything’. And S1’s have a deep and utter belief in the one true faith that is Christianity. Their relationship with God (and/or Jesus, and/or The Holy Spirit) is paramount, and God is present in every decision made in the person’s life. Thus, God is the leader, and S1 the willing follower. This is a hierarchical relationship, with God at the top (a loving but disciplinary parental figure) and the S1—and, indeed, all else—below. Obedience and submission are appropriate ways for the S1 to respond to God, though God is loving, forgiving, comforting, guiding, gracious, and wholly trustworthy. As one participant reflected:

I guess God’s plan is to keep shaping us, and everything that he brings our way is used to do that. The more I grow as a Christian… the more I realize that it’s him and it’s not me. He is the one who is sustaining and keeping control. Oh, it’s all him. And the less of me the better really!

God is Father, and thus male (the traditional, Scriptural view), and images of God also may be traditional. Jesus is the model for living, and Christ is the Saviour, through whom S1’s are forgiven and saved. S1’s are deeply grateful to God and Christ for all they have done:

You can feel it deep in your heart that here is the true and living God… he’s walked among us in flesh. And although he had all authority and he had no need to… he takes on himself the punishment that we deserve. It’s just astonishing… just amazing. I feel deep thankfulness.

Deferring to biblical authority—the Bible being the primary way in which God speaks to the S1—and looking constantly to Scripture for God’s truth (the only truth), and for answers and models/examples to support their faith, S1’s are able and skilled at quoting and referencing biblical passages. Interpretation may be literal, with little in the way of subjective interpretation undertaken. There is no doubt that the Bible serves as a meta-narrative in the life of most S1’s,
held as *the* authority; which, in turn, brings comforting certainties and guidance on how to live life, to the S1.\(^{55}\)

Invariably, S1’s have had a conversion experience, though some may have been brought-up, at least nominally, as Christians (and, with hindsight, have come to realize that their pre-conversion lives were not Christian lives). Established S1’s are likely to be in relationship with both the Father and the Son. Newer S1’s are likely to be uni-centric, most likely in relationship with the Father. However, they may be actively working on establishing a relationship with the Son.

S1’s are loving and caring of others, but this behaviour is justified by them as being what God wants—in that God is first in all things. However, much introspection is evident in terms of the primary endeavours of the S1: developing his or her own relationship with, and correct response to, God, as suggested here, in different ways, by two participants:

Over the past year, my theme has been drawing closer to God, and everything that I’ve been doing has been towards that.

These days, God says to me, ‘you’ve got to trust me’. And then I say, ‘are you sufficient, God?’ And then he gets through, and I realize that of course, of course he is sufficient.

Fellow S1’s, and a community supportive of S1’s (a community also likely to incorporate S2’s and perhaps S4’s) are important and highly influential in the life of the younger or newly-converted S1, who will seek suitable mentors from their church community and be eager to learn from them. Without God, S1’s view human endeavour as meaningless, and searching for understanding as pointless—a mere “groping in the dark”, as one participant put it. S1’s love to share their faith, but, though they are not as evangelical as S2’s, they may well have non-Christian friends, and are likely to have a strong sense of the ‘rightness’ of seeking to convert them. They most certainly will pray for these friends and for their conversion.

\(^{55}\) See discussion on the place and purpose of meta-narratives, plus objective/subjective interpretation, in Chapter Three, section 3.5.4.
S1’s tend to be deeply contented and fulfilled because God provides their purpose for living, and they are able to live within comforting boundaries and with reassuring certainties—for which reason, this is likely to be the point of entry to Christianity for many. They have accepted and surrendered to the truth, and can rest and be at peace in that situation. Further, God is ever-present, so they are never alone. Their faith is their way of life. All things are seen in light of God’s purpose. For example, God is in suffering, so suffering is accepted as a means by which to grow:

I’m not afraid of suffering, and I’m not afraid of difficult times... You know, Romans 8:28, ‘God works for good in every situation for those who love him’. More and more as I live [I can see that] suffering is the context in which we grow, and that’s where the promises of God are planted in your heart.

S1’s explore their faith openly, but they won’t cross certain boundaries and thus the exploration will be non-critical. But they have no need to be critical because they know that they have found the one true way. Highly motivated to please God, and aware that disobedience brings consequences, S1’s see it as vital to make time to listen to God to get it right—this is a non-negotiable part of life. And worship, Scripture, prayer, meditation, and taking ‘time out with God’ are other common and important spiritual practices. Such is the strength and depth of their focus on God, and their commitment to the relationship, that they may present as serious-minded.

Doctrinal language is used frequently by S1’s. And ‘spirituality’ is not a word with which they are particularly comfortable—‘faith’ is their preferred alternative. Words and expressions typical of The Spiritually Surrendered are obeying, surrendering, revealed (or Scriptural) truth.

The S1 spiritual type is all-consuming of the individual and (in the absence of further research) appears likely to be an ‘all or nothing’ type. Thus, if migration were to occur, it seems most likely to be to S6: The Spiritually Sceptical; moving thereafter along the continuum to a non-Christian type.

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56 For example, “living sacrifice”, “cup of suffering”, “Jesus in anguish”, “the new nature”, “the celestial city in heaven”, “the beating of my breast”, “searing my mind with God's truth”, etc.
7.11.1.3 The Relational Self Model of Type S1: The Spiritually Surrendered

Relational-Self Model for Type S1: The Spiritually Surrendered

Divine-Related Self

10%
- I am made in the image of Jesus
- God is in every part of life. He is my all and everything
- I see purpose in everything, including suffering
- 'Spirituality' means my faith
- My relationship with God (and/or Christ and/or The Holy Spirit) is the most important thing in my life
- I trust God completely. My happiness comes from my dependence on him
- I focus on God's truth and the Word
- I know that I am totally and utterly forgiven by God
- I am deeply thankful to God and Christ for what they have done for me
- God sustains me in difficult times
- I can forgive through Jesus

Humanity-Related Self

30%
- My family and friends are part of God's Creation, so they matter to me
- I believe that, without God, human endeavour is meaningless
- I will turn to wise people in my life whom I know will help me know God better

Solitary Self

60%
- Material possessions matter little to me
- I know that I am totally and utterly forgiven by God
- I am deeply thankful to God and Christ for what they have done for me
- I can forgive through Jesus

NOTE: Figures rounded to nearest 5%
### Type S2: The Spiritually Spirited

#### 7.11.2.1 Statistical Findings and Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE S2</th>
<th>Finding</th>
<th>Comments/Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>42 years</td>
<td>Fourth-oldest of the types (4/6) Relatively young average-age potentially of significance (and in any developmental model of spirituality by maturation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age-range of participants</td>
<td>26-56 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Third-largest (3/6) grouping (affected by C-of-O)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of participants as percentage of all study-participants</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>8F, 1M</td>
<td>Gender appears to be highly significant to type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities-of-origin</td>
<td>From three: C1 (1), C3 (1), C6 (7)</td>
<td>C-of-O apparently significant to type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational-triad breakdown (rounded to nearest 5%)</td>
<td>S 20% H 40% D 40%</td>
<td>Equal H &amp; D-readings—a marker of the S2-type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Relational Triad of Type S2</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="The Relational Triad of Type S2" /></td>
<td>Well above average. Highest degree of overlap of the types, and predominantly HD—potentially highly significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlap of selves (%)</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a significant link (manifest in the form of overlapping text) between the Divine- and Humanity-related selves for the majority within this type, suggesting the immense importance of community, and an integral link between faith and community.\(^{57}\) The S2-type is similar to the S1— and is a further example of intrinsic religious belief—but it differs from S1 in that it is more active in mode, and has a considerably higher degree of community-drive and focus. S2’s are intimately and actively involved within their church communities—which, without fail, will be strong, supportive, and loving; with dynamic leaders who actively encourage the sharing of gifts, responsibilities, and lives. Christians, for the S2, are not lone travellers: others are seen as vital and significant fellow travellers in and on the journey—a journey which not only can, but must be shared in community. The Spiritually Spirited see God reflected in these others—whom they will know well and trust wholeheartedly—and they are more than happy to be accountable to them, as these S2’s explain:

The love of God is expressed through this extended family that I’ve got…they are helping me while I’m helping them.

We have intentional relationships where we are committed to go deeper with one another, and deeper with God, and being accountable and that. To ask each other challenging questions.

We want to share life and ‘travel’ together. And it makes me feel as happy as anything because that’s the stuff of real life: people caring about each other and learning together.

Predominantly extrovert, S2’s will open themselves completely to these others, ‘warts and all’, and feel happy and fulfilled within this safe, welcoming, understanding, and encouraging environment—an environment which meets most of their higher-level human needs, including the need for purpose.

The Great Commission of Jesus to his disciples\(^{58}\) holds the key to the life and mission of S2’s, who are likely to be active in the world, seeking to do their part in spreading the Kingdom of God. They perceive everyone as precious to God, and seek to open as many people to God as

\(^{57}\) See discussion in section 7.10 of this chapter.

\(^{58}\) “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” \textit{Matthew 28: 19-20}. 
they can. The most evangelically-oriented of the six types, they will go out to where people are. And, as far this particular mission is concerned, they will be looking for the ‘open’ unchurched rather than the ‘closed’ unchurched (whom they know will not be open to listening). So they will not be found standing on a soapbox, ‘talking the talk’, but will place themselves where they believe that they are needed, and will actually ‘walk the walk’ with others—within the environment of the other, as noted by the following S2 participants:

You need to go out and do things with people. Actually attract their attention, and then perhaps some of them will ask, “What’s this about, why are you like you are?”...It really needs to be about going out and spreading the Kingdom. Not about what little nest I can build for myself cocooned against the world. But how I can go out and make an impression for God in the world—that’s what you need to do.

I think Jesus has the best plan for everyone, so I am always on the look-out for people who want to have a conversation about God. In a nice way, you know. If people are open, then I’m very open to talking to them about it.

S2’s endeavour to make their way-of-life reflect their beliefs. This has the benefit of giving them a sense of authenticity. But they understand that each person has unique gifts and individuality, and believe that they are called to use those gifts fully. In keeping with S1’s, they are able and willing to talk of their faith and to share the story of their journey into it. In fact, they love doing it because they are excited to be where they are spiritually. They live and breathe their faith, which is, without question, the most important aspect of their life. S2’s tend to be more inclusive and understanding of others than S1’s, and this may be linked to their being more flexible in terms of exploring their faith and spiritual expression. Learning and growing is important to them, and they will seek wisdom not only from the Bible, and from teachers and mentors, but also from wider Christian literature, to which they are open (though discerning). They remain strong in their faith in part because they surround themselves with like-minded people, who continually remind them of what God has done and is doing in their lives: a perpetual reminder that keeps their faith strong and alive. And, in turn, they see it as their loving duty to disciple others.

Within their personal lives, S2’s are likely to believe that God has a plan for them, and they try to be open to that because God’s plans always will be so much better than their own, and God
is behind all good things that happen. This is evident in the following comments from two S2 participants:

I try to rest back into who God created me to be. And to accept that. And not try to be either what I think or what other people give the impression they think I should be….God is the creator; he's the one who made us, and I just need to rest in that and let him do more of the driving, with me looking out of the window and going, "Oh, that was great!"

What I say and what I do should be coming from God and not from me. I find that huge relief… I can see that some people might see it as strange—you're denying yourself of doing it—but I find it hugely relieving and empowering to think that it’s not something we need to worry about. I don’t have to worry about living a fulfilling life because whatever he does is what needs to be done. So for me it’s a massive burden off my shoulders, and exciting at the same time.

Thus, S2’s are more likely to let things happen (regarding personal choices) than make them happen. They are open to God’s prompting, and submit to what they see as God's will. That way, all will be right. In this way, they lose their fear of making mistakes in that if they make a mistake it is because they have not listened properly. But then they know that they are forgiven! God—who, for most S2’s, is perceived as a male figure—is at and in the centre of day-to-day life, and may be talked to openly and freely, in conversational language. God is seen as ‘ultimate friend’ and ‘teacher’, and may also be seen by some (but not all) S2’s as ‘lover’ and ‘bridegroom’.

Some S2’s may be long-term Christians, but all will have had a conversion experience, which they remember with absolute clarity. Like S1’s, even if they were born and brought-up in the Church, they will not now consider themselves as having been anything other than a cultural Christian prior to their conversion experience.

Scriptural truth is important to S2’s, but they are more likely than S1’s to interpret biblical texts in the context of their time, realigning them to the present. Notwithstanding, the Bible is read as a meta-narrative by many. S2’s know that there is always more to be known about God, and that they can never know it all. A sense of new freedom comes to them with every discovery they make about God, but the element of mystery that surrounds God still is important to them—they do not need or want to know it all (notwithstanding, they know that they never can):

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59 Alpha courses appear to be a significant point-of-entry to Christianity for the S2 type.
60 See Chapter Three, Section 3.5.4, for discussion.
Chapter Seven: Findings

Looking back…I’ve learned so much more about God, so much more about his face on earth…I’m much more aware of my weakness but his incredible faithfulness and love and generosity. And his sovereignty. It’s almost like God is getting bigger and bigger all the time for me. He is not my pocket God. He’s not my handbag. He is just incredible, bigger than I can imagine.

As noted above, S2’s are more likely to be extroverted than introverted personalities (though it cannot be ruled-out that extrovert S2’s came forward in greater numbers for interview). They are joyful, happy, elated, passionate, and excited by life. They have tremendous hope, and a strong sense both of belonging and of being loved and accepted unconditionally. They are in a safe, secure place. As one S2 reflected:

I mean there just aren’t words for it. I’m filled-up completely…it’s being loved unconditionally, fundamentally. Just completely and utterly, profoundly, being loved. No matter what you’ve done, what you’ve said…

And as another enthused: “I feel like doing a back-flip, I’m so happy.” Whether or not this degree of enthusiasm can be sustained over time is a question that remains. If migration across types were to occur, a move to Type S6: The Spiritually Sceptical cannot be ruled out, but it would seem most likely to be to Type S4: The Spiritually Sustained, or (later) to Type S3: The Spiritually Serene.

To conclude, S2 spirituality is firmly faith-based, and must be community based. Common spiritual practices include worship, the reading of Scripture, wider Christian reading, prayer (with others where possible), group bible study, listening to ‘praise and worship’ songs, seeking discipling, and discipling.
7.11.2.3 The Relational Self Model of Type S2: The Spiritually Spirited

Relational-Self Model for Type S2: The Spiritually Spirited

- Divine-Related Self
  - God is the most important thing in my life. I love to learn about God, and I feel that I am growing continually in my faith.
  - I know that God is behind the good things that happen.
  - I believe that God has a plan for my life. I try to be open to his prompting.
  - My faith and my faith community are inseparable. I am a fellow traveller with other members of my church.
  - Our mission is to spread the Kingdom of God. For this, we go out among the unchurched.
  - I clearly remember the day on which I became a Christian.

- Solitary Self
  - I hold firmly to The Great Commission. I try to make my way-of-life reflect my beliefs.
  - I am excited and passionate about life! I often feel elated and full of joy.
  - I worry less and less about what others think of me. Being free to be true to myself and to God makes me feel more authentic.
  - I willingly make myself accountable to others in my church, and they remind me of what God has done, and is doing, in my life.

- Humanity-Related Self
  - I believe that everyone is precious to God.
  - I love talking about my faith to others.

NOTE: Figures rounded to nearest 5%
### Type S3: The Spiritually Serene

#### 7.11.3.1 Statistical Findings and Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE S3</th>
<th>Finding</th>
<th>Comments/Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Age</strong></td>
<td>70 years</td>
<td>Oldest of the types (1/6). Highly significant. (Also, of potential significance for any developmental model of spirituality by maturation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age-range of participants</strong></td>
<td>64-80 years</td>
<td>Narrow age-range—a marker of the S3 type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of participants</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fourth-largest grouping (4/6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of participants as % of all study-participants</strong></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>5F, 3M</td>
<td>Proportionally near-even F:M. Thus, gender not apparently significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communities-of-origin</strong></td>
<td>From four: C(3); C2(1); C3(1); C4(3)</td>
<td>C-of-O not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relational-triad breakdown (rounded to nearest 5%)</strong></td>
<td>S 25%</td>
<td>Relatively-close spread across the relational-selves—closest of the six types. A marker of the S3 type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H 35%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### The Relational Triad of Type S3

![The Relational Triad of Type S3: The Spiritually Serene](image)

| Overlap of selves (%) | 24% | Below-average percentage. Possibly of significance. |

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7.11.3.2 Pen-picture of Type S3: The Spiritually Serene

It is notable that three only out of all forty-seven study-participants were found to have an almost-equal spread between the three relational-selves, and that all three of these participants were found to be of Type S3: The Spiritually Serene. Thus, having an even balance between the selves may be a pointer to this spiritual type—though it is not, of course, a requirement.

S3’s are integrated of mind, body, and soul—and more so than other spiritual type within this typology. They exude authenticity, wholeness, and realness—qualities which allow others to feel safe and secure in their presence. These are the sages of life—the ‘tribal elders’ of any community. They are perceptive, wise, and trustworthy. They are responsible, respectful, kind, and generous. They are deep, calm, and reflective, with a perceptible sense of inner peace.

S3’s are aware of the inter-dependent nature of humanity, and care deeply for their fellow human beings. Inclusive and non-judgemental, they are alert to the needs of others, and will offer and be open to receiving love readily—deeming love highly. Inherent nurturers, and comfortable sitting with silence, they are exceptionally good listeners and mentors (and, indeed, are likely to be sought-out as mentors). And in talking with others, they tend to listen for, and adopt, the vocabulary of the other—to whom they are highly sensitive, open and caring. This empathy allows them to see situations from other perspectives; which, in turn, gives them a broad understanding of life and people.

Their genuine and selfless interest in, and openness to, others gives them a fluidity of perspective such that they are not afraid to acknowledge their mistakes, and are open and ready to adjust their own position as and when necessary—if, on reflection (a spiritual exercise in which they engage instinctively and often), they see wisdom in the position. Thus, they will not fix to a position dogmatically:

[I’ve learned that] new solutions and new insights come from listening to people, and that you can’t get them if you stop listening, stop looking, stop your awareness. You’ve first got to look out, not in—because then the ‘in’ will come.
S3’s invariably will be parents with grown children—and most also will be grandparents—who are in, or who have been in, long-term relationships with a spouse/partner. It cannot be said without further research whether or not these particular demographic factors are pre-requisite to the type, but it is possible that they are. They may have provided the particular environment and experiences that have enabled the growth and establishment of the S3’s deep interest in and understanding of others.

This understanding notwithstanding, learning to accept practical help from others constitutes an ongoing (and perhaps life-long) spiritual challenge for at least some S3’s:

It took me a long time to realize that I can receive as well as give; that I need to have the humility to accept help if I myself am in trouble. As a natural ‘giver’, that is hard, and I still have to work on it—having the graciousness to say to someone, ‘that is just what I need, thank you’, without feeling the need to overwhelm by giving something back.

This comment also highlights a deep level of reflectiveness among The Spiritually Serene, who are on a never-ending journey of learning and growing.

The Spiritually Serene, on average, are the oldest-aged of the six types, and, as such, have longstanding and extensive experience of life. They have all, without exception, experienced significant loss and grief at first-hand. In consequence, having been through the “refining fire”, as one participant put it, they are aware of the polarities—the highs and lows—of life, and embrace them. One participant of this type—living with a terminal illness—reflected:

I am aware that I’m doing less now than I was, but that’s not a cause of great sadness—it’s just a case of managing it. But I think probably, when time and effort are limited, somehow or other it’s more intense. There’s more awareness of the need for intensity, of the need to actually use time to its best advantage, and to use opportunities to their best advantage.

Trust and hope are important qualities for The Spiritually Serene, who are likely to move through times of hardship one day at a time, resting in the knowledge that suffering will be transient. And they tend to look for and find light in the darkness. Moreover, being quietly but highly observant

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61 In this study, at least.
people, they are likely to be first to notice the rays of sunshine among the clouds—whether literally or figuratively. And they smile readily, warmly, and genuinely.

As the eldest of the types, S3’s are mature, developed individuals, and their spirituality—particularly as it relates to faith and the Divine—does not appear to follow as regular a pattern, or require as strict a discipline (at least consciously), as it does for Types S1 and S2. Faith is at the core of their spirituality, but is not swamping or overt. They will draw wisdom from the Bible, but read it subjectively. The numinous certainly is the backdrop to and the primary support in their lives, but their faith is lived-out in their way-of-being, seven days a week, as part of who they are. Their faith is real and deep, but God resides within, rather than at the forefront of their minds (unlike S1’s and S2’s). This is because their faith and beliefs essentially have become intrinsic to their being—established to the point of integration.

The Spiritually Serene may come from a traditional Christian background, but their general open-mindedness (as noted above) means that many will be liberal thinkers. Intensely reflective, they are likely to employ symbol and analogy in their explorations—through which they are able to come to a deeper understanding of life. For example:

The more I hear that piece of music, the more I can see in it. It begins, like childhood, so gradually. It unfolds in a marvellous way, just like one’s consciousness of one’s own childhood. Full of leisure. Almost a happy non-event. But gradually it goes on, it becomes more exquisite, until there comes a point when the shadows come, and discord, and it goes into darkness and turbulence.

Nothing is ever destroyed, it can only be changed. So life or essence cannot be destroyed, it can only change its form. And, for me, death is simply a change in form. I think of a car…my spirituality is the driver—‘I am’ the driver—and the rest is pure mechanics. You put fuel in one end, and the exhaust is at the other. But when the car wears out and breaks down you don’t stay in it—you get out and move on.

The Spiritually Serene are unlikely to talk of faith-related matters unless asked directly. However, when they do, they will use little in the way of doctrinal language, preferring simple faith-based terms. And they are willing to make themselves vulnerable in the process. Unlike S1’s and S2’s, S3’s do not ‘God-talk’ in conversation, at least not with those they do not know well. Not only is

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62 See discussion in Chapter Three, section 3.5.4.1.
this not the way of S3’s, but it would be unlikely in any event because of their sense of respect for the beliefs and sensitivities of others.

S3’s have a big-picture perspective on life, are objective, and have a ready ability to see things in context. They tend not to be excitable, but are well balanced and profoundly thoughtful human beings. They have a deep thankfulness for life and all that it brings, and notice and appreciate the ‘small things’. And they are ever open to beauty—integral to their D/divine—which they will see anywhere and everywhere, wherever it is to be found, whether in people, nature, actions, or art.

This type of spirituality is humanity-focused, but heart-driven by God within. And many S3’s consciously are aware of its relational nature. As one participant reflected:

Spirituality is a journey, for me, that never ends. And it’s about me; and my relationship with God, and my relationship with other people.

S3 spirituality is linked to that of Type S4: The Spiritually Sustained, with many similarities evident between the two types. Notwithstanding, in that not all Type S4’s will migrate to S3, S3 is a spiritual type in its own right. The nature of the S3 type is such that migration from the type appears to be highly unlikely.
The Relational-Self Model of Type S3: The Spiritually Serene

NOTE: Figures rounded to nearest 5%
7.11.4 Type S4: The Spiritually Sustained

### Statistical Findings and Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE S4</th>
<th>Finding</th>
<th>Comments/Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Age</strong></td>
<td>51 years</td>
<td>Third-oldest of the six types (3/6). Age largely insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age-range of Participants</strong></td>
<td>26-88 years (62-year span)</td>
<td>Widest age-range of all six types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Participants</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Largest grouping (1/6). Possibility that S4 is a widespread type within source-population of The Anglican Church of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of participants as % of all study-participants</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Comment as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>9F, 5M</td>
<td>Almost-even F:M proportionally Gender does not appear to be a salient marker for this type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communities-of-origin</strong></td>
<td>From five: C1(1); C2(3); C3(1); C5(1); C6 (8)</td>
<td>Widest spread of all the types. Overall, C-of-O does not appear to be highly significant to this type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relational-Triad Breakdown (rounded to nearest 5%)</strong></td>
<td>S 25%</td>
<td>H-reading dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overlap of selves (%)</strong></td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>Marginally above-average percentage. Mostly HD overlap—may be linked to C-of-O finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: As a grouping within this study, Type S4: The Spiritually Sustained, were exceptional in many ways. They constituted the largest number of participants; had the widest age-range, and
were drawn from more communities-of-origin than any other type. Though salient findings, it is likely that most are linked to the source population for the study—the Perth Diocese of The Anglican Church of Australia—rather than inferring that this type of spirituality necessarily is the most widespread within the broader population. The wide age-range represented within this type-grouping has implications in terms of the following pen-picture for The Spiritually Sustained in that, plainly, personal development and experience across and between those within this type-grouping will differ widely. This exposition should be read with that in mind.

7.11.4.2 Pen-picture of Type S4: The Spiritually Sustained

As noted in section 7.11.3.2, above, there are some striking similarities between the spirituality of The Spiritually Sustained of Type S4, and that of those of Type S3: The Spiritually Serene. In some ways—and in strictly general terms—S4 might rightly be seen as a younger version of S3. However, migration from S4 to S3 is not inevitable.

S4’s are active and involved in life, and tend to be interested explorers of life and people. And their Christian faith ultimately determines how that is lived out. Though God for them is real and true, it is notable that, rather than God being the reason for living and the primary focus of life (as is the case for S1’s and S2’s), or intrinsic to their being (as for S3’s), God instead is foundational to life, providing the means and sustenance by which to live. Thus, the faith of S4’s is manifest in their way-of-being in the world, and in their response to others. As one S4 noted, “I strive to be a person who is congruent. I want to be someone who what I believe shows in my life. And my life comes out of what I believe in”.

Invariably open, honest, loving, caring, and kind, S4’s seek to do right in all that they do. Primarily “into substance and not fluff”, as one participant put it, they feel no need to impress others for the sake of it. For that reason, although material possessions are appreciated by S4’s, these will be kept in perspective. Without doubt, their fellow human beings are their principal

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63 Specifically, the final paragraph of section 7.11.3.2.
focus in life—though precisely on whom this focus falls may differ depending on the particular situation of the S4, as can be seen in the following:

What matters most to me are my relationships with the people I care about. My children and their spouses; my little grandchildren, and my sisters—who are like my best friends. So my family would have to be, without a doubt, the most important thing in my entire life…and my happiest times are when I’m with them.

I’m involved in education…so probably what is most important to me is that sense of having a mission to satisfy the needs of the students I’m teaching….I have responsibility for a lot of little souls, and it preys on my mind quite a bit—it gnaws at me actually—is this world a good and nourishing place for them? And am I contributing to them in terms of making it a nourishing place for them to be?

Family are definitely important to me. And because our family is far-flung, community is important outside family: regular connection with close friends; having working relationships with neighbours, and being part of what’s happening locally. I think that’s important.

S4’s are openly Christian, but the manifesting of their faith in their way-of-being means that they tend not to be evangelical in terms of sharing their faith orally in the wider community:

I am not an evangelist in that sense, but I believe that if I try to live in the way of Jesus—albeit in the inadequate way I do—then that can only be an example. So that’s part of my attitude to life.

This outlook and practice is likely to be linked to the particular role of God—and, indeed, Jesus—in their lives as role-model and foundational bedrock. But it may also be coupled with their respect for those of differing faiths and beliefs in that, although S4’s personally take meaning from; are strengthened by, and find solace in the tenets and practices of the Christian faith, they can see that such sustenance can be and is found elsewhere by those outside their faith:

I imagine that everyone who explores their spirituality—whether in other faiths or in other denominations—has the same sort of inner reflection and contemplation that I do. And it [too] will be connected to something larger.

The Spiritually Sustained are centred, solid, and down-to-earth Christians. And they see expressions of God all around them in the world—in nature, music, art and architecture, for example—and are deeply appreciative of all these manifestations. Their own relationship with God is important to them, and they are sustained by their faith in hard times, and able to rest in God’s love. Like S3’s, their explorations may include the use of symbol and analogy, but this is not evident to the same degree. And in keeping with The Spiritually Serene, they will look to the
Bible for wisdom, which they will revere, but the Bible does not hold absolute authority over them.\(^64\)

The particular community in which S4’s worship may determine the extent to which they travel with others on their faith-journey. Inevitably, some will be in community with The Spiritually Spirited, and the S2 enthusiasm and passion for community undoubtedly will rub off on S4’s, who, in consequence, may become willingly involved. However, the particular faith-formation of S4’s—most notably, as it relates to God—necessarily makes them markedly less dependent on fellow Christian travellers than is the case for S2’s (for whom God is focus, rather than foundation).

The Spiritually Sustained tend to be highly dependable and responsible, but they are also courageous people who are willing to take risks. In general, they are strong communicators, and, though not introverted (at least not \textit{per se}), they are likely to come across as more restrained and less ‘bubbly’ than S2’s. As noted, S4’s have much in common with S3’s. For example, many S4’s will be liberal and open thinkers. Further, though it will be to a lesser degree than that for S3’s, they too will have measure and balance; little pretence about them, and will be moving toward congruence and inner peace.

The striving of The Spiritually Sustained for onward and inward growth means that much self-reflection is evident, through which, ultimately, they will come to know themselves well. They are aware, or will be becoming aware, of their own strengths and gifts, and try to use them where they can:

Knowing what I’m here for is truly important. Reflecting on the unique gifts and talents and circumstances that I have been given in life, and understanding what that means and what I should be doing with that. And, in the busyness and complexity of life, not losing sight of that.

\(^{64}\) See discussion in Chapter Three, section 3.5.4.
S4’s are thankful for all of life’s experiences, every one of which, good and bad, they perceive as invaluable in helping them to learn and grow. Notwithstanding, they know that they don’t—and can’t—have answers to all the questions of life:

I think you accept the fact that there are some things you cannot really get an answer to, and there’s probably not much to be gained by attempting what’s beyond our comprehension. So I accept some things as they are, and I suppose look for reasonable answers to other aspects to which there could be an answer of some kind. So it’s looking for what is reasonable and meaningful—and doing it honestly, because you can’t pretend about those sorts of things.

The strong orientation of S4’s toward others means that they will put themselves out willingly and lovingly to minister to the needs of others in a way that is thoughtful, empathetic, respectful, and non-judgemental. They find it easy to give love and support, but—in-keeping with some S3’s—may find it harder to accept love and support, and this may be one of the spiritual challenges for them.

It seems likely that many S4’s will not migrate from the type, although some inevitably will migrate to Type S3: The Spiritually Serene. It is possible that a small number may migrate either to Type S5 or Type S6.

In conclusion, the spirituality of The Spiritually Sustained is humanity-focused and down-to-earth. It is supported and encouraged by a loving God who is the foundation of their being.
7.11.4.3 The Relational-Self Model of Type S4: The Spiritually Sustained

Relational-Self Model for Type S4: The Spiritually Sustained

- **Divine-Related Self (30%)**
  - God is foundational to my life, and provides the means and sustenance by which I live
  - I express my faith in my way-of-being—and Jesus is a role model
  - I see expressions of God in many things
  - I respect those of other faiths and traditions
  - People are the primary focus of my life
  - I am dependable and responsible
  - I am non-judgmental of others

- **Humanity-Related Self (45%)**
  - I am open, honest, loving, caring, and kind
  - I am reflective
  - I see expressions of God in many things
  - I respect those of other faiths and traditions
  - People are the primary focus of my life
  - I am dependable and responsible
  - I am non-judgmental of others

- **Solitary Self (25%)**
  - I strive to be congruent. I want what I believe in to show through in the way that I live
  - I express my faith in my way-of-being—and Jesus is a role model
  - I see expressions of God in many things
  - I respect those of other faiths and traditions
  - People are the primary focus of my life
  - I am dependable and responsible
  - I am non-judgmental of others

**NOTE:** Figures rounded to nearest 5%
## Type S5: The Spiritually Settled

### 7.11.5.1 Statistical Findings and Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE S5</th>
<th>Finding</th>
<th>Comments/Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>55 years (Median age—65 years)</td>
<td>Second-oldest of the types (2/6) Older age of some significance as a marker for the S5 type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age-range of Participants</td>
<td>26-74 years</td>
<td>48-year span—second widest age-range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Second-largest grouping—an outcome likely to be linked to participant-numbers within certain C-of-O (C-of-O being significant to the S5 type)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of participants as % of all study-participants</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>6F, 5M</td>
<td>Proportionally more M than F. Gender thus may be a marker, but this outcome also appears to be linked to C-of-O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities-of-origin</td>
<td>From three: C2 (8); C3 (2); C4 (1)</td>
<td>C-of-O appears to be a highly significant marker to this type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational-Triad Breakdown (rounded to nearest 5%)</td>
<td>S 25%</td>
<td>S-reading higher than D—a marker of type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H 55%</td>
<td>Highest H-reading of all six types—a marker of type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 20%</td>
<td>Low D-reading—a marker of type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Relational Triad of Type S5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlap of selves (%)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Lower-than-average percentage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![The Relational Triad of Type S5: The Spiritually Settled](image-url)
NOTE: The wide spread of participants both by age and gender among The Spiritually Settled means that the pen-picture that appears in section 7.11.5.2, below, is necessarily more generalized than that of some other types. Further, the notable lack of focus on the Divine-related Self among those of this type called for some of the following to be drawn from the researcher’s considered interpretation of what, saliently, was not said by participants.

7.11.5.2 Pen-picture of Type S5: The Spiritually Settled

Those of Type S5: The Spiritually Settled are marked by their relative lack of focus on the Divine, and, accordingly, have a D-reading that is comparatively low. However, S5’s are not spiritual seekers, but rather are settled in their lives and in how and where they are placed spiritually. Were it not for that, it might have been surmised that, following those of Type S6: The Spiritually Sceptical (see section 7.11.6, below), S5’s would be the most likely to move out of the Christian church for reasons of faith.

Type S5, then, is not a traditionally faith/religion-based spiritually, and encompasses an extrinsic form of religious belief. Indeed, some S5-participants made no mention of any noun—either proper or common—connected with the Christian faith. However, though not strictly faith-based Christians, S5’s may find great solace in the tradition, and in their familiarity with it. It is notable that all but one of the S5’s within the current study were born into and brought-up within the Christian church. Thus, they inherited a Christian belief-system—and so are comfortable and at home with the practices of the tradition, and have a sense of belonging within it. However, they either did not, or could not, go on to adopt for themselves the tenets and doctrines of it—at least insofar as they relate to the figure and place of God in their lives.

Notwithstanding, although S5’s are settled where they are, and are not searching elsewhere, a minority may yearn to share the faith that they see within others:

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65 For example, some S5 participants did not use any one of the following words: God, Jesus, Christ, The Holy Spirit, The Bible, prayer, Holy Communion, Eucharist, church, church service.
I feel that I would love to really have a sense that God was there. In the last few years, I've done everything I possibly can to strengthen my faith. I go to church as many times as possible—like every Sunday—I go to all the study-groups; and at home we watch Songs of Praise every week without fail. And [on Songs of Praise] they talk to people whose faith has changed their lives, and who live their life by their faith. And [those people] have some wonderful experiences, and I think 'why doesn’t that happen to me?'

Thus, some choose to remain in the church in the hope that something greater will be found—and these particular individuals may feel somewhat inauthentic for not sharing the traditional beliefs of some of their peers (of other spiritual types). And, while it is evident that some other S5’s have remained active churchgoers out a sense of habit, duty, or rightness, most if not all of these will have some valid spiritual reason for wanting or needing to be there. For example, church services may provide them with a regular means for reflective ‘time out’. Some may find the music of the church stirring and enriching; the buildings inspiring; the people loving, welcoming, and companionable—each one a *bona-fide* medium through which S5’s may access their D/divine.66 67

The human need for belonging is evident too:68

To come to church each Sunday keeps you on track. To reflect and join in keeps me in touch with people who I wouldn’t otherwise see, as a general rule, because we all keep tucked-away in our houses these days. So it keeps you in touch with the community.

I have young children, and for me it’s actually being part of the community of the church that’s as important as anything else. I like the fact that the children are involved in a community group that’s not associated with school, and not associated with us and the family. It’s another group they belong to…and now they’re getting involved with other things like helping the church to fund-raise and the charitable side of things. So it’s not just about spirituality…it’s also about the community side of the church too.

The Spiritually Settled are the second eldest of the spiritual types on average, and it is notable that, for most, the vestige of their childhood faith remains intact at least on some level. For one thing, God may still be imaged as a divine and loving Father sitting on a throne in the clouds (though this image, or at least the remembrance of it, is not unique to the S5 type). Further, though God plays little or no part in the day-to-day life of S5’s, and there is no evidence of their having a personal relationship with God, some S5’s still look to God instinctively in times of need:

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66 See Chapter One for discussion on the known effects of religion and churchgoing on human wellbeing.
67 'D/divine' as used here does not necessarily refer to God. As footnoted in section 7.2.1, above, what constituted the 'D/divine' differed from person to person. For example, while some participants made no mention of God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, they talked of being affected profoundly by the natural world, music, etc.
68 These reasons for attending church may, of course, apply to those of other spiritual types too.
I’m not a great one for prayer… I mean, I don’t pray as in prayers really. I can’t say what I want to say… but he knows, God knows what’s wrong with people. We don’t have to tell him, do we?

I have been a Christian for a long time— since I was a child, a baby. I was brought-up that you pray to someone, and that if you pray long enough, someone will answer. If you’re in difficulty, there’s nothing else you can do… you just pray to God, ‘Oh get me out of this’. And that keeps me going.

Though not Christian in terms of an active belief in and growing relationship with God, S5’s invariably have strong Christian values and ideals. And this will be lived-out in the day-to-day lives of most. For the older members of the type, in particular, the Jesus of the Bible remains an exemplary role model, and the Two Great Commandments highlighted by Jesus (and, significantly, the saying of which forms part of the weekly service of Holy Communion held by most parishes within this study’s source-population) serve as a behavioural ideal:

Spirituality to me has got to do with how you live your life. You live your life as Jesus would want you to live it. To love, which is the biggest thing in the world. And that was the second great commandment, that you love your neighbour as yourself. And if you can’t see that, well!

With the highest H-reading of all the types, S5’s are strongly humanity-focused, and may well be active socially within their faith-communities, where some will have a high profile, and where most will willingly and lovingly be giving their time:

I think it’s important to do things to help. Sometimes I think I could do more… but I am on rosters for teas, flowers, and all that sort of thing. I help with things like catering too. And whenever things are asked, I generally try to help where I can.

Though they are not seeking to make any move away from the church community to which they belong (where most are long-standing members, and to which they are exceptionally loyal), The Spiritually Settled are highly tolerant of, and open to, those of other faiths—indeed, they will see it as something to be desired to have friends across faiths, and outside religion. Not surprisingly, and in general terms, S5’s are genuinely interested in others, towards whom they are loving, caring, and kind. And their close families and friends, both within and outside the church, not only

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69 Specifically, the quotation used— drawn from Mark 12: 29-31— is “‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ Jesus said: ‘This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.’” Ref: The Anglican Church of Australia, A Prayer Book for Australia (Alexandria, NSW: Broughton Books, 1995), 120.
are their primary concern, but invariably will be sought-out as their first means of sustenance and support.

S5’s are most likely to be found in church communities where there are other S5’s, and in which S3’s and S4’s may also be present. They are likely to feel uncomfortable with the spiritual-style of S1’s and S2’s, and so are highly unlikely to be found in community alongside members of these particular types—or, indeed, in a community that is led by an S1 or S2 leader.

Most S5’s will not migrate from this type, but a shift to Type S6 seems possible ahead of moving outside the Christian faith.
7.11.5.3 The Relational-Self Model of Type S5: The Spiritually Settled

Relational-Self Model for Type S5: The Spiritually Settled

- **Humanity-Related Self**
  - I am generally contented with my life
  - I am loyal, loving, kind and caring
  - I am actively involved with people, and I like to help where I can
  - For the most part, it is members of my close family who sustain me when I'm in need
  - My family and friends are the most important thing in my life

- **Divine-Related Self**
  - My divine may be found in music, nature and/or in art.
  - I was born and brought up in the Christian church, and I feel comfortable and settled within it
  - I do not have an active relationship with God, but I may pray to God in times of need
  - I like being involved in my parish, and I appreciate the safety and familiarity of the tradition
  - I sometimes feel inauthentic because I don't necessarily share the beliefs of those around me

- **Solitary Self**
  - I strive to have high ideals and values
  - I like to use my gifts where I can—and especially to help others
  - I am highly accepting of people of other faiths and cultures

**NOTE:** Figures rounded to nearest 5%
### 7.11.6 Type S6: The Spiritually Sceptical

#### 7.11.6.1 Statistical Findings and Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE S6</th>
<th>Finding</th>
<th>Comments/Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>26.5 years</td>
<td>Youngest of the six types—an outcome of unknown significance as a marker to type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age-range of</td>
<td>26-27 years</td>
<td>Age-range insignificant due to small sample size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Smallest grouping—relevance unknown in that the nature of S6 is such that others of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td></td>
<td>the type may have consciously decided not to come forward for interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of participants as % of all study-participants</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>2F: 0M</td>
<td>Sample size too small to ascertain significance of gender as a marker for this type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities-of-origin</td>
<td>From two: C (1); C6 (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational-Triad Breakdown (rounded to nearest 5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Highest S-reading of all six types—potentially highly significant. Equal H- and S-readings—relevance unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>D-reading lower than S-reading—salient and a marker of type. Lowest D-reading of all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>six types—also a marker of type</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### The Relational Triad of Type S6

The Relational Triad of Type S6: The Spiritually Sceptical

Overlap of selves (%) 22% Below-average percentage. Potentially significant
NOTE: Of the six type-expositions presented in this chapter, that for Type S6: The Spiritually Sceptical, below, necessarily is the most vague and indistinct. This is due both to the nature of the type, and the particularly low number of study-participants found to be within it. Unquestionably, further research is called-for. It cannot be ruled-out—not least given the significant differences in the relational triad for the two S6-type-members (see footnote 72, below)—that more than one spiritual type is represented here.

7.11.6.2 Pen-picture of Type S6: The Spiritually Sceptical

There is no doubt that, of all the types of this typology, Type S6 is the most transitionary. Its key markers are dissatisfaction with the status quo coupled with a desire to make changes to that status quo. Some degree of existential anxiety may be evident as S6’s question who and where they are. They either no longer believe what they once did, or, if they did not begin with a strong Christian faith—and unlike those of Type S5—are coming to the conclusion that, for them, the benefits of belonging to a faith community are becoming outweighed by the dissatisfaction or inauthenticity of their situation. As such, then, S6’s are spiritually sceptical. They are likely to be pulling away from their church community in terms of attendance, and, if another form of spiritual expression that interested them were to come to their attention, they are likely to move on to explore it.\(^7\)0

The Spiritually Sceptical of the current study were too small in number to allow any real conclusions to be drawn about the type.\(^7\)1 This was exacerbated by a noticeable divergence in focus, personality, and demeanour between the two participants in question\(^7\)2—a lack of uniformity which made generalizations impossible (and, indeed, imprudent) to make. What can be said, however, is that both S6’s plainly were individual and deep thinkers, for whom music constituted a strong and important element of their divine. Both evidently had been questioning their faith, and

\(^7\)0 Indeed, the researcher is aware that one of the two participants found to be of this type already has made such a move.

\(^7\)1 Given the nature of the study, with its particular recruitment procedures, this is perhaps not surprising. Indeed, it might have been more surprising had more people of the type come forward.

\(^7\)2 Though both participants had significantly low D-readings (22% and 17%, respectively), one had a highly dominant H-reading (60%), while the other had an exceptionally high S-reading (63%). (See note at 7.11.6.1, above).
were becoming increasingly unable to sit with some of the contradictions it presented. For one, for example:

My friends ask me so many questions that I can’t answer…How can God be content to have suffering in the world? How can you have a God that is at the same time loving and unloving? Beforehand, I had answers that I was happy with, but I’ve now got to a point where I don’t have answers.

This type-grouping not only were the youngest within the study, but emerged with the lowest D-reading of all the types. It cannot be known without the insight of a longitudinal study whether or not the D-reading has dropped over time, creating a rise in another area of Self. However, were that to have been the case, it would have constituted a highly significant marker of the type.

\[73\] A factor that may be due to small numbers rather than being specific to the type.
7.11.6.3 The Relational-Self Model of Type S6: The Spiritually Sceptical

Relational-Self Model for Type S6: The Spiritually Sceptical

Divine-Related Self

- I am seeking to make changes in my faith-life: 20%
- What I once believed no longer makes sense to me.

Humanity-Related Self

- I am beginning to pull away from my church community: 40%
- What I once believed no longer makes sense to me.
- Insufficient information to chart

Solitary Self

- I may be experiencing existential anxiety: 40%
- My life as it is sometimes makes me feel inauthentic
- Insufficient information to chart

NOTE: Figures rounded to nearest 5%
### Typology of Relational Spirituality: Comparison Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S1: Surrendered</th>
<th>S2: Spirited</th>
<th>S3: Serene</th>
<th>S4: Sustained</th>
<th>S5: Settled</th>
<th>S6: Sceptical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary relational-self focus/foci</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>HD</td>
<td>H (Significantly close to SHD)</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of Divine/divine</td>
<td>God (Trinitarian and supernatural)</td>
<td>God (Trinitarian and supernatural)</td>
<td>God (Trinitarian) Beauty—in all its forms</td>
<td>God (Trinitarian) Creation Artistic expression</td>
<td>Nature Artistic expression God (Trinitarian and supernatural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Divine in life</td>
<td>At head</td>
<td>Alongside</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>Foundational</td>
<td>At a distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of relationship with Divine</td>
<td>All-encompassing</td>
<td>Hierarchical</td>
<td>Submissive</td>
<td>Surrendered</td>
<td>Thankful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solitary Self</td>
<td>Subsumed in Divine</td>
<td>Matters little</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td>Not a lone traveller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanity-related Self</td>
<td>Loving and caring—as God requires</td>
<td>Intensely engaged in journeying with Christian family</td>
<td>essential Ministry and evangelism</td>
<td>essential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types to which migration most likely to occur</td>
<td>Unknown, but S6 a possibility</td>
<td>S4 S3 S6</td>
<td>Migration from S3 unlikely</td>
<td>S3 S5 S6</td>
<td>S6 Outside the Christian faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatible types</td>
<td>S2 S3 S4</td>
<td>S1 S3 S4</td>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>S3 S4 S6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary words/phrases</td>
<td>Surrendered, Submitting to God, Obedient, Biblical authority</td>
<td>Sprinted, Spreading the Kingdom, Community, Discipleship, Accountability</td>
<td>Serenity, Deep reflection, Love of beauty, Appreciation of all, Balance, Acceptance</td>
<td>Sustained, Open, Approachable, Seeking to grow, Ministry</td>
<td>Settled, Dependable, Of service, Christian ideals and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most likely Christian background</td>
<td>Conversion experience in late teens or early adulthood</td>
<td>Conversion experience (perhaps via Alpha course)</td>
<td>Life-long and traditional</td>
<td>Life-long and traditional</td>
<td>Life-long and traditional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.12 Setting the Typology in Context

The six types that constitute the emergent *Typology of Relational Spirituality* plainly have been constructed from an in-depth analysis—using both qualitative and quantitative measures—of the data that was collected in this particular study. Each type is set apart from all five others not only by a unique set of characteristics regarding spiritual formation and expression—most saliently, those which relate to matters of faith—but by a distinctive and visual pattern (in the form of the relational triad) that distinguishes and quantifies the type in terms of its members’ relationships with self, others, and that which is held to be Divine. To keep this typology in context, however, it must be remembered that, as noted in Chapter Six, the research design for the study set-out to keep the study within manageable bounds by limiting both participant numbers and variables from within the source-population. For this reason, it would be hard to conceive that the six types that have been identified and expounded here constitute all possible spiritual types that may exist within the Anglican Church of Australia—much less, within the Christian church (or, indeed, across faiths, cultures, or on a universal plane). Furthermore, during the analytical endeavour, the researcher was aware that there were some participants who pushed the boundaries of the types in that, though they exhibited a greater number of characteristics of the type to which they were ultimately assigned, some of their characteristics might rightly have been classified to another type. Thus, it is possible that a continuum of types, and/or sub-types, exists. And, were such a continuum to be visualized in, say, linear form, the additional types would be evident both within the emergent typology, and on either side of it—as illustrated in Figure 7.12, below.
Figure 7.12: Continuum of spiritual types illustrated in linear form (including hypothetical additional types/sub-types)

This charting has been configured using the actual relational-triad breakdown for each type within the emergent typology (namely, Types S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, and S6). It is suggested that there may be additional types—or at least sub-types—situated between the emergent types, and indeed, at either side of them (S0a, S1a, S2a, etc); and that these hypothetical additions (the situation of which is depicted on the chart using white arrows) may have a relational triad that falls within the range delineated by the straight black lines. The dotted lines at either side of the chart show a possible direction in which the triads of the continuum might then move, based on the trend that is evident.

The emergent typology has been constructed within one denomination of a particular faith-community, of course. Its potential relationship with, and possible application within, other denominations and faiths—and, indeed, other cultures—will be discussed in Chapter Nine: Discussion 2.
7.13 Summary of Findings

The initial vision of the current research was to construct a model of spiritual development—based on an empirical study—that would reflect Christian lives in the Western world of the twenty-first century. Notwithstanding, the grounded-theory methodology that was used in the study ultimately required a change in focus in order to concentrate on the typology of spirituality that was the first major finding to emerge from an in-depth analysis of data.

The analytical methods used in this research brought about the conceptualizing and prototyping of some investigative tools which became findings in and of themselves. These tools, together with other major findings presented in this chapter, are summarized as follows:

- **The Relational Triad**

  The relational triad is a means by which to gauge, measure, and plot the degree of spiritual focus of the individual in terms of that individual’s relationship with her/his inner self (S), others (H), and that which s/he holds to be divine (D). It is a statistically-based investigative tool, based on information derived from the qualitatively-based coding of interview-data.

  When plotted in bar-chart form, the relational triad gives an instant picture of the relative contribution of each constituent self, S, H and D, to the spirituality of an individual. It can be plotted for individuals, or averaged-out across groups of people—allowing patterns or trends to be seen clearly.

  The triad has been informally tested for effectiveness across several demographic groups. When averaged across individuals within such groups, it was able to reflect relational-foci in such proportions as might reasonably have been expected.
The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality

The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality is a presentational version of the relational triad, designed to allow the spirituality of the individual (or, indeed, spiritual-types that have emerged across groups of people) to be charted. It moves beyond the relational triad in that it not only plots the three relational-selves proportionately, but also includes—in first-person form—the primary qualities, characteristics, and concerns of the individual (or the type-grouping) within each constituent area of self.

The model was designed not to give detail but rather to offer a summary ‘snapshot’ of individual (or typological) spirituality for purposes of comparison and understanding. However, it also has the potential to monitor spiritual growth and development, and/or any shift in relational-focus, if recharted at intervals of, say, five or ten years.

The Relational Heptagon

The relational heptagon is a conceptual tool for coding interview-data. It is an extended version of the relational triad which includes not only the three relational-self categories, S, H and D, but the overlapping areas that exist across and between them. The four additional categories that make up the heptagon are the dual categories SH, HD, and DS, plus the multiple category, SHD.

This coding-tool was developed for and used within the current study to allow the data to be classified as accurately as possible.

The Typology of Relational Spirituality

The Typology of Relational Spirituality is a non-hierarchical typological model of Christian spirituality that was constructed from an in-depth analysis of the study-data. The analysis was expedited with the use of each of the above investigative-tools, together with intuitive knowledge of the participants gained by the researcher throughout the data-collection process.
Currently, the Typology comprises six distinct types of relational spirituality. Each of the types is distinguished not only by a particular set of qualities and characteristics (most notably those relating to faith and the divine) that is evident across and between type-members, but in the manifestation of a distinct and unique pattern—representing proportional degrees of relational focus in each area of self—on the relational triad. When the relational triads for all six types are plotted together, a salient trend is evident; the existence of which raises the possibility that the Typology is part of a continuum of types of relational-spirituality. Nonetheless, it is recognized that each of the types of the emergent typology was identified from a limited study undertaken within one denomination of the Christian church, and thus no firm inference beyond the study can—or, indeed, will—be made.

The following chapter will introduce existing models and theories that have a bearing—either in terms of content or operation—on the emergent typology, with a view to discussing the worth and practical application of *The Typology of Relational Spirituality*. 
Chapter Eight
Discussion 1: Comparative Models of Spirituality

8.1 Introduction

In light of the findings of the empirical study—specifically, in which a typological model of relational spirituality has been constructed, and a means by which to chart spirituality designed—this chapter will consider and compare a selected range of existing models of spirituality that may have some likeness to, contrast to, or bearing on the model of spirituality that is emerging from this study. In line with the practices of constructivist grounded theory,¹ these works intentionally were not examined before this point in the research in order not to influence—either consciously or unconsciously—the design of the empirical study; the analysis of the data, or, indeed, presentation of the findings. The works cited here are not a comprehensive suite, but represent a subjective, and necessarily restricted,² selection of what are seen to be among the most suitable works with which to compare, and within which to place, the emergent findings.

8.2 Selecting Comparative Models of Spirituality

The systematic study of human spirituality—broadly defined—and the understanding of its forms, expressions, and development plainly is an interdisciplinary endeavour, most obviously straddling the broad areas of religion, psychology, and sociology. Precisely where and when serious academic interest in it began is open to debate, but the nineteenth- and twentieth-century figures of the late William James (1842-1910); Carl Jung (1875-1961); Jean Piaget (1896-1980); Erik Erikson (1902-1994); Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984); Jane Loevinger (1918-2008); Daniel Levinson (1920-1994), and Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987) must be included among those who have made unique, significant, and lasting contributions to this now established and growing field of interest. Contributions in the area that relate directly to the emergent findings include the conceptual ideas of Henri Nouwen, whose framing of human spirituality as a triadic relationship between self, others, and God (see Chapter Two) served as a springboard and backdrop to the study, of course; but where else might the findings have a conceptual home? Numerous models were examined to find out. These included the widely-

¹ See Chapter Five, section 5.5.2.
² The restriction here comes primarily from the logistics of the current research in terms of its word-limit in that it was recognized that a dialogue could not be entered-into effectively unless each comparative model were explored to at least some degree of depth.
known and popular models, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator,\(^3\) and the Enneagram,\(^4\) together with the Spirituality Wheel of Corinne Ware,\(^5\) each of which incorporates a practical assessment tool\(^6\) through which insight can be gained into differing aspects of individual human spirituality (again, broadly defined). Ultimately, however, four further models were chosen as the most fitting representative-sample with which to dialogue in-depth, and round which to situate the emergent typology. The first of these is the long-established faith-development model of James W Fowler, which, in keeping with the current study, advocates the relational nature of spirituality.\(^7\) The others are the more-recently constructed typologies of John R Mabry; Nigel Leaves, and Richard Flory/Donald E Miller—the most salient distinguishing factor in each of which (again, in line with the emergent typology) is linked, in broad terms, to that which the current study terms the Divine-related Self of the relational triad.

The dialogue will begin with a tabular comparison of the four models under review in relation to the emergent model, before an examination is made of each model in turn. The latter will present an introduction to the model in question; a brief biography of its author/s or instigator/s (in order to understand something of its informing frame of reference); and an exposition of the model and its workings. A general critique of the work then will be offered, before, finally, the relationship of the model to the emergent typology is considered, observations made, and conclusions drawn. For the purposes of clarity, to avoid confusion in the comparing of models, direct references to the emergent Typology of Relational Spirituality, its six incumbent types, and other constructs of the current research will be italicized both throughout this chapter and for the remainder of the thesis.

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\(^{3}\) The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) incorporates sixteen type-styles. It is based on the theory of Carl G Jung—as set-out in Jung’s 1921 book, Psychological Types (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), and was developed over a period of decades in the twentieth-century by American mother-and-daughter team, Katharine Cook Briggs (1875-1968) and Isabel Briggs Myers (1897-1980). The operating premise of MBTI is that behavioural differences between people are not random but rather are due to the differing ways in which individuals process information and make decisions. Ref: The Myers & Briggs Foundation. Accessed 5 September 2009. Available from [http://www.myersbriggs.org](http://www.myersbriggs.org).

\(^{4}\) The Enneagram incorporates nine type-styles, which are represented visually as points on a nine-point star polygon, placed within a circle—the distinctive figure from which the Enneagram derives its name.

\(^{5}\) Corinne Ware’s work is set out in her 1995 publication, Discover Your Spiritual Type: A Guide to Individual and Congregational Growth (The Alban Institute). Presenting four types of spirituality, each of which favours a different style of worship, Ware builds on the typology of the late Urban T Holmes as set-out in A History of Christian Spirituality: An Analytical Introduction (Minneapolis: Seabury, 1980).

\(^{6}\) In each case, this takes the form of a multiple-choice questionnaire in which personal preferences are selected.

\(^{7}\) As will be seen, Fowler’s concept of ‘faith’ is not far removed from this paper’s concept of ‘spirituality’.
8.3 Setting the Models in Context

The four models to be featured, and used as a framework in which to situate the emergent TRS are unique, differing explicitly or subtly in many ways. Plainly, such differences are central to any comparison, and therefore factors and information that have contributed to the nature of each are set out side-by-side in Table 8.3, below.
Table 8.3  
Comparison of Featured Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECTS OF MODEL OR OF FOUNDING STUDY</th>
<th>Fowler(^9)</th>
<th>Mabry</th>
<th>Flory/Miller</th>
<th>Leaves</th>
<th>Nicol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model—by Name of Originator/s</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of model</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Typological</td>
<td>Typological</td>
<td>Typological</td>
<td>Typological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary informing discipline/s</td>
<td>Practical Theology/ Psychology</td>
<td>Practical Theology</td>
<td>Sociology of Religion</td>
<td>Systematic Theology/ Philosophy</td>
<td>Practical Theology/ Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country in which study based</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of study</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>Theoretical/ observational</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary data-collection method/s</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Email survey, plus own observations</td>
<td>Interview, plus site visits</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source-population of participants</td>
<td>Initial study predominantly Christian. Other faiths included</td>
<td>Multi-faith; multi-denominational; atheist; agnostic; humanist</td>
<td>Christian—multi-denominational</td>
<td>N/A (but author Christian—Anglican)</td>
<td>Christian—Anglican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age-range of participants and/or age-range covered by model</td>
<td>3-84</td>
<td>Adult (Not specified)</td>
<td>20-40 (Post-Boomer generation)</td>
<td>Adult (Not specified)</td>
<td>25-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of types/stages in model</td>
<td>6/7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit relational focus?</td>
<td>Yes (Triadic)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>In part (Community)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (Triadic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguishing factor/s between types/stages</td>
<td>Pattern of thinking, valuing, and acting</td>
<td>Style of belief/ faith</td>
<td>Emphasis placed on community, symbol/ritual, embodiment in religious practice</td>
<td>Approach to/ understanding of God, plus spiritual practice</td>
<td>Relationship with D/divine, self, and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential reach of model (within Western culture)</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>All religions and belief systems</td>
<td>All seeking alternative/s to the supernatural God of traditional Christianity</td>
<td>Universal(^10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^8\) The information presented in this table has been drawn, where possible, directly from the work of the respective authors. Where the required information was not given explicitly, interpretation was required—and it is hoped that this endeavour has been undertaken accurately.
\(^9\) As will be discussed below, James Fowler’s work is extensive and ongoing. The information given here relates primarily to Fowler’s initial empirical work, undertaken in the decade from 1972.
\(^10\) Though the TRS model in its current form encompasses Christian spirituality only, with its focus on relational aspects of spirituality and non-directional and open questioning—suitable for all—it is believed to have the potential to expand to have universal reach. See Chapter Nine, section 9.8, for discussion.
It can be seen from the above table that, while each model is unique—having a distinctive set of features and foundations—each nonetheless has characteristics in common with each other model. And, while the disparities between the models necessarily make comparisons between them and the emergent model a complex and somewhat convoluted undertaking, they serve in and of themselves to highlight the diversity and intricacies of the field.

Chapter Eight: Discussion 1

8.4 Faith Development Theory and James W Fowler

8.4.1 Introduction

It would be hard—indeed, unwise—to put together a thesis in the broad area of human spirituality, within the arena of practical theology, without including within it reference to the work of James W Fowler: the pioneer and architect of faith-development studies. Fowler’s seminal work, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* was published in 1981, and the Faith Development Theory (FDT) it presented—based on an empirical study, and underpinned by wide-ranging theoretical and scholarly influences—has since gained global recognition. As Heinz Streib notes:

> Within a relatively short period...the theory of faith formulated by James W Fowler has attracted attention and inspired theoretical and empirical research in psychology, theology, religious education and pastoral care...interest in faith-development theory has spread steadily worldwide.¹²

Indeed, within a decade of publication, the work had undergone twenty printings, and was being used as a textbook in Christian and Jewish colleges, and for pastoral-care education. It had been translated into three languages other than English; had appeared in textbooks within the field of developmental psychology; abstracts of it had been written by academics in four other countries including Britain and Indonesia; and it had spawned more than two hundred research-based projects and associated papers encompassing every one of the world’s continents.¹³ Some nineteen years later—its critics notwithstanding¹⁴—*Stages of Faith* has settled into place as a classic work that presents one of the most widely known theories of

¹¹ Publication details of the earliest edition are as follows: James W Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981). The publication now is in both hardback and paperback editions, and has been reprinted forty times. It has been translated into several other languages.


¹⁴ For an outline critique of FDT, see section 8.4.4, below.
human development. And Gary K Leak suggests that Faith Development Theory is “perhaps the most influential theory concerning the process of faith development” in existence.\(^{15}\)

As the name of Fowler’s 1981 book clearly implies, *Stages of Faith* is a theory of faith-stages—specifically, “a theory of growth in faith…a theory of seven stagelike, developmentally related styles of faith”\(^{16}\)—rather than a theory of faith-types. Thus, its link with the emergent typology would be tenuous were it not for Fowler’s noting—in later writings—that the nature of faith is such that his stages can present a generalized outline of faith-development only, and therefore that FDT has the potential to be expanded “by cross-cutting it with an empirically tested typology”.\(^{17}\)

It is important to remember that the structuring operations underlying faith are, at best, only half of the story of a person’s development in faith. The other half has to do with the contents of faith, the symbols, narratives, practices, and communities—and the emotional and imaginal responses to life conditions and experiences—that exert powerful existential shaping influences on persons’ patterns of interpretation, habit, mind, and action. Any adequate faith biography has to embrace both these important halves of the story.\(^{18}\)

It is hoped that, with further research, the emergent *Typology of Relational Spirituality* ultimately may be able to enter into such a dialogue, and, for that reason, Fowler’s stage theory will be used here as one of the representative works by which to consider and position the *Typology*.

### 8.4.2 The Author\(^ {19}\)

James W Fowler’s academic career predominantly has come under the broad banner of practical theology, including his work as a developmental psychologist; Christian educator, and ethicist. A widely published author and writer, and the recipient of several international awards, Fowler taught both at Harvard Divinity School and at Boston College before moving, in 1977, to the Candler School of Theology at The University of Emory. Here, a decade on, he was appointed Charles Howard Candler Professor of Theology and Human Development, and

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17 See, for example, James W Fowler, ‘Faith Development Theory and Practical Theology’. In Osmer and Schweitzer (eds), *Developing a Public Faith*, 234.
18 Ibid.
served as founding director of the Centre for Ethics at Emory from 1994 to 2005. Fowler retired from his university appointment in May 2010.20

8.4.3 Faith Development Theory Explored

8.4.3.1 The Meaning of ‘Faith’

Fowler’s definition of ‘faith’ is a critical starting point in the understanding and appreciation of his work, in that his understanding of the word is arguably close to that which many today would term ‘spirituality’. For one thing, while faith for Fowler is firmly aligned to “one’s ultimate concern”;21 faith is not the sole prerogative of the actively religious. Certainly, it may include religion for some people (who may choose to work-out their faith in the context of a religious tradition, thereby gaining a medium for the nurturing, growth, and expression of faith) but faith itself is both deeper and more personal than religion.22 Underpinning the human quest for meaning and meaning-making, faith is integral to being: a generic and universal human orientation that is both central to, and a centering component of, the self.23 And, operationally, it is dynamic, social, and relational; encompassing human knowing, valuing, committing, and acting.24

The above notwithstanding, selecting one representative definition of faith as viewed by Fowler is not easy in that the author’s work in the field has been ongoing and extensive, and, not surprisingly, numerous definitions of faith have appeared within his corpus.25 However, Gabriele Klappenecker helpfully posits that the following two definitions are the most representative of Fowler’s work overall:

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20 For references, see footnote above. Fowler himself gives a full and personal account of the influences on him that he believes led to the emergence of faith development theory in James W Fowler ‘Faith Development at 30: Challenges of Faith in a New Millennium’. In Religious Education 99/4 (2004): 405-421 (see pages 405-410). See also James W Fowler, ‘Faith Development Theory and the Challenges of Practical Theology’. In Osmer and Schweitzer (eds), Developing a Public Faith, 229-233.
21 Fowler, Stages of Faith, 14.
22 Ibid, 9-10. Here, Fowler is openly drawing on the ideas of Wilfred Cantwell Smith.
24 Fowler, Stages of Faith, 14 & 92.
1. Faith is the process of constitutive-knowing underlying a person’s composition and maintenance of a comprehensive frame (or frames) of meaning.26

2. [F]aith is the forming of images of, and relation to, that which exerts qualitatively different initiatives in our lives than those that occur in strictly human relations.28 29

And the following—drawn from Fowler’s 1996 publication, ‘Faithful Change: The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life’30—expands elements within Klappenecker’s selected definitions:

Faith...may be characterized as an integral, centering process underlying the formation of beliefs, values and meanings that (1) gives coherence and direction to persons’ lives, (2) links them in shared trusts and loyalties with others, (3) grounds their personal stances and communal loyalties in the sense of relatedness to a larger frame of reference, and (4) enables them to face and deal with the limit conditions of human life, relying upon that which has the quality of ultimacy in their lives.31

It can be seen, then, that faith for Fowler is a broad and open concept, which includes, but is not limited to, religion and belief.

8.4.3.2 The Relational Nature of Faith

It is significant to this thesis that the dynamic and evolving process of faith development is bound-up in relationships. Indeed, for Fowler, faith—the Greek and Latin forms of which word, he notes, were verbs—is always active and is always relational. And, in terms of structure, faith—together with the development of faith—manifests as a triadic, or ‘covenantal’, pattern of relationships between self (s); others (o), and the ‘shared centers of value and power’ that link the two.32 These ‘shared centers of value and power’ (scvp) include all that is of great worth to us, including, for some, God—as Fowler elucidates:

26 The phrase ‘constitutive knowing’ is defined by Fowler as follows: “[B]eing, in others, in self, in world and in God—becomes real to us as we construct it in our knowing in response to the sense data and symbolic representations that impinge on us. Put more simply, we constitute our own subjective experience of others, self and world as related to transcendence”. Fowler’s italics. Fowler, Stages of Faith, 297.
29 Notably, within the same publication as Klappenecker’s assertions appear, a summary response by Fowler himself does not contest these definitions. Rather, he suggests that Klappenecker’s research on faith development “uniquely qualifies her as an interpreter and critic of this body of research and its uses”.29 Thus, it may well be that these two definitions are at least among those which Fowler himself would call representative.
31 Ibid, 56.
32 Fowler, Stages of Faith, 16-17.
A center of value in your life or mine is something that calls forth love and devotion and therefore exerts ordering power on the rest of our lives and our attachments. Family can be one such profound center of value in our lives. Success and one’s career can be important centers of value. One’s nation or an ideological creed can be of life-centering importance. Money, power, influence, and sexuality can all be idolatrous centers of value in our lives. For some persons and groups religious institutions constitute dominant centers of value...And of course, from a religious standpoint, God is meant to be the supreme center of value in our lives.\(^{33}\)

The covenantal pattern of relationships, as depicted by Fowler, is shown in Figure 8.4.3.2, below.

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Each person in his/her lifetime will be part of many covenantal triads, the nature of which will be dynamic.\(^{35}\) And the understanding of the relational format of faith, suggests Fowler, will become increasingly evident to an individual during his/her life-span.\(^{36}\)

**8.4.3.3 Faith Development Theory: How it was developed**

In framing his model of faith development, Fowler openly draws on theoretical foundations laid by structural-developmenal psychologists, Jean Piaget\(^{37}\) and Lawrence Kohlberg,\(^{38}\) whose

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\(^{34}\)This diagram has been copied (redrawn) from Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 17.

\(^{35}\)Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 17.


\(^{37}\)Piaget’s work was in the area of cognitive development.

\(^{38}\)Kohlberg’s work embraced the development of moral reasoning.
constructivist approaches are most closely aligned to that of Fowler. However, he cites psychosocial developmentalist, Erik Erikson, as having been influential on him, and H Richard Niebuhr and Paul Tillich as among those who informed his work in its early stages.

The empirical work undertaken by Fowler and his colleagues that led to the development of FDT (as published in Stages of Faith) was carried-out over ten years from 1972. It took the form of a four-part interview with a non-random sample of 359 participants—all US-based—spanning in age from three-and-a-half years to eighty-four years. The percentage-spread of participants in each age-decade was uneven, ranging from 4.7% (for those aged from 51-60 years) to 25.1% (for those aged from 21-30 years). An almost even spread was evident by gender overall. Participants were drawn from various religious orientations, but the study was dominated by Christians, and particularly those identifying as Protestant (45% of all participants) and Catholic (36.5%). The recorded interviews themselves lasted for two to two-and-a-half hours (except those undertaken with children, which were shorter), and encompassed more than thirty questions. The first part of the interview dealt with life-review matters; life-shaping experiences and relationships were covered in the second part; and present values and commitments, in the third. Questions about religion completed the interview. Participants were asked to illustrate their answers with examples from life-experience throughout the interview—showing that the concept of narrative-knowing was facilitated and encouraged.

The analysis undertaken on the transcribed interview-data was the means by which the stages of faith were constructed. And, ultimately, the analysis included the classification of each participant to one of seven stages of faith, or to one of the transitional stages between them. In brief, this was done by a process of classification, undertaken by two analysts in each

41 Fowler’s colleagues comprised graduate students of theology and/or developmental psychology. Ibid, 410.
42 These and other details of the FDT interviews and participant sampling can be found in the Appendices of Fowler’s Stages of Faith, 307-323.
case, in which structure-indicating passages of an interview were identified, and assigned to one or more of seven ‘modes of knowing and valuing’, or ‘aspects’ of faith.  

These aspects, and a brief description of them, are given in Table 8.4.3.3, below:\textsuperscript{44}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|p{12cm}|}
\hline
Aspect \\
Letter & Aspect \\
Name & Description \\
of Aspect \\
\hline
A & Form of Logic & Draws on the cognitive-developmental theory of Jean Piaget. Focuses on patterns of thinking and reasoning evident within the individual. Importantly, Fowler notes that, at any given stage, the cognitive operations identified by Piaget must be present in order to facilitate the operations of the other six remaining aspects. Thus, cognitive development is at the heart of FDT—though, of course, it alone does not constitute faith (as defined by Fowler).\textsuperscript{46} \\
B & Social Perspective & Draws on the research of Robert Selman. Considers the ability of, and extent to which, individuals adopt the perspectives of their group/s; and then (in later stages) that of groups beyond their own. \\
C & Form of Moral Judgment & Considers how individuals deal with moral issues and make judgments. A modification of Lawrence Kohlberg’s stages of moral development. \\
D & Bounds of Social Awareness & Concerns the nature and extent of the world within which individuals live, in terms of their in-group/s. Plus the extent to which they acknowledge and respect the views of other people or other groups. \\
E & Locus of Authority & Considers to whom the individual looks for reliable and authoritative insight; the way in which s/he interprets it, and the extent to which it is relied upon. \\
F & Form of World Coherence & Considers ways in which the individual conceives or creates unity and consistency in his/her ultimate environment. \\
G & Symbolic Function & Focuses on the way in which, and the extent to which, symbols, metaphors, myths, and rituals are employed by an individual in the quest to understand his/her environment. \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{The Seven Aspects of Faith Development Theory\textsuperscript{45}}
\end{table}

Once the process of classification to the above seven aspects had been completed, the relevant passages were given a faith-stage weighting within the aspect to which they had been assigned. Then, all the classifications to an aspect were averaged according to the assigned weighting/s, producing a particular faith-stage for that particular aspect. On completion of this

\textsuperscript{43} Fowler, Stages of Faith, 313-315.  
\textsuperscript{44} The order of these aspects has been taken from Fowler’s Stages of Faith publication, pp244-245. It is noted that each aspect is presented under a different name and appears in a different order from that in the earlier publication of James W Fowler and Sam Keen, Life Maps: Conversations of the Journey Faith (Waco: Word Books, 1978), 39-41. 
\textsuperscript{45} The information presented in this table has been taken from Fowler and Keen, Life Maps, 39-41. 
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, 39-40.
task for each of the seven aspects, an average of the resulting faith-stages was taken, giving an overall faith-stage (or transitional stage) for the participant in question.\textsuperscript{47}

8.4.3.4 Faith Development Theory—An Overview

Fowler stresses that his and all theories presenting human development as a stage-process necessarily must be non-specific, general, and largely formal:

\[\text{[T]hey present to us the characteristic patterns of knowing, reasoning and adapting in ways that describe general features of human growth, applicable to all of us, despite the vast differences we recognize in our temperaments, our unique experiences and the content and details of our particular life stories.}\textsuperscript{48}\]

Thus, within Faith Development Theory, though the life story and faith pattern of an individual will be unique, the description of his/her faith stage can relate only part of it. In other words, a person’s stage of faith is determined not by the specific contents of his/her faith, but rather by a set of generalized, structural characteristics (aspects) that represents a certain pattern of thinking, valuing, and acting.\textsuperscript{49} And such a structured approach means that once an individual’s stage of faith has been determined, it becomes possible not only to undertake comparisons across and between individuals of divergent faith-content, but also among those for whom faith-content may be similar—for example, members of the same faith-tradition or community.\textsuperscript{50}

Table 8.4.3.4, below, presents an overview of Faith Development Theory, showing, in outline, the development that might be expected at each of the stages. The following factors about FDT, however, are emphasized by Fowler, and should be taken into account when viewing the table:

\begin{itemize}
  \item The descriptions of the stages represent ‘still shots’ only in a dynamic process of faith development. Thus, transition from one stage to another is not by means of giant leaps, but rather by means of a gradual and sometimes unsettling dissolution of one way of constructing meaning, in order to reframe it in another. And (ordinarily) this process will take place across each and every one of the seven aspects of faith.\textsuperscript{51}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{47} Fowler, \textit{Stages of Faith}, 313-314.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, 89-90.
\textsuperscript{49} Fowler and Keen, \textit{Life Maps}, 38-39.
\textsuperscript{50} Fowler, \textit{Stages of Faith}, 99.
\textsuperscript{51} Fowler and Keen, \textit{Life Maps}, 37-38.
As part of a structural-developmental theory, Fowler’s stages of faith are held to be “invariant, sequential, and hierarchical”.\(^{52}\) However, ‘hierarchical’ used in this sense does not mean that the stages represent a scale either of worth or achievement.\(^{53}\)

Though Fowler’s understanding of faith itself is that it is generic and universal, he does not claim universality for the stages of faith.\(^{54,55}\)

It should further be noted that Stage 0: Primal (or Undifferentiated) Faith is a pre-language pre-stage, generally encompassing those aged up to two years. For this reason, it is not open to empirical research of the kind employed by Fowler, and, in turn, no specific structural characteristics can be given for it.\(^{56}\)

\(^{52}\) Fowler, *Faithful Change*, 57.


\(^{54}\) Fowler, *Faithful Change*, 56-57.

\(^{55}\) This may be due, among other things, to insufficient empirical research having been undertaken cross-culturally. See Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 315. Notwithstanding, work in this area is now underway. See, for example, Streib, ‘Faith Development Research at Twenty Years’, 15-42. In Osmer & Schweitzer (eds), *Developing a Public Faith*, 27-28.

\(^{56}\) Notwithstanding, short accounts of the stage are given by Fowler in various publications. See, for example, *Stages of Faith*, 121; *Faithful Change*, 57-58; *Weaving the New Creation*, 102-103.
Table 8.4.3.4: Overview of James W Fowler’s Faith-Development Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE of FAITH</th>
<th>Aspects of Faith</th>
<th>A: Form of Logic (Piaget)</th>
<th>B: Social Perspective Taking (Selman)</th>
<th>C: Form of Moral Judgment (Kohlberg)</th>
<th>D: Bounds of Social Awareness</th>
<th>E: Locus of Authority</th>
<th>F: Form of World Coherence</th>
<th>G: Symbolic Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>TYPICAL AGE</td>
<td>Patterns of thinking and reasoning</td>
<td>Ability and extent to which able to take the role/perspective of others</td>
<td>Approaching to moral issues. Modification of Kohlberg’s stages</td>
<td>By how much and in what way account is taken of the existence and views of others</td>
<td>On whom and extent to which rely for authoritative insights re ultimate environment</td>
<td>Ways to create unity and consistency in ultimate environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Primal</td>
<td>Infancy</td>
<td>Pre-language stage in which the polarities of trust and anxiety develop—to varying degrees—within the arena of mutual relationships with parents and/or others responsible for the infant’s primary care.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Intuitive- Projective Faith</td>
<td>Early childhood</td>
<td>Lack of inductive and deductive logic. Cause and effect poorly understood, leading to possible misinterpretation. Fact and fantasy hard to separate.</td>
<td>Limited ability. Own perceptual experience dominant. Egocentric thinking and valuing. Rudimentary empathy only.</td>
<td>Concepts of right/wrong not sufficiently developed to be considered ‘moral’. Visible result of actions and reward/punishment determine good/bad.</td>
<td>Parents’ and close family dominate world, but others will be included on the approval of the above. Distinctions of race/class, etc, not standard.</td>
<td>Parental (or surrogate) authority primal. Physical size and power also may be influential.</td>
<td>Experiences tend to be perceived as episodic, and stand-alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mythic-Literal Faith</td>
<td>Middle childhood &amp; beyond</td>
<td>Cause and effect now understood—though open to error. Elementary use of abstract concepts.</td>
<td>Developing in the ability to understand the viewpoint of others. Empathy thus increasing.</td>
<td>Reciprocal fairness emerging even in “you scratch my back, and I’ll scratch yours.” (Illustrative adage, Kohlberg’s).</td>
<td>Social world extending beyond family. Self-image may now include family in-groups—eg, social class, religious affiliation.</td>
<td>Still reliant on close and trusted others, but also on external authority figures. However, the views of the latter will be scrutinized in areas of own experience.</td>
<td>Stories &amp; myths used—not yet including reflections on meaning—to express experience and give coherence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Synthetic-Conventional Faith</td>
<td>Adolescence &amp; beyond</td>
<td>Thinking now expanding beyond the concrete. Some understanding of hypothetical consequences. Some evaluation of own thoughts and values.</td>
<td>Mutual role-taking. Third-person perspective now developed, leading to awareness of and concern about judgements. Virtues of others invariably used to judge the merit of their perspectives.</td>
<td>Moral judgement focussed on agreement and peace keeping, plus meeting the expectations of significant others.</td>
<td>Identity derived from group memberships (eg, peer, religion, interests) in which relationships are interpersonal. Out-groups viewed prejudicially, though some individuals may be valued.</td>
<td>Authority figures are those with solid, admirable, and trustworthy qualities; and those sanctioned by social institutions.</td>
<td>Values and beliefs—formed through interaction with significant groups and others—which may be contradictory, but which are now deeply felt and defended—coordinate into a working system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Individuative-Reflective Faith</td>
<td>Young adult – adulthood &amp; beyond</td>
<td>Reflectiveness on self and outlook evident. Boundaries of self establishing, including independent perspective, in quest for unique identity.</td>
<td>Building on the above, with self judgements now being made as from the perspective of the other. But others’ positions may be distorted to justify own position.</td>
<td>Morality now principled for some, but may be biased. For others, moral standards are changeable and not absolute (relativist).</td>
<td>Now belonging to a wide circle of groups from whom reference taken. Alert to perspectives of other groups but these generally assimilated to that of own.</td>
<td>Will look to those whose experience and outlook align with own.</td>
<td>Striving for a comprehensive, clear, and unified theology, and now readily employing abstract concepts to do so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conjunctive Faith</td>
<td>Early middle and beyond</td>
<td>Polarities and differences understood and embraced. All sides seen. Critical self-awareness.</td>
<td>Accuracy now prevails in perceiving others. May require the transcending of own viewpoint. Open to changing own position.</td>
<td>Moral judgement now principled and less open to bias. The indicative and the imperative inseparable in pursuit of justice.</td>
<td>Seeking to be open to, and identifying with, groups and classes other than own.</td>
<td>Authority as above, but must also have wide-ranging perspectives, and discipline of self. Internal authority increasing.</td>
<td>Multiple perspectives understood and informing. Does not need everything to be unified in that can now live with mystery and irrationality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Universalizing Faith</td>
<td>Middle and beyond</td>
<td>Shift in importance of self now at one with Being and ultimate environment. Able to relinquish self for love/justice.</td>
<td>Takes the perspective of the ideal. Thus actions will respect and encourage potential of all that is. Loyalty to Being the essential principle in moral reasoning. Actions consistent with this.</td>
<td>Profound regard for all that is—highly effective when in active mode.</td>
<td>Integral and non-egocentric authority, striving to attend to the requirements of Being</td>
<td>Outlook informed by a complex and plural unity. Includes each and all that is, but forms a oneness beyond this.</td>
<td>Mediating symbols wholly and fully understood. Shaping and regenerating of symbols.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57 The information presented in this table has been drawn from Fowler and Keen, Life Maps, 39-41; Fowler, Stages of Faith, 244-246; Fowler, Faithful Change, 57-67.
It is notable that transitions from one stage of faith to another are neither automatic nor inevitable. Fowler suggests that an intricate interaction of the developmental factors\(^58\) that underpin FDT—including new understandings of the way in which the functioning of the human brain affects emotional and cognitive behaviour—means that, while many people may indeed move sequentially through most of the stages, others may reach adulthood (by age and/or biology) and remain at a stage of faith more commonly associated with childhood or adolescence.\(^59\) For example, Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional faith, typically is constructed in adolescent years, but many adults remain at this stage of faith development.\(^60\) And, while Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective faith typically rises in early adulthood, it either does not form, or forms markedly later in life, for others.\(^61\)

A small number of people only will transition to Stage 6: Universalizing Faith, which is the rarest of the stages of faith. Indeed, one only of the 359 participants in Fowler’s study was found to be at this stage.\(^62\) Fowler puts forward the names of several historical figures whom he believes to have been at this faith-stage ultimately—Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, among them—and bases much of his subsequent exposition of the Stage on their biographies rather than on empirical evidence. He writes:

> The persons best described by it have generated faith compositions in which their felt sense of an ultimate environment is inclusive of all being. They have become incarnators and actualizers of a spirit of an inclusive and fulfilled human community...The rare persons who may be described by this stage have a special grace that makes them seem more lucid, more simple, and yet somehow more fully human than the rest of us.\(^63\)

However, he moves on to suggest that Stage 6 is not a stage of perfection:

> To be Stage 6 does not mean to be perfect, whether perfection be understood in a moral, psychological or a leadership sense. I do not believe that people set out to be Stage 6...It is my conviction that persons who come to embody Universalizing faith are drawn into these patterns of commitment and leadership by the providence of God and the exigencies of history. It is as though they are selected by the great Blacksmith of history, heated in the fires of turmoil and trouble and then hammered into usable shape on the hard anvil of conflict and struggle.\(^64\)

\(^{58}\) Fowler lists these as “biological maturation, emotional and cognitive development, psychosocial experience, and religio-cultural influences”. Fowler, Faithful Change, 57.

\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Fowler, Stages of Faith, 172.

\(^{61}\) Ibid, 182.

\(^{62}\) The participant in question was male, aged 61+ years. See Fowler, Stages of Faith, 320-322.

\(^{63}\) Ibid, 202.

\(^{64}\) Ibid.
Notwithstanding, the scarcity of people in this stage; its essentially beyond-reach nature; the change evident in method of analysis, and a perceived discontinuity in the structural patterns needed to attain the stage are among criticisms that have been levelled at FDT.  

8.4.3.5 Ongoing Research in Faith Development Theory

As suggested in section 8.4.1, above, Faith Development Theory continues to be of significance and influence both practically and theoretically almost forty years after research on it first began. In an invited article, published in 2004, Fowler moots the following three broad areas as among those in which the theory has been affirmed by others for its impact:

- In its characterization of what faith does and modelling of what faith is
- In its striving to extend understanding of structural developmental theory
- In its actual and potential uses within the field of religious education

And Heinz Streib stresses the invaluable foundations laid by FDT, providing a springboard for research in the areas of theology, psychology, religious education, and pastoral care.

Empirical research pursuing FDT has continued, now including some cross-cultural and cross-faith studies with a number of replicational and correlational studies having been undertaken by other researchers. Some of these qualitative studies—which have added significantly to the sample 359 interviews undertaken by Fowler and his associates—have employed the research interview as framed by Fowler, but others have used variations of the interview. And new qualitative approaches—such as the use of narrative measures as both a research instrument and an analytical tool—have been mooted and are being introduced.

Furthermore, some quantitative instruments of measurement have been devised in an endeavour to expedite and exponentially extend the reach of the research. However, the nature of quantitative instruments—assuming as they do a reality that is fixed, and

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66 As noted elsewhere in this chapter, the interviews that underpin FDT were conducted between 1972 and 1981. Ref: Fowler, Stages of Faith, 313.

67 James W Fowler ‘Faith Development at 30: Challenges of Faith in a New Millennium’.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Streib, ‘Faith Development at Twenty Years’, 15.

71 Ibid, 29.
emphasizing facts over values\textsuperscript{72}—necessarily means that they are more restricted in focus than qualitative instruments such as FDT. For example, the Faith Development Scale (FDS),\textsuperscript{73} constructed in 1999 by Gary K Leak and his associates,\textsuperscript{74} has been openly derived from Fowler’s Faith Development Theory, but has a purpose that is markedly different from it. Leak writes:

Our measure was designed to yield an overall index of current faith development...rather than to provide indexes of development at each faith stage or to assess movement from one stage to the next. For this reason our instrument could more properly be seen as measuring differences in types or styles of faith, rather than stages of faith development.\textsuperscript{75}

And—though the authors of the latter instrument suggest that FDS is a “global faith development measure”\textsuperscript{76}—it is notable from an examination of the instrument itself that it would not be suitable for use with those outside organized religion.\textsuperscript{77}

### 8.4.4 A Critique of Faith Development Theory

By necessity, the above presentation of Fowler’s now-seminal work is in overview only—contracting more than thirty-five years’ work by Fowler, his associates, and countless other researchers to a mere four-thousand-word account. For that reason, it would be folly to attempt to present here an all-embracing and wholly original critique of it in that, quite plainly, a corpus of such magnitude would need first to be examined to a depth and in a detail that would move quickly beyond the scope and brief of the current thesis. It is interesting to note from the literature, however, that this very factor appears to have opened FDT to various subjective interpretations over the years—differing from those of Fowler—in terms of what the theory represents, and how it has been framed. It will be seen later in this chapter, for example, that misgivings were expressed by a group of US students at what they interpreted to be the hierarchical nature of Fowler’s theory. The context of the group’s criticism makes it clear that

\textsuperscript{72} For a comparison table differentiating between the two modes of inquiry, see Chapter Five, section 5.3.3.
\textsuperscript{73} FDS is an eight-item scale employing eight pairs of statements (A and B) from which participants select the one which best reflects their situation. One of the pair in each case constitutes what is deemed to be a greater level of faith development (equivalent to approximately Stage 4 or 5 as constructed by Fowler), and one of which constitutes faith that is at a lower level (approximating to Fowler’s Stage 2 or 3). See Gary K Leak, Anne A Loucks, & Patricia Bowlin, ‘Development and Initial Validation of an Objective Measure of Faith Development’, 108, In International Journal for the Psychology of Religion 9/2 (1999): 105-124.
\textsuperscript{74} Leak, Loucks, & Bowlin, ‘Development and an Initial Validation of an Objective Measure of Faith Development’, 105-124.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, 107.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid, 108.
\textsuperscript{77} For example, participants must make a choice between statement (A): “I believe that my church offers a full insight into what God wants for us and how we should worship him”; and statement (B) “I believe that my church has much to offer, but that other religions can also provide many religious insights”. Leak, ‘Factorial Validity of the Faith Development Scale’, 131.
‘hierarchical’ in that instance was being defined to mean superiority of worth and achievement. However—and, again, as noted elsewhere in this chapter—Fowler attempted to pre-empt such concerns in 1978 by expressly stressing the point that it would be a “serious mistake” for the stages of faith to be viewed in those terms (notwithstanding, and in common with other stage-like theories of human development, FDT necessarily must be seen as a sequential theory of developmental stages).

Such subjective interpretations apart, wide-ranging and ongoing debate has been and continues to be undertaken by scholars working in the broad arena of FDT—in and of itself a sign of the impact of the work. A literature review undertaken by Sharon Daloz Parks, encompassing some six years of intense debate in the US following the publication of Stages of Faith, highlighted the emergence of two primary areas of critical dialogue. These related to:

- Fowler’s broad conceptualization of faith
- The framing and portrayal of Stage 6: Universalizing Faith

Other reservations were raised over FDT’s ability to adequately engage all religious traditions; its emphasis on cognition and knowledge (to the detriment of the human imagination, affect, and the unconscious mind), and its socio-political perspective, especially as it relates to women.

In addition, suggestions have been made that the theory, though based on empirical research almost wholly undertaken with participants from within religious traditions, insufficiently embraces the consciously-religious dimension of humanity through which some individuals may find meaning. Mary Ford-Grabowsky, for example, posits that “...the post-
modern era is challenging [Fowler’s] model of faith-development as theologically deficient, inadequate to account for the depths of the Christian faith life."\(^{85}\)\(^{86}\)

8.4.5 The Emergent Typology in Relation to Faith Development Theory

Fowler’s post-Stages of Faith publications together could be said to present an effective response to the latter censure of his work,\(^{87}\) but nevertheless Ford-Grabowsky’s criticism highlights well the area in which the emergent *Typology of Relational Spirituality (TRS)* may sit most comfortably in relation to FDT. And this is useful in that the differing nature and purpose of the two models in question is such that attempting to align, compare, or contrast the respective stages and types of each would appear to be an unproductive, even futile, exercise.\(^{88}\) It can be seen, however, that though—in contrast to FDT—TRS is a fledgling typology, currently bound to a limited sample-population, and significantly more restricted in breadth and depth, nonetheless it is a model of spirituality that is able to highlight differences between people according to the way in which they view and interact with the D/divine. And not only does it feature the contents of spirituality, but it is able to indicate the proportion of focus placed by each type-grouping (or, indeed, by each individual within each type-grouping) on D/divine matters in relation to that placed on both the self and others. Plainly, as a generalized stage-model of faith development, highlighting the structural characteristics (or aspects) that underpin faith/spirituality, these are areas that FDT was not designed to cover.

Table 8.3, above, clearly shows that both major and minor differences between the two models and their methodologies abound—not least in terms of construction, operation, scope, size and intent—but similarities also are evident.\(^{89}\) And among the most important of

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86 Today, some eighteen years after this criticism was levelled, it might be argued that postmodern interest no longer is seeking to account for the depths of the faith life of Christians, but rather the faith life of all humans, no matter what their beliefs.
88 Certainly—and by way of example—it might be said that parallels exist between *Type S6: The Spiritually Serene* of TRS and Stages 5 or 6 of FDT; and thus *Type S6* might best be situated somewhere between these stages. But such an exercise quickly breaks-down elsewhere, making dialogue in this area too convoluted to be either practical or helpful.
89 For example, within both models/studies: (1) faith/spirituality is viewed as dynamic and evolving; (2) storytelling is encouraged within the interview framework; (3) the initial sample-population was Christian or predominantly-Christian; (4) the small sample-size within one stage/type led to a necessarily-theorized account of that stage/type; (5) descriptions of the stage/types comprise formal generalizations only; (6)
these likenesses for the purposes of this discussion, at least, are that both FDT and TRS assume that:

- faith/spirituality is not the exclusive domain of the actively religious
- faith/spirituality is inherently relational
- the relational nature of faith/spirituality is triadic

Evidently, then, though currently limited to the adult Christian population in and through which it was constructed, TRS—in keeping with FDT—has the potential to be expanded to be a universal instrument that is not limited to the actively religious. And the above fundamental parallels ultimately might make it both feasible and beneficial to combine the two models in an attempt to add to knowledge of ‘the other half’ of the human story, which, Fowler suggests, necessarily is missing from FDT.90 Further, it may be that the presentational Relational-Self Model of Spirituality (see Chapter Seven) has the potential to provide a practical format through which to chart and display salient features of such ‘human stories’.

As noted above, Fowler himself mooted the potential of FDT to be expanded “by cross-cutting it with an empirically tested typology”.91 And were this to be undertaken using the emergent Typology of Relational Spirituality, a first step in testing the combination might be for the faith-development instrument—utilized either in its full form, or using an associated instrument of measure such as Leak’s Faith Development Scale92—to be applied to the participants of the current research.93 Once the faith-stage of every participant had been established, it would quickly become apparent whether or not any of the six types that currently constitute the TRS were associated with any particular stage of faith; and whether or not a type was limited in terms of developmental reach (in which case, that type might then be understood to be more transient, and prone to type-migration). Further, it would be evident if some types manifestly had a developmental model of sorts within them; and/or whether signs existed of faith/spiritual development across and between the types. It might also make plain

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90 Fowler, ‘Faith Development Theory and Practical Theology’. See discussion at 8.3.1, above.
92 For further details, see 8.4.3.5, above.
93 Notwithstanding, TRS was constructed with a small sample-population of adult participants only, which necessarily would restrict the exercise in terms of the number of faith-stages that might be evident.
where any faith-stage gaps existed either within the typology or, indeed, within its participant population.

Were the outcome of that exercise to be successful, a next step might be to expand it by undertaking it in a reverse situation, with FDT participants classified according to TRS types.\(^{94}\) As part of this process, were each extant FDT interview to be coded into a relational triad—the alternative interview questions of each study notwithstanding\(^{95}\)—it might be expected that a distinctive pattern would emerge across and between FDT participants. And, in light of several of the findings of the current study—as detailed in Chapter Seven\(^{96}\)—it seems feasible to suggest that individuals at certain stages of faith might be found, on average, to manifest relational triads that were comparable.

The completion of both the above exercises would facilitate a ready examination of the relational triad according to Fowler’s stages of faith. Were the relational triad of all participants within each faith-stage to be averaged-out, it would be interesting to discover what pattern—if any—would emerge across the stages. Would the Solitary Self, for example, be at its highest point for those at stages 1 or 2, but gradually give way to the Humanity-related Self at later stages of faith, in line with the emergence of an increasing awareness of other people and perspectives? Would those at faith-stages 4, 5, and 6 have a relational triad that showed an incremental flattening-out across the selves? Would the unique qualities and characteristics of those at Stage 6 manifest in a triad that had a markedly-high Divine-related Self? Or would these same aspects display instead as an even spread across the triad, such as that manifest by three members of the TRS’s Spiritually Serene?

\(^{94}\) An exercise which currently, of course, would need to be limited to adult FDT participants identifying with the Christian tradition.

\(^{95}\) It is recognized that profound differences in the nature of the interview questions between the two studies would prohibit direct comparisions being made across the respective participant-populations. The non-specific nature of the questions behind the TRS model, for example, do not point to an answer in any particular relational area (S, H or D). In contrast, some of Fowler’s questions are more specifically directed—the following, for example: “When you think of your father as he was during the time you were a child, what stands out? What was his work? What were his special interests? Was he a religious person?” (Ref: Fowler, Stages of Faith, 311). Plainly, this compound-question requires an answer that necessarily must fall into a specific area of the relational triad (namely—and predominantly—the Humanity-related Self), and would be classified accordingly. While this would not prevent potentially-enlightening comparisons being made between the relational-triads of participants within either one of the populations, such a bias would prohibit effective comparisons of individuals across and between the two populations.

\(^{96}\) See, for example, the relational triad averaged according to the age-decade of participants (section 7.4.2); and that for those with formative training (section 7.3.1.4).
These questions cannot be answered here, of course, with each requiring considerable additional research. However, inevitably, the findings of any such undertakings would throw further light on the ‘human story’, as Fowler puts it, of the participants—both individually and collectively.

**NOTE:** James W Fowler’s Faith Development Theory has been used here as a representative model of human development with which to dialogue and round which to situate the emergent typology. While Fowler’s model was considered the most fitting model for the purpose, it is acknowledged that other models of human development have been constructed—both before and after FDT—each of which has added immeasurably to the field in terms of knowledge, insight, and innovation.\(^97\)

### 8.5 Faith Styles and John R Mabry

#### 8.5.1 Introduction

Not surprisingly, given the eventual outcome of the current study, models that align more directly with the emergent findings than the developmental model considered above, are typological models of spirituality. And three contemporary typologies will be considered here. As before, an exposition of each model will be given before that model is considered in dialogue with the **Typology of Relational Spirituality**. Unlike the foregoing discussion, however, the intention is not to integrate each model with the TRS, but rather to draw out areas of relevance and significance.

The first typology to be considered in this way is the Faith Styles’ model constructed by John R Mabry.

#### 8.5.2 The Author\(^98\)

John R Mabry has a background as a moderate within the Southern Baptist church in the US, but now is a universalist serving as pastor of an interfaith liturgical community in California.

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\(^97\) Among the best known of these are the maturational models of Erik Erikson (eight/nine psychosocial stages) and Daniel Levinson (adult-focused; four ‘seasons’ of life); and the structurally-based models of Jean Piaget (child-focused; four/five stages of cognitive development), Lawrence Kohlberg (male-focused; six stages—three principal stages, each sub-divided—of moral development), Carol Gilligan (female-focused, and essentially a response to Kohlberg; three stages of moral development), Jane Loevinger (ten stages of ego-development), and Daniel Helminiak (linked to the work of Bernard Lonergan. Adult focused, linked to intelligence; five stages of spiritual development).

and bishop for the Old Catholic Order of Holy Wisdom. He is Director of the Spiritual Direction program at the Chaplaincy Institute for Arts and Interfaith Ministry, where he teaches interfaith theology, world religions, and spiritual direction. Mabry has authored or contributed to numerous publications. His research interests include early Jewish Christian literature.

8.5.3 Faith Styles Explored

8.5.3.1 Faith Styles: What it is and how it was Developed

Unlike James Fowler, John Mabry does not attempt to clarify what he means by ‘faith’, but, on reading his publication Faith Styles: Ways People Believe, it becomes evident that his is a much narrower understanding of the word than that of Fowler. Mabry clearly aligns faith with religion and religious belief, and thus it is no surprise that his Faith Styles’ model is a typological-assessment model presenting styles of human belief.

Mabry reveals that his 2006 typology emerged from his first-hand awareness of dissatisfaction with earlier models of development such as that of Fowler, and the simplified version of Fowler’s model put together by M Scott Peck. Specifically, it was born as a result of his spiritual-guidance students criticizing what they perceived to be the hierarchical nature of these models, and Mabry himself seeing limiting factors in models in which later stages are implied to be somehow superior to earlier ones. Thus, he set out to improve the situation.

Inspired by an unpublished model constructed by a colleague, Jürgen Schwing, in which four styles of faith—all deemed of equal merit—were mooted, Mabry went on to develop it further. Data was gathered from first-hand knowledge of his own spiritual-guidance clients, parishioners, and others, but came primarily from responses to a survey Mabry sent out by e-mail to “literally thousands” of people of various faiths around the world. Some fifty

100 See comment at section 8.4.4, above.
101 Mabry, Faith Styles, vii-ix.
102 Schwing’s Spiritual Care Assessment Model of faith styles encompasses The Humanist (for whom humanity is the highest spirit, and no God exists); The Theist (who looks to God, and the respective scripture appropriate to their faith, for guidance); The Spiritual Person (who believes in God or a Higher Being, and is guided mostly by first-hand encounters of the sacred); and The Mystic (who actively seeks experience of the Divine through higher levels of consciousness). Mabry, Faith Styles, xii-xiii.
103 Mabry, Faith Styles, xiv.
104 Ibid.
responses were returned, including from those holding to atheist, agnostic, and humanist positions, in addition to members of the following faiths and denominations:

- Buddhist
- Catholic
- Jewish
- Mainstream Christianity
- Evangelical
- Unitarian Universalist

Members of the Muslim, Hindu, Jain and Sikh faith-traditions also were approached for the survey, but none responded.  

A difficulty that arises in considering the nature and strength of Mabry’s model comes from his not including a copy of the e-mailed survey in his book, nor, indeed, detailing how the ensuing data was analysed. However, in that Mabry presents composite case-studies describing the six emerging styles, a qualitative approach appears to have been taken. Furthermore, the author discusses each faith-style in terms of eight ‘key’ and ‘defining’ questions, and notes that the survey responses were the primary source on which he drew for these discussions. Thus, it seems likely that these questions—noted below—were included in one form or another within Mabry’s e-mail survey.

- How is the Divine imaged?
- What is the nature of one’s relationship with the Divine?
- How does one construct meaning in the world?
- What are the accepted sources of spiritual wisdom?
- How is spiritual growth assessed?
- What spiritual disciplines and practices are honoured?
- What are the advantages of the style?
- What are the disadvantages?

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105 Ibid.
106 In Mabry’s defence, the book in which the typology is presented clearly has been written as a working tool for spiritual directors, rather than as an academic paper. Thus, the author may have felt it unnecessary and/or superfluous to detail in it his research-design and methodology.
107 Mabry, Faith Styles, xiv.
Faith Styles: What it Aims to Do

Mabry’s express purpose in creating Faith Styles was to shed light on differing styles of belief in order to equip spiritual guides and other caring professionals in their work with clients.\textsuperscript{108} Not only, he suggests, would knowledge of the Faith Styles’ model enable a spiritual guide to assess his/her own style of faith—and with it an awareness of how that style might influence interactions with a client—but it would facilitate a speedy assessment of the faith style of a client, highlighting any potential conflict of style between guide and client.\textsuperscript{109} He notes:

[We] will feel more comfortable with clients whose faith styles reflects our own, and in fact we may find that we are best at guiding people of some styles while we are utterly incapable of guiding people of other styles. This is simply a fact, and there is no shame in it. Rare indeed is the spiritual guide who can companion people of every faith style with equal efficacy.\textsuperscript{110}

Furthermore, understanding the faith-style of a client would help the guide in knowing how best to structure meetings; in making recommendations, and in assessing the client’s progress.\textsuperscript{111}

8.5.3.3 Faith Styles: An Overview

Mabry’s assessment-model offers a detailed description, including a composite case study, of each of the six styles of faith he is putting forward. Visually, he presents the model as The Faith-Styles Wheel, comprising two overlaid triangles—forming a six-point star—placed on a circle (see Figure 8.5.3.3a, below). The three points of the first triangle, The Primary Triangle—see Figure 8.5.3.3b—represent what Mabry describes as “the most obvious and mutually-exclusive”\textsuperscript{112} of the styles of belief: Traditional Believers, Spiritual Eclectics, and Ethical Humanists. The three points on The Secondary Triangle—see Figure 8.5.3.3c—represent styles of belief that fall in between those of The Primary Triangle; namely, Liberal Believers, Religious Agnostics, and Jack Believers. Visually, Ethical Humanists are placed at the top point of the star, followed, in a clockwise direction, by Jack Believers, Traditional Believers, Liberal Believers, Spiritual Eclectics, and Religious Agnostics.

A synopsis of each of these styles is given beneath the models.

\textsuperscript{108} Mabry expressly prefers the terms ‘spiritual guides’ and ‘clients’ to ‘spiritual directors’ and ‘directees’—considering the latter two terms to be “misleading” and “awkward and obfuscatory”, respectively. For this reason, Mabry’s favoured terms are used in this discussion. Ref: Mabry, Faith Styles, xv.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid, xiii.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, facing page 1.
Figure 8.5.3.3a: The Faith Styles Wheel of John R Mabry

This figure has been copied (redrawn) from the original in Mabry, Faith Styles, 88.
Figure 8.5.3.3b: The Primary Triangle of the Faith Styles Wheel of John R Mabry

This figure has been copied (redrawn) from the original in Mabry, *Faith Styles*, xvi.
The Primary Triangle: (a) The Traditional Believer\textsuperscript{115}

The world of Mabry’s Traditional Believer—in whatever religion and denomination he or she may be based—is hierarchical and highly structured, headed by an all-powerful, but loving and merciful Divine. The Divine—generally male, and a father-figure—seeks a relationship with every person, and choosing to enter into such a relationship of grace is the means to salvation for The Traditional Believer. Furthermore, the Divine has a chosen path for him/her, and the Traditional Believer’s meaning and purpose in life comes in the process of discerning what this might be, though s/he retains free will and freedom of choice. Scripture and tradition form the basis for spiritual learning and wisdom; and prayer, the reading of scripture, and worship are important practices. The benefits of this style of faith—which, Mabry posits, is the most common of the six faith styles—include a sense of safety and security which comes with its structures. Disadvantages include the potential for the occasionally-devastating consequences of mistaking human authority for Divine authority, and the potential to disrespect those who hold to other faiths in that this type of believer considers his/her faith to be the only true one.\textsuperscript{116}

The Primary Triangle: (b) Spiritual Eclectics\textsuperscript{117}

In contrast to Traditional Believers, Spiritual Eclectics do not hold to one faith tradition; and, though often influenced by Eastern traditions, tend to embrace a mix-and-match approach. They are highly active spiritually, and invariably will be pantheists, viewing all that is as One. Seeing the Divine in everything, including within themselves, it is primarily self-knowledge that gives the Spiritual Eclectic access to the Divine. Emerging from the ‘hippie’ youth culture of the nineteen-sixties, this style of faith tends to bring with it an intense interest in environmental, social, and justice issues; and meaning comes from honouring, preserving, and serving the world and its creatures. Spiritual practices will be many and varied, and generally embodied, making exercise and active service important. Wisdom can be found anywhere and everywhere, including from any of the faith traditions, but the supreme spiritual authority for the Spiritual Eclectic is likely to come from within. A strength of this style of faith is the respect and advocacy it shows for humanity and the world in its diversity. However, the Spiritual Eclectic’s willingness to embrace new paths while tending to lack spiritual discernment, coupled with

\textsuperscript{115} This overview of The Traditional Believer style of faith has been drawn from Mabry, Faith Styles, 1-12.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} This overview of The Spiritual Eclectic style of faith has been drawn from Ibid, 13-30.
being without support from an established faith community, may make him/her vulnerable to enticement from potential abusers.\footnote{Ibid.}

\textit{The Primary Triangle: (c) Ethical Humanists}\footnote{This overview of The Ethical Humanist style of faith has been drawn from Ibid, 31-46.}

The third point on Mabry’s Primary Triangle signifies the Ethical Humanist—a style of faith which incorporates atheists and (non-religious) agnostics. Those holding to this style do not believe in a creator God or gods, but rather that such gods are human creations. Ethical Humanists, as their title suggests, have a strong sense of the ethical; and the divine for them is likely to be found in the awe, mystery, diversity, and beauty of life itself. Displaying deep compassion and respect for their fellow earth dwellers, of every form, they feel bound to the natural world, and have a sense of responsibility toward it. Meaning—and, indeed, growth—comes from living in the best way possible, whether in terms of knowledge, wisdom, or practical interaction. Spiritual wisdom comes from rational thought; the scientific method; peers and mentors, and from personal observations. Plainly, the Ethical Humanist is free to explore, wonder, question, and act as s/he sees fit, not bound to religious doctrine or in relationship with a transcendent Divine. Drawbacks of this faith-style are the potential for anxiety emerging from having no concept of life-after-death; lacking the advantages known to come from belonging to a faith-community; and an apparent prejudice from religious believers.\footnote{Ibid.}
Figure 8.5.3.3c: The Secondary Triangle of Mabry’s Faith Styles Wheel

This diagram has been copied (redrawn) from the original in Mabry, Faith Styles, 48.
The Secondary Triangle: (a) Liberal Believers

Liberal Believers begin The Secondary Triangle of Mabry’s *Faith Styles Wheel*. Those of this faith-style have adapted their belief to embrace human knowledge, reason, and personal experience, grounding their particular faith-tradition in the present-day reality of their culture and time. Essentially, this is an internal shift which affords the individual authenticity in developing an-often unique approach to the Divine, at the same time as they may choose to utilize conventional manifestations of their established tradition. The Liberal Believer’s relationship with the Divine is one of love and friendship, with the Divine generally imaged as an intimate companion (in contrast to the Traditional Believer’s relationship of fear and obedience with all-powerful Father or ruler). Liberal Believers recognize the legitimacy and worth of alternative routes to the Divine, but are sincere and unreserved in their own faith-practices, which invariably will centre on contemplative reflection. Scripture is important to them, but the interpretation of sacred texts will be undertaken in the context of contemporary culture and time. The spiritual growth of Liberal Believers can be assessed in terms of their increasing wisdom, compassion, and degree to which they achieve personal authenticity and realization. This is a flexible and inclusive faith-type, which necessarily opens its practitioners fully to all people, regardless of their belief or unbelief. However, a downside is that it cannot offer the comfort of certainties or clarity-of-belief that come with other faith-types.

The Secondary Triangle: (b) Religious Agnostics

Despite their intrigue with matters of faith—to the extent that some may be teachers or preachers of it—Religious Agnostics have a faith-style that is both motivated and dominated by a concern for uncovering the difference between the improbable and the probable. Open, honest, and deep thinkers, they realize that they do not know enough to be able to believe in anything other than a divine within, and they may view the divine somewhat metaphorically—most aptly as ‘Mystery’. Religious Agnostics are likely to explore ideas from different faiths—if somewhat carefully and sceptically—but will see meaning only in the subjective and the existential. Thus scriptural material from all or any of the faith-traditions may be a potential source of wisdom, but it will be examined thoroughly and filtered to uncover the existential

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122 This overview of The Liberal Believer style of faith has been drawn from Mabry, *Faith Styles*, 49-64.
123 Ibid.
124 This overview of The Religious Agnostic style of faith has been drawn from Ibid, 65-76.
truth that is being sought. Religious Agnostics have an affiliation with the natural world; appreciate beauty, and actively strive for a better world in terms of justice and rights. Their spiritual growth can be gauged in numerous ways, including an increasing sense of internal peace in the face of ongoing existential disquiet, but most noticeably in a gradual move from concern with self towards empathetic and philanthropic service. Walking the path between belief and unbelief may not make for the easiest journey, but Religious Agnostics nonetheless have a sense of authenticity in being grounded in present reality, and often are able to relate to people of all faith-styles.  

The Secondary Triangle: (c) Jack Believers

Jack Believers are those who are inherently familiar with a faith-tradition—perhaps having grown-up within it—and who acquiesce inwardly with its code of belief, but nonetheless find themselves unable to live outwardly within its bounds. Among their ranks are those who are perceived as being ‘different’ or rebellious in some way. Mabry describes this as “the saddest point on the wheel”, “utterly unenviable”, and to be “universally pitied”, in that those of this faith-style feel estranged and isolated: condemned by both others and themselves to remain where they are, while getting nothing of spiritual value from their belief-system. For example, Jack Believers may consult Scriptures, but will read in a way in which condemning messages only will be drawn out. And the Divine is depicted as an angry judge, with themselves the already-convicted black sheep in the family of the Traditional Believer. This negative worldview and low sense of self-esteem ultimately may lead to destructive behaviours—a path which, of course, exacerbates their situation. Alternatively, Jack Believers may join forces with similar others, possibly within a cult or the occult, and work actively against those by whom they feel shunned. No positives are evident for those of this faith orientation.

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125 Ibid.
126 This overview of The Jack Believer style of faith has been drawn from Ibid, 77-87.
127 Ibid, 79.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid, 86.
130 Ibid, 77-87.
8.5.3.4 Migration to Other Faith Styles

Mabry posits that styles of faith are not necessarily fixed, with migration possible from one style to another around the Faith-Styles’ Wheel; and he offers suggestions to spiritual guides on how best to companion such journeys.\textsuperscript{131} However, in that the three styles on the Primary Triangle are deemed mutually exclusive, any migration is most likely to be to an adjacent point on the Wheel—in other words, a shift to one of the two nearest points on the opposite Triangle—rather than to another point on the same Triangle.\textsuperscript{132}

8.5.3.5 Faith Styles Compared

For purposes of easy comparison, Table 8.5.3.5, below, highlights attributes of, and contrasts between, each of the six styles.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid, 99-124.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid, 99-100.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 8.5.3.5: Faith Styles’ Comparison Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**FAITH STYLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Primary Triangle</th>
<th>The Secondary Triangle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Believers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spiritual Eclectics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Image</td>
<td>Sovereign of Universe, benevolent father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with Divine</td>
<td>Hierarchical—the believer as a child in the divine family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of meaning</td>
<td>Through discerning and acting-out the will of the Divine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of spiritual wisdom</td>
<td>Scripture and tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing spiritual growth</td>
<td>The extent to which the believer submits his/her will to that of the Divine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplines and practices</td>
<td>Prayer, study of scripture, corporate worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantages</td>
<td>Security. Clear answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantages</td>
<td>Rrigidity, spiritual arrogance, blind obedience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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133 This tabulated information has been drawn, for the most part verbatim, from summations of the six styles of faith given by John Mabry in Mabry, *Faith Styles*, 11-12, 29, 46, 63-64, 76 & 87.
8.5.3.6 Faith Styles in Spiritual Guidance

In addition to explicating the six styles, Mabry details what he sees as the ‘best fit’ of styles between spiritual guide and client. Potentially suitable and unsuitable matches—all generalizations, subject to exception—are illustrated in Table 8.5.3.6, below.\(^\text{134}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8.5.3.6(^\text{135})</th>
<th>Faith-style as a measure of compatibility between spiritual guides and clients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAITH-STYLE OF CLIENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>FAITH-STYLE OF GUIDE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Believer</td>
<td>Highly effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Eclectic</td>
<td>Highly effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Humanist</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Believer</td>
<td>Possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Agnostic</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Believer</td>
<td>Highly effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spiritual guides who are Traditional Believers are the only style unsuited to companioning clients from a faith-tradition other than their own, notes Mabry—a factor that implicitly serves to highlight the somewhat ‘closed’ and non-inclusive nature of this faith-style. And, while Mabry’s tacit omission of Jack Believers as spiritual guides is not unexpected given the nature of the style, his inclusion of up to four styles of guide whom he believes would make suitable companions for Jack Believers is more surprising given the latter’s high degree of estrangement, and the subsequent unlikelihood that they would seek-out such guidance.\(^\text{136}\)

8.5.4 A Critique of John Mabry’s Faith Styles’ Model

It is evident that, in line with both the emergent TRS and the other typological models presented here, John R Mabry’s Faith Styles’ model does not offer the breadth or depth of human understanding as that offered by Fowler’s Faith Development Theory. Indeed, while FDT—as a developmental model—endeavours to answer the ‘why?’ ‘when?’ and ‘how?’

\(^{134}\) Mabry, *Faith Styles*, 89-98.

\(^{135}\) This tabulated information has been drawn from *Ibid*.

questions of human spirituality, Faith Styles simply addresses the ‘what?’ Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Faith Styles achieves what the author explicitly set out to do with it: it is indeed a non-developmental, non-hierarchical (at least for the most part—see below), model of spiritual assessment, which appears highly likely to assist spiritual guides in their work with clients.\footnote{Indeed, as footnoted above, the work was published by Spiritual Directors’ International—a factor which, in and of itself, would indicate that such information is held to be of value by spiritual directors.} Adventurous in endeavouring to embrace all religious traditions and other spiritual leanings, a clear strength of the model is that it advocates a level-playing field across and between the styles of faith, potentially paving the way for important inter-faith dialogue.

Mabry’s use of composite case-studies—drawn both from his live data and from his practice as a spiritual guide—throughout helps to illustrate and clarify the various faith-styles he presents, and he wisely cautions that his descriptions are generalizations that present an overview of each style rather than necessarily a perfect fit for the faith-style of any particular individual. Notwithstanding, while noting his acknowledgement that the model represents a beginning that “can only scratch the surface”,\footnote{Mabry, \textit{Faith Styles}, 125.} the specific areas he puts forward for further research appear to suggest that, taken together, the six styles of faith essentially are comprehensive.\footnote{Mabry’s noted interest for areas of further research include the discovery of the percentage of the US population fitting into each of the styles; faith-style according to geographical location, and faith-style according to generational population. No express suggestion is made of the possibility of uncovering additional faith-styles. Ref: Ibid.} The current research findings would appear to dispute that, and thus the breadth and scope of Faith Styles in relation to the TRS will be explored, below.

Though the exact form and wording of Mabry’s e-mail survey are not given in his publication, the questions round which the author frames his explications predominantly cover only what the current research model might deem the ‘Divine-related Self’. Of course, Mabry does not aver to be doing anything other than talking of faith-considerations (narrowly defined), but it would have been interesting to have had some indication of the framing of an individual’s relationship with others and indeed him/herself, which (within the Christian faith at least) might be said to be integral to that faith.

For the most part, Mabry has used live data through which to frame his faith styles. But the one exception to this is with the style that also appears to be the most controversial—at least in terms of its inclusion within the typology. No ‘Jack Believers’ responded to Mabry’s
survey, so the author’s extrapolation of the style is drawn entirely from his first-hand observations. And, plainly, the Jack Believer is not a style to be desired in that Mabry paints it in a wholly negative light. This raises some questions over whether or not Faith Styles is a completely non-hierarchical typology, especially in that—as noted in earlier discussions—context appears to suggest that ‘hierarchical’ for Mabry means a structure in which each consecutive stage is deemed superior in terms of merit and accomplishment. And, surely, the undesirable Jack Believer style might be said to be inferior to all other styles of the typology. Notwithstanding, a second query that might be raised here is whether or not the Jack Believer is a faith style in keeping with the other five, or whether it might more fittingly be deemed a personality style.

Finally, Mabry’s setting out of the six faith styles as consecutive points on a visual star-shaped ‘wheel’ is helpful in providing instant information about the styles which are most compatible in outlook and action, and between which migration might occur. Movement between some styles seems unlikely, however. For example, while migration from Traditional Believer to its neighbouring Liberal Believer seems feasible, a move in the reverse direction seems less likely in the Western world of the twenty-first century; requiring, among other things, a major shift from a faith formation that has already consciously embraced human knowledge and reason, and an attitude of inclusivity toward those of other faiths, to a position that is diametrically opposed.

8.5.5 The Emergent Typology in Relation to Faith Styles

Plainly, the emergent Typology of Relational Spirituality encompasses features relating not only to (what the latter terms) the Divine-related Self of the individual, but also to both the Solitary and the Humanity-related selves. However, in that the Faith Styles’ model, by design, is concerned primarily with the former, and, in addition, it is this same component of self which constitutes the primary area of distinction between TRS types, this discussion necessarily will focus on this area.

140 Such a change in methodology also is evident within James Fowler’s model, of course, and, indeed, within the current research—in that low numbers made the extrapolation of Type S6, in particular, somewhat hypothetical.

141 See Mabry, Faith Styles, viii.
The inclusion of survey-participants identifying as atheist, agnostic, and humanist, alongside those of Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist persuasion among Mabry’s respondents makes it no surprise that the Faith Styles’ typology has a wider and more general reach than that of TRS. On the other hand, however, with each study employing an almost-equal number of participants, the more intensive methodology employed in the TRS study, plus the concentration of its participants from within one Christian denomination only, means that the typology that was constructed from the latter study is likely to have emerged as more specific and refined. Certainly, by way of example, the Traditional Believer of Mabry’s typology appears to be a composite of up to three of the TRS types—S1: The Spiritually Surrendered, S2: The Spiritually Spirited, and S4: The Spiritually Sustained—though the type-description does not constitute an exact fit with any of the latter types.

Where other types are concerned, limited parallels are evident between the faith-expression of Mabry’s Liberal Believers and that of both S3: The Spiritually Serene, and S4: The Spiritually Sustained of the TRS. And certain traits (but by no means all) of Mabry’s Ethical Humanists and Religious Agnostics also may be evident among those of Type S3: The Spiritually Serene of the TRS. Conversely, there is no evident parallel within the Faith Styles’ model of either TRS type S5: The Spiritually Settled or S6: The Spiritually Sceptical.

On the whole, then, no robust links are evident between the two models per se, with no direct parallel of type. One of the reasons for this becomes apparent when one realizes that at least two of Mabry’s types—Spiritual Eclectics and Ethical Humanists—lie outside the current bounds of the continuum of spiritual types of the TRS (see Chapter Seven, Figure 7.12). This might have been expected given the different source-populations of the studies, but it does serve to suggest that, with further research, the TRS continuum could be expanded to encompass not only those of other faiths and denominations, but also those with no doctrinal beliefs. Furthermore, the marked difference in content between the typologies raises the possibility that drawing on a wider sample-population in future studies might indeed uncover

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142 It is acknowledged, however, that Mabry also drew information from his knowledge of spiritual guidance clients, and parishioners (though precisely how many, and to what degree, is unknown). See section 8.5.3.1, above.

143 This may suggest that the Faith Styles’ typology is too broadly generalized in that cognizance of the significant differences between these types seems likely to enhance the effectiveness of spiritual guides—at whom Mabry’s work is directed—in their interactions with clients of these types.
sub-types situated between the emergent types on the continuum—as suggested in Chapter Seven.

8.6 Finding Faith—Richard Flory and Donald E Miller

8.6.1 Introduction

A further contemporary typology is that constructed and set out by Richard Flory and Donald Miller in their 2008 publication, *Finding Faith: The Spiritual Quest of the Post-Boomer Generation*. The typology comprises four current approaches to the Christian faith either instigated by, or designed to appeal to, the post-Baby Boomer generation—specifically, those presently aged between twenty and forty years. Other generations, however, are attracted by the types, thus extending their reach and significance. A key finding that has emerged from Flory and Miller’s research overall is that the United States is on the brink of “another potential revolution in how Christians worship and associate with each other”, with myriad post-Boomers showing signs of moving beyond the mega-church experience (in which they find entertainment, but do not necessarily experience a strong sense of community) in favour of worship that is “aesthetically rich, participative, and relatively intimate.” This new religious orientation, favouring an embodied approach, is that of ‘expressive communalism’.

8.6.2 The Authors

Both Richard Flory and Donald E Miller are sociologists of religion based at the University of Southern California. Here, Flory holds positions as Senior Research Associate of the Center for Religion and Civic Culture, and Research Associate Professor of Sociology. Miller is Leonard K Firestone Professor of Religion; executive director of the Center for Religion and Civic Culture, and Professor of Religion and Sociology. Miller has a particular interest in global religious trends and emerging patterns of religious practice; and, in addition, has undertaken

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145 Ibid, viii. Flory and Miller’s research was undertaken in the US, but it is relevant to this thesis in that it is thought likely that such happenings will be being mirrored elsewhere in the Western world.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid.
148 Biographical information on Donald E Miller contained within this section has been drawn from the following sources: (1) Flory & Miller, *Finding Faith*, back cover; (2) ‘Donald Miller’, Department of Sociology, University of Southern California website. Accessed 30 October 2010. Available from http://college.usc.edu/soci/people/faculty_display.cfm?Person_ID=1003537.
Biographical information on Richard Flory contained within this section has been drawn from the following sources: (1) Flory & Miller, *Finding Faith*, back cover; (2) ‘Richard Flory’, Center for Religion and Civic Culture, University of Southern California website. Accessed 30 October 2010. Available from http://crcc.usc.edu/about/personnel/richard-flory.html.
extensive research on genocide. Flory’s research interests include spirituality and young adults; faith-based organizations, and faith and culture.

8.6.3 Flory and Miller’s Typology Explored

8.6.3.1 What it is and How it was Developed

Flory and Miller’s model is a typology of ‘religious action’ in which the constituent types are set apart by their level of acceptance or rejection of postmodern trends, and, in turn, the differing emphases placed on the use and importance of visual symbols, ritual, and tradition, and the extent to which the whole person—mental, physical, and emotional—is involved in religious practice.\(^\text{149}\) It was born from the authors’ observation that—in the wake of the formative experiences of their age and upbringing\(^\text{150}\)—younger Christians in the United States are beginning to switch allegiance from the relatively bland and rationalist worship-style of Protestant churches such as Baptist or Presbyterian, in favour of the more embodied spiritual style of the ancient Christian traditions.\(^\text{151}\) But, far from simply re-entering these established traditions, post-Boomers are reinventing them—in some instances, importing and adapting elements of their rituals into new churches—and emphasizing a faith that is lived-out not only within their faith community, but also within the wider community. And the relatively recent emergence of a backlash counter-movement provides concrete evidence of both the existence and significance of the new orientation.\(^\text{152}\)

Flory and Miller’s data for the typology was collected over a period of two years, and included some findings from a previous investigation, as set out in an earlier publication edited by the two researchers.\(^\text{153}\) Key participants from this antecedent research were reinterviewed, and a snowball-sampling technique undertaken thereafter. In addition, internet sources—for example, Christian group websites, and individual blogs—relevant to these same participants, were sampled. New contacts were established via these secondary sources, leading to a total of one-hundred interviews. Ten site-visits were made by Flory and Miller to churches, services, and events attended by their participants, and illustrative descriptions of these experiences are


\(^{150}\) Ibid, 5-10.

\(^{151}\) Catholic, Episcopal, and Orthodox, for example. Ref: Ibid, vii.

\(^{152}\) Ibid, vi-viii. See précis of the *Resister* type, below, for information on this counter-movement.

included in their publication.\textsuperscript{154} No details of individual interviews—including setting, length, or questions asked—are given.

\textbf{8.6.3.2 What it Aims to Do}

One of Flory and Miller’s express hopes in charting their typology was that it might open dialogue about what they observed to be happening, and the likely impact of expressive communalism not only on the Christian tradition but, potentially, on other faiths (in each of which, the authors surmise, a similar spiritual orientation is likely to be establishing among post-Boomer members).\textsuperscript{155} Furthermore, and critically, with younger adults often holding the key to the future shape—or, in some cases, the future existence—of a religious tradition, their hope is that the typology might provide insight into the religious practices and expressions of the future. And, in turn, the very understanding of ways in which various groups of people both come to appropriate religion, and structure the relationship between their faith and their culture, might shed light on attitudes and behaviour not only in these areas, but in other realms of personal and community life.\textsuperscript{156}

\textbf{8.6.3.3 The Typology in Overview}

The four emerging approaches to the spiritual quest of the post-Boomer generation that together form the typology, are those of Innovators, Appropriators, Resisters, and Reclaimers. The types necessarily are abstractions, note the authors, who stress that, in practice, overlaps across and between the types are inevitable.\textsuperscript{157} A précis of each type follows below.

\textit{Innovators}\textsuperscript{158}

As their name suggests, Innovators demonstrate an innovative approach to religion and spirituality, and are continually evolving in their practices and beliefs. Invariably drawn from middle-class, well-educated, and professional backgrounds, those of this orientation are likely to be actively and happily engaged in their church communities—which will be open-boundaried communities, welcoming of all. Some Innovators will be found in newer and emerging-church groups—which may comprise people of diverse faith-perspectives—but

\textsuperscript{154} Flory & Miller, \textit{Finding Faith}, 16.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid, xi.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, 3-4.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, 189.
\textsuperscript{158} The following overview of the approach of the Innovators has been drawn from Ibid, 19-51, 159-60, 164-166, 168-170, & 190-191.
Chapter Eight: Discussion 1

others will be innovating from within established church traditions. Membership of such a
community is vital to those of this spiritual orientation, and the communities in which they will
be found will be ones that focus on people—both within and outside the church community—
rather than on the institution. Constantly seeking opportunities to develop both personally and
in their ministering to the wider community, Innovators often will devise, develop, and lead
programmes themselves. Worship practices to which Innovators typically are drawn
emphasize the visual and experiential—encouraging active participation; sensory (as opposed
to simply cognitive) stimulation, and the innovative use of ritual and symbol.

Four characteristics are common to communities in which Innovators are worshipping
and/or leading. These are:

1. A prevalence of visual symbols and artistic expressions of the sacred
2. A congregation that is small, but highly committed
3. A dislike of institutionalized forms of religion and hierarchical structures
4. A focus on inward experience and outward expression

In summary, Innovators belong to open, loving, non-traditional, and cohesive church
communities in which they are actively and enthusiastically engaged, and from which stable,
supportive, and motivational base they will go out into the wider community seeking to put their
beliefs into practice. Flory and Miller suggest that, should they successfully manage to avoid
conformity, of the four types of the typology, Innovators appear to have the greatest chance of
long-term success.

Appropriators

The Appropriator orientation to religion and the spiritual makes use of—ie, appropriates—
secular forms of entertainment and expression (most notably and effectively, music) in order to
make Christianity relevant and attractive to the masses: converts and potential converts alike.

159 These range from traditional icons through to computer-generated visuals, 3D-images, photographs,
paintings, pottery, &c. Flory & Miller, Finding Faith, 40.
160 Unlike mega-churches, these churches often are consciously limited to a size that promotes and enables a
sense of community and belonging. Ibid, 41-42.
161 Such communities may not own buildings, for example, and may instead meet in homes or rented rooms.
Leaders are few, and, in some instances, may serve as facilitators rather than pastors. Ibid, 43-44.
162 This is evident (a) in services of worship, where there is an emphasis on the physical and interactive, rather
than the passive and cognitive; and (b) in the wider community, with the development of outreach
programmes and services to the community. Ibid, 45-46.
163 The following overview of the approach of the Appropriators has been drawn from Ibid, 52-53, 162-165,
167-168, 170-171, 184, 191-192.
A feel-good entertainment approach to Christianity—sometimes known as ‘pop’ or ‘lite’ Christianity—this model aims to meet the needs of each and every spiritual seeker by generating a compelling spiritual experience on an individual level. Indeed, focus on the individual (whether on a spiritual, social, psychological, or entertainment plane) is the primary marker of the approach, making the provision of readily-available choices and options an essential mission of Appropriator churches.

Utilizing the contemporary drive toward consumerism, and encouraging a come-as-you-are culture, mega/seeker-churches are supreme examples of this orientation. Flory and Miller note that, though denominations may differ, mega-churches are remarkably alike. Not only are their buildings laid-out similarly (mirroring shopping centres in some ways, with their large public areas, bookshops, and cafes), but their services tend to be uniform, employing the latest technology; featuring popular music—often performed by Christian bands—and always centring on the sermon. Beyond services of worship, myriad choices are available for seekers to become involved in support-groups, programmes, and experiences, and invariably these too will appropriate elements of popular and/or youth culture. Appropriator churches also seek to have a presence outside the church, selling church wares in shopping-centre outlets; and staging stadium rallies and even occasional extreme-sports events.

Two characteristics are common to communities in which Appropriators are worshipping and/or leading. These are:

1. The offering of a church equivalent to the familiar shopping-centre/consumption experience

2. Moving into the community with church consumables, and the offering of an identity to which people may affiliate and, with it, gain a sense of belonging

In summary, Appropriators seek to attract the masses by tapping into youth culture and offering an enjoyable entertainment experience, along with the opportunity of belonging. Though members may become spiritually-dependent on the resources available, Appropriator churches make few demands on individual members, who choose their own level and areas of

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164 This is aimed at getting as many people as possible into the church. The church will offer many points of entry, and myriad choices. Flory & Miller, Finding Faith, 162.
involvement beyond the service-experience in their quest to shape an individual spiritual identity.

Resisters\textsuperscript{165}

The Resister orientation is one that opposes, or resists, postmodern culture and its associated developments—for example, pluralism and the emerging church movement—within the Christian church. It sees the Christian worldview and associated moral values as being under attack throughout the world, and seeks to recover what is perceived to be being lost, re-affirming reason (a property of God, held by all) and the written text as foundational authorities for Christian faith and practice. The approach resists the ideas and practices of the emerging church, and goes against the current trend toward embodiment and personal experience. Instead, it upholds Christianity as objective truth, and makes the case for a rational, intellectual approach to belief. The concept of reason for Resisters, however, is complex, with Flory and Miller suggesting that—among other things—for Resisters, a belief or an idea is seen to be rational if there is good reason to believe that that is the case. Christianity itself is deemed by them to be fundamentally rational, and thus religious beliefs are viewed as another form of rational knowledge.\textsuperscript{166}

Resisters tend to be experts in their field; invariably are male; are of the Baby Boomer generation, and include among their numbers established Christian philosophers, theologians, and scholars of the Bible. The efforts of Resisters to stem the developments of postmodernism focus primarily on educational endeavours through which to instruct or retrain the post-Boomer generation (primarily, but not exclusively) in what Resisters hold to be the authentic version of Christianity. These endeavours include the establishment of church, college, and high school programmes; widespread networking, and the dissemination of their message via numerous branches of the media.

Three standard patterns and behaviours characterize the Resister approach:

\textsuperscript{165} The following overview of the approach of the Resisters has been drawn from Ibid, 15, 84-123, 161-162, 165-168, 170-171, 192.

\textsuperscript{166} For a full exposition of the meaning and place of reason within the Resister model, see Flory & Miller, \textit{Finding Faith}, 97-104.
1. The belief that Christianity is predominantly cognitive—essentially, it is about what one thinks and believes only.\(^\text{167}\)

2. Opposition to postmodernism because it is irrational and illogical; promotes incorrect beliefs and behaviour, and lacks appropriate authority.\(^\text{168}\)

3. A striving to re-establish the Christian worldview as the dominant perspective for (US) society and culture

Despite the extensive endeavours of Resisters to check the tide of postmodernism, Flory and Miller consider this approach to faith to be one that is unsustainable: “Resisters are simply fighting a losing battle. Culture has left them behind…and the forces against which they are aligned are simply overwhelming.”\(^\text{169}\)

**Reclaimers**\(^\text{170}\)

The majority of Reclaimers are young adults who are entering or returning to the Christian faith, or choosing to convert from an evangelical Protestant perspective. Seeking a sense of order, structure, and known limits, together with the desire to belong to a small community of believers within a long-established Christian tradition, Reclaimers are turning to liturgically-oriented, ancient Christian denominations such as the Catholic and Orthodox churches. In doing so, they are **reclaiming** for themselves the symbols, rituals, and rich history of the traditions; and gaining a spiritual outlet that is holistic in the sense that it combines use of the mind, body (especially the senses), and emotions, in liturgical ritual. Furthermore, such traditions offer a strict religious discipline; the comfort of religious ‘absolutes’, and a welcoming place within a small yet established spiritual family—potentially, highly attractive components in an otherwise unstructured and often disjointed world.

Five characteristics are common among those of the Reclaimer orientation. Reclaimers are drawn to:

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\(^\text{167}\) In other words, God is a god of reason and logic, and requires a response in-kind. Ibid, 100-101, and 161.

\(^\text{168}\) For the Resister, true spirituality comprises that which is disembodied, rational, and intellectual. The embodied and the experiential—including the use of symbols, icons, rituals, and the show of human emotion—are inappropriate as Christian practices. Ibid, 161.

\(^\text{169}\) Ibid, 192.

\(^\text{170}\) The following overview of the approach of the Reclaimers has been drawn from Ibid, 124-156; 158, 160-161, 164-171, 191.
1. Visual and ritualistic components of the liturgy

2. Physical and intellectual involvement in liturgical rituals

3. Active participation in and understanding of a larger, and ancient, Christian tradition

4. A strict spiritual regime

5. Strict dictums of belief, role, and behaviour, and the sense of order these bring

Flory and Miller suggest that this is a highly demanding orientation. For example, services within the denominations to which Reclaimers are drawn may require standing for up to three hours, and Reclaimers may choose to attend several such services each week. Such demands—together with the fact that the young adults in question are at a stage of life where they may be uncertain of where and to what to commit—make this an approach that, for some at least, may be temporary.

8.6.3.4 The Relationship between the Four Types

The strength of any typology, suggest Flory and Miller, is that it can highlight the dominant characteristics and features of its types, allowing them to be compared and analysed. And, in the case of their typology, the dominant characteristics that mark-out the types fit most obviously into three major areas. These are:

- The approach to the visual and experiential dimension of religious practice
- The understanding of, and importance placed on, the faith community
- Ways in which mission, outreach, and social action are pursued

The characteristics of each type in relation to these emphases, together with an overview of spiritual goals and the likely future of the type, are compared in Table 8.6.3.4, below. The authors stress, however, that the types they have constructed are not impervious, and that it is thus unlikely that any one individual, church, or ministry would fit perfectly into any one of them.

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171 For example, the structured service, partaking of the Eucharist, icons. Ibid, 160.
172 Physical involvement may include kneeling, genuflecting, standing, for example. Intellectual involvement includes interpreting the symbolic elements, for example. Ibid.
173 Often including spiritual mentoring, confession, and being accountable to another (established and authentic) believer. Ibid, 160-161.
174 Ibid, 164.
175 Ibid, 163.
Table 8.6.3.4: Flory & Miller’s Typology: A Comparison Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of Type</th>
<th>Spiritual Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview of spiritual journey and goals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Innovator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to develop spiritually, but not individualistically. Spiritual quest embodied in community, so faith-community vital to the journey—and to which committed in the long term. Committed too to wider community.</td>
<td>Seeking to develop spiritually. Primarily an individualistic quest, but partly undertaken in small faith-community groups. Seeking an embodied representation of identity, beliefs, and expression similar to that found in wider culture. No long-term commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual and Experiential</strong></td>
<td>Emphasis on this dimension. Practices fluid, not fixed—and ritual/symbols created by members. Participation important, and in context of faith-community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role and Type of Faith Community</strong></td>
<td>Open boundaried. Faith-community small, and provides powerful support &amp; motivation, from which ministry springs—both within congregation and in wider community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role in Mission, Outreach, and Social Action</strong></td>
<td>Participating and assisting in local community a central focus. Members themselves likely to initiate and devise the programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future of type</strong></td>
<td>The most likely to be long term. If too successful, however, a danger of becoming institutionalized or of burning out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.6.3.5 *Expressive Communalism: A New Form of Spirituality*

Flory and Miller’s analysis of their data and subsequent typology led to their conclusion that a new spiritual orientation is emerging among the ranks of the post-Boomer generation (predominantly), and that it is distinctly different from the individual spiritual questing that has been—and, indeed, remains—prominent in contemporary Western society. Expressive

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176 Information presented in this table has been drawn from Flory & Miller, *Finding Faith*, 83, 122-123, 155, 157-171, 190-192.
Chapter Eight: Discussion

Communalism—as they have named the orientation—emphasizes embodiment in worship and/or ministry; and belonging to, participating actively in, and committing to a community of faith:

[W]e are witnessing the emergence of a new form of spirituality that recovers ritual, embraces the body and experience, and seeks community for both belonging and as a context for living out Christian beliefs.

This new form of spirituality strikes a balance between the three primary spiritual impulses that until now have held sway in the Western world: namely, the essentially-secular utilitarian-individualistic and expressive-individualistic orientations, and the faith-based (Protestant) approach of rational inner-worldly asceticism.

Flory and Miller suggest that evidence for the establishment and existence of Expressive Communalism is found in all four types of the typology, which together either embrace or actively oppose the trends of the orientation.

8.6.4 A Critique of Flory and Miller’s Typology

Flory and Miller’s typology provides timely and invaluable insight into ways in which young people of the twenty-first century are reacting to the formative experiences of their time, and reframing Christian expression and practices in the light of contemporary culture. And the authors’ highlighting of the incoming schema of behaviours that is Expressive Communalism—the components of which apparently are being adopted in various ways and to varying degrees—should serve well in paving the way for enhanced understandings and potential

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177 Embodiment here meaning the physical experience of using of one’s body—visually, aurally, or physically—in worship practices; and in the living-out of Christian teachings in faith communities and in the wider community. Flory & Miller, Finding Faith, 17-18 and 185.
178 Ibid, 159.
180 The approach of expressive individualism also was noted in 1985 by Bellah and his associates, who describe it as the wish to “cultivate and express the self and explore its vast social and cosmic identities”. Ref: Bellah et al. Habits of the Heart, 35. As cited in Flory & Miller, Finding Faith, 187.
181 Protestant Asceticism was described by Max Weber in 1993. The approach rejected the ethically irrational, and that which was dependent on the emotions in favour of discipline and rationality. “The clear and uniform goal of this asceticism was the disciplining and methodical organization of the whole pattern of life”, notes Weber. Ref: Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 183. As cited in Flory & Miller, Finding Faith, 186.
182 Flory & Miller, Finding Faith, 185.
183 Opposition to the trends of Expressive Communalism is manifest in the Resister type. Innovators, Reclaimers, and Appropriators all embrace the trends, but the former two types do so to the fullest extent. Flory & Miller, Finding Faith, 185.
tolerance across and between people and generations in both religious and other societal worlds.

Flory and Miller do not provide in-depth details of their methodology or questioning techniques within their publication\(^{185}\) and therefore these cannot be critiqued or, indeed, contrasted with those of the current research. However, the detailed descriptions given of each type of the typology, including illustrative case studies, history, and background—written from a sociological perspective—clearly establish the depth and detail of the study. There is evidence of a divergence in methodology where one of the types of the typology is concerned in that much of the exposition of the Resister type appears to have been drawn predominantly from published writings rather than from first-hand interview material.\(^{186}\) But this factor serves in and of itself to highlight one of the characteristics of the type—namely, the widespread use of various branches of the media in order to mount a vociferous opposition to postmodern influences on Christianity.\(^{187}\)

Flory and Miller present two of the four types of their typology predominantly from the perspective of people other than members of the post-Boomer generation who are the primary subjects of the authors’ work. This clearly was essential in the case of one of these types (Resisters)—no members of which are of the post-Boomer generation\(^{188}\) —but may have been avoidable in the case of the other (Appropriators), in that Post-Boomers are those utilizing the Appropriator approach and therefore constitute the driving force behind it. However, this mode of presentation successfully illustrates the essentially passive nature of the latter orientation, and adds strength to the authors’ thesis that this type is one from which post-Boomers are gradually pulling away.

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\(^{185}\) As with John Mabry’s publication, Flory and Miller’s publication is not presented as an academic work exclusively, and clearly is aimed at a wider audience. Thus, the inclusion of such methodological information is likely to have been deemed superfluous and/or inappropriate. The authors note that their publication represents the final part of a larger and longer-term project, various parts of which have been presented to the academic world at conferences, in published articles and book-chapters, and—more novelty—in an art-gallery installation. Ref: Flory & Miller, *Finding Faith*, ix.

\(^{186}\) As noted elsewhere, such a divergence also was necessary within the analysis of the current study.


\(^{188}\) Rather, as noted above, Resisters are a type predominantly comprising older males, who represent the counter-movement that Flory and Miller suggest proves the existence of the incoming orientation of expressive communalism.
8.6.5 The Emergent Typology in Relation to Flory and Miller’s Typology

The differences evident between Flory and Miller’s typology and that of the current research notwithstanding, Flory and Miller’s typology is relevant to this thesis not only because it was constructed in response to the changes of the time, but, more significantly, because it highlights new ways of spiritual expression that are emerging within Christian denominations—including but broadening beyond that drawn on in constructing the TRS. And, though Flory and Miller’s typology relates predominantly to those aged between twenty and forty years, almost one-third of the participants of the current study were within that same age-range.

For that reason, were a new spiritual orientation to be emerging among the ranks of the post-Boomer generation, as Flory and Miller suggest, it might be imagined that at least some evidence of this would be found within the types of the TRS. And that certainly is the case.

Most notably, there is a clear correlation between some attributes and characteristics of Type S2: The Spiritually Spirited of the TRS and the Innovators of Flory and Miller’s typology. And (notwithstanding that the TRS grouping had an average age of forty-two years), it appears to be significant that seven of the nine members of The Spiritually Spirited emerged from the same church community—namely, the distinctive Community 6, which undoubtedly would be classified by Flory and Miller as an ‘Innovator church’ in terms of outlook, leadership, practice, and structure; plus in its emphasis of commitment, belonging, and service. And, while other participants from this same community-of-origin were classified to other TRS types, it is salient that none was found to be among S5: The Spiritually Settled, whose spiritual style is the only one on the current TRS continuum thought to be incompatible with that of S2.

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189 Informing disciplines, source of study-population, focus, and scope, for example. See Table 8.3, above.
190 It is not known whether or not any of Flory and Miller’s participants were of Anglican-church origin. However, the Anglican Church—a liturgical tradition, with established symbols, rituals and practices—would seem to be a fitting example of one of the ancient Christian traditions to which members of Flory and Miller’s Reclaimer-type might be drawn. Indeed, the Episcopal Church in the US explicitly mentioned by Flory and Miller as one such example is part of the worldwide Anglican communion. See Flory and Miller, Finding Faith, 137.
191 Specifically, fifteen participants—thirty-two-per-cent of the overall sample—of participants of the current study were aged between twenty and forty years.
192 See discussion in Chapter Seven, section 7.7.2.
193 See Flory and Miller, Finding Faith, 14.
194 See Chapter Seven, section 7.11.5.2.
195 It is noted that, while no participant of Community 6 was found to be of Type S3: The Spiritually Serene, this would be as expected in that the average age of Type S3 members is seventy years, and the oldest participant from Community 6 was aged sixty-two years. It would be anticipated that The Spiritually Serene would be represented—and possibly strongly represented—within Community 6, however; not least because members of this type are sought after as spiritual mentors by Types 1 and 2, in particular.
This correlation shows that the TRS incorporates a spiritual orientation that Flory and Miller suppose to be part of the evolving face of Christianity. And this, in turn, suggests that there are indeed spiritual stirrings within the Anglican Church of Australia in response to the changing patterns and experiences of the twenty-first-century world. Further evidence for this, albeit less robust, is in the finding that the two members who comprise Type S6: The Spiritually Sceptical (in essence, dissatisfied with their status quo) both are of the post-Boomer generation.

Given the focus of the current study on its Anglican Church sample-population—all members of which are regular churchgoers within this denomination—no strong link could be expected with Flory and Miller’s Appropriator type. However, the researcher is aware of at least three young participants who do attend Appropriator churches from time to time, and who talked of being helped spiritually by being able to draw on this combination of worship-styles. Furthermore, though the liturgical style of worship within the Anglican church is that sought by Flory and Miller’s Reclaimers (all of whom are converting from non-liturgical forms of Christianity, returning after lapsing, or entering into a faith commitment), the researcher can identify one participant only (male, post-Boomer) of the current study who meets these criteria, and whose interview material indirectly reveals a Reclaimer orientation. It may be, however, that the sampling process for the study ruled-out the inclusion of many new or returning members of the church.

The differences between the two studies preclude this discussion from venturing too much further without entering into the realm of speculation. However, given the Christian sample-population of both studies, it is suggested that Flory and Miller’s types might reasonably be situated somewhere on the current TRS continuum, and that some may be closely aligned to TRS types, manifesting similar relational triads. Innovators, for example—with their emphasis on faith-journeying in community—may be a direct parallel with the distinctive Type S2: The Spiritually Spirited.

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196 Mega-churches in this instance.
197 Flory & Miller, Finding Faith, 137.
198 As noted in Chapter Six, participants were recruited via their parish priests, who, in general terms, may have felt it unfair or unwise to approach new parishioners.
199 The SHD breakdown for The Spiritually Spirited is in the ratio of 20:40:40 (rounded figures).
In the Preface to their publication, Flory and Miller question whether developments similar to those found within their research project might now be evident within non-Christian traditions such as Judaism and Islam. This same question might be posed for types within the TRS continuum, and, indeed, for the associated relational patterns that comprise the relational triad. Further research in this area undoubtedly would be profitable.

8.7 The God Problem and Nigel Leaves

8.7.1 Introduction

A second typology that engages with the changing face of religion and spirituality in the contemporary world is that set-out by Nigel Leaves in his 2006 publication, *The God Problem: Alternatives to Fundamentalism*. Though not designed or presented as a typology as such, it nonetheless extrapolates four new types of belief that are manifesting in Western society in response to the crises of faith that are being triggered among many in light of new understandings from scientific inquiry. Complementing (for current purposes) the typology of Flory and Miller—which focuses predominantly on younger people—Leaves’s typology concerns forms of spiritual expression emerging among adults of all generations.

8.7.2 The Author

Nigel Leaves is an Anglican priest and contemporary theologian, based in Queensland, Australia. One time Warden and Dean of Studies at John Wollaston Anglican Theological College in Perth, Western Australia, Leaves now lectures at St Francis Theological College in Queensland, and is an academic associate of Charles Sturt University. He is the author of several books, including on the life, works, and theology of Don Cupitt. Leaves’s research interests include Postmodern Theology; Spirituality & Theology; and Religion, Agnosticism & Atheism.

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200 Flory & Miller, *Finding Faith*, xi.
8.7.3 The God Problem Explored

8.7.3.1 What it is and How it was Developed

Nigel Leaves’s publication is a discourse that, broadly-speaking, was written in response to the ongoing decline of the Christian faith and church. However, a quotation cited by the author in his Conclusion sets the work within a narrower frame-of-reference:

The future of the Christian faith may turn out to be a minor aspect of the cultural shifts that are shaping our global future. The themes that have dominated the institutional churches may no longer be of central concern to us. But no matter. Yet at the heart of the old faith tradition there are topics and themes that are central to the human condition and the fate of the planet in the next millennium. Our task is to locate those themes and set them in a new and broader context.

Leaves’s work responds to the challenge set down here by the late Robert W Funk in that it both locates and then expounds what Leaves perceives to be the principal theme that is both “at the heart of the old faith tradition” yet “central to the human condition,” that is, the ‘problem’ of God. Leaves attributes the decline of the Christian Church to the persistence of its leaders in portraying a supernatural, judgemental God in a world in which the ongoing findings of scientific inquiry cannot support—and so effectively work to undermine—such a doctrine. A defensive rise in the fundamentalist approach to Christianity notwithstanding, the situation has generated a significant and growing section of society for whom the traditional figure of God no longer makes sense, and who are shunning Christianity in favour of “creating new ways of understanding and relating to ‘God’ in an attempt to make sense of their lives, the world, and the nagging notion of something greater that has created and sustains it all.”

Leaves’s text offers a theoretical unpacking, comparing, and critiquing of four primary ways in which those who are turning away from organized religion are attempting to overcome what he considers to be the “theological crisis” of knowing how—or even if—to talk of God in the new millennium. In doing so, the primary issue he puts forward for debate is whether or not

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203 The publication began life as a series of lectures, entitled The God Problem, delivered by Nigel Leaves at the Westar Institute in 2005, at the invitation of the Institute’s founder, the late Robert W Funk. Leaves’s work expressly addresses two of the three issues raised by Funk in the Second Agenda put forward for consideration by scholars of the Westar Institute. (The First Agenda, widely known as the Jesus Seminar, aimed to promote understanding of the differences between the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history). Ref: Leaves, The God Problem, 1-4.


206 Ibid, ix.

207 Ibid, 5.
God is real or simply a human invention—a symbol of humanity’s deepest and most profound concerns.\(^{208}\)

### 8.7.3.2 The God Problem: What it aims to do

In presenting succinct accounts of already-established or establishing alternative approaches to traditional formations of the Christian faith, *The God Problem* expressly aims to promote discussion and understanding of the issue within academic and/or church-based circles.\(^{209}\)

Though the publication does not present a typological model of faith by assertion, it might be said to be offering an alternative typology of faith for present and future generations.

### 8.7.3.3 The God Problem: An Overview

The four responses to the ‘problem of God’ posited and evaluated by Leaves are those of Panentheism; Non-Realism; Grassroots’ Spirituality (also known as The Spirituality Revolution), and Religious Naturalism.

**Panentheism\(^{210}\)**

Panentheism translates from its Greek origin to mean ‘everything in God’. It is an approach which proposes that God is both immanent and transcendent—in everything within the world (and thus not disconnected from humanity), but also exceeding and extending beyond the world. Its advocates sit comfortably with Mystery and the unknown, but do not support the traditional notion of a supernatural and personal God.

Panentheism is the approach to faith most commonly associated with liberal Christianity and sometime Episcopalian bishop of Newark, John Shelby Spong. Leaves notes that five principal issues underlie Spong’s panentheist theology: namely, his views of God, Jesus, evangelistic activity, prayer, and the Church. For Spong, the theistic view of the supernatural, interventionist, and tribal God of the Old Testament has atrophied. Rather, God is formless, unknowable, and indefinable, “a symbol for that which is immortal, invisible, and timeless.”\(^{211}\) Subjective human experience of God is ruled-out, then, but objective experiences are not in that while God surpasses the world, God can still be found within the world, manifest in worthy human activism such as that against oppression and prejudice. And a (as

\(^{208}\) Ibid, 81.

\(^{209}\) Ibid, ix.

\(^{210}\) The following overview of the panentheist approach has been drawn from Ibid, 5-6; 23-32, and 75-78.

\(^{211}\) Ibid, 28.
distinct from the) path to God comes in the panentheist view of Jesus—not divine, but an inclusive, transforming, and exemplary figure who breaks-down the divisions of humanity, and, in doing so, reveals the divine. And a further path to God can be found through not only the Christian Church but every religious tradition—in that, with God beyond religion, evangelism is unnecessary from the panentheist perspective; and religions should instead be united in their role of offering a supportive medium for active exploration of the love that is God. For Spong, the ideal of prayer is nontheistic contemplative meditation, coupled with loving service. And his vision of the church of the future—the Ecclesia—is of simple communities of love and encouragement.  

Non-Realism

Non-Realism—also known as theological non-realism—is the response to the ‘God problem’ to which Leaves himself expressly feels drawn. An approach pioneered by both Don Cupitt and Lloyd Geering—indeed, independently of one another—and continuing to evolve, it draws in part on the thinking of Immanuel Kant, and is the philosophical base for radical Christianity. In this approach, the word ‘God’ is symbolic only. God is neither supernatural, nor an ontological, objective reality, but rather a verbal construct that represents love and the perfect; a spiritual ideal or goal to which human life may be oriented. And the figure of Jesus is reframed from being the doctrinal wholly human/wholly divine Son of God into an exemplary and ethical teacher who modelled human kindness and love, demonstrating how, ideally, we might respond to our peers. Thus, the non-realist approach does not render Christianity (nor, indeed, necessarily the church) redundant, but rather reinterprets its tenets into new and existential ways of creating meaning and purpose. Leaves clarifies:

Such a way of living would blend the ethics of Christianity with the spirituality of Buddhism to create what Richard Holloway has called a ‘godless morality’. Christian doctrines are not to be understood literally, but interpreted in terms of the way of life that they recommend.

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212 The foregoing overview of the panentheist approach has been drawn from Ibid, 5-6, 23-32, and 75-78.
213 The following overview of the non-realist approach has been drawn, unless otherwise referenced, from Ibid, 6, 33-44, & 73-75.
214 Leaves notes that, though the two agree in essence, there are distinctions in their approach and emphases. Ibid, 33.
215 Specifically, the idea that humanity does not need Divine assistance in order to come to knowledge and understanding. Ibid, 6.
216 Ibid, 34-35. Sometime Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church and Bishop of Edinburgh, Richard Holloway’s 1999 book, Godless Morality: Keeping Religion out of Ethics (Canongate: Edinburgh) argues that God cannot and should not be used in human debate about morality, in that morality is not fixed and Divine, but human-centred and continually evolving.
Don Cupitt’s thinking includes a possible future—albeit radically refocused—for the Christian Church, but it also progresses beyond church borders. And an adjunct to Leaves’s 2006-dated exposition of non-realism comes in Cupitt’s own more recent publication, Above Us Only Sky: The Religion of Ordinary Life, in which Cupitt frames what he now observes to be the “new and truly global religious consciousness [that] has in recent decades been quietly easing itself in around the world”. A this-worldly religion of life itself to which, he believes, the majority of those living in the Western world now hold, or are coming to hold, it is a religion:

...about your attitude to your own life, and the way you see it as fitting into the larger stream of human life in general. It is about the way you negotiate your own deal with life and its basic conditions: its temporality, its precariousness, your freedom, and your coming death. It is about how we can find eternal joy just in the mere living of our ordinary lives. We no longer ‘look up’ in any way at all...

With Cupitt thus emphasizing the role of the individual, Lloyd Geering’s accent on the healing, ongoing care, and unification of the global world sits comfortably and helpfully alongside to create a holistic, two-pronged unity to the non-realist approach to religion. “Put quite simply”, summarizes Leaves, “non-realism is aimed at getting ourselves and our planet in shape to tackle what life throws us so that we can preserve and extend the world we inhabit.”

Grassroots’ Spirituality (The Spirituality Revolution)

An arguably less controversial solution to the ‘God problem’ than non-realism (in the sense that it does not offer a direct challenge to extant Christian doctrine), is that of the manifold practices of spiritual searching that together have taken a firm foothold in the Western world. These practices individually and collectively comprise Grassroots’ spirituality (also known as New Age spirituality), and come under the umbrella of The Spirituality Revolution. Robert K C Forman—whose 2004 publication, Grassroots Spirituality: What it is, Why it is here, Where it is going gave rise to the Grassroots’ label—considers that “it may be the biggest movement to

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218 Cupitt, Above Us Only Sky, vii.
219 Ibid, 2.
220 Leaves, The God Problem, 44.
221 Except where otherwise referenced, the above overview of the Non-Realist approach has been drawn from Ibid, 6, 33-44, and 73-75.
222 Apart from where otherwise referenced, the following overview of Grassroots’ Spirituality has been drawn from Ibid, 6-7; 45-57, and 78-80.
come onto the religious/spiritual scene since the reformation”. Emerging from the counter-secularization movement; already vast, and growing throughout the world, grassroots’ spirituality comprises what Leaves creatively dubs “a smorgasbord of therapeutic spiritualities” — such as yoga, reiki, homeopathy, meditation, aromatherapy, sound healing, creative dance, therapeutic massage, et al— aimed at enhancing wellbeing, and from which interested individuals are free to pick and choose. Though distinct and individual means of spiritual expression, the practices are linked by the common thread of having no figurehead or controlling hierarchy—although some followers may seek-out small groups in which to practice, all members of which will be fellow-travellers among equals. The spiritualities also are paralleled in their apparent concern with an immanent divine within, as opposed to a Divine separate and distinct from the self—an approach similar to that of panentheism (at least in this regard). Women outnumber men by two to one among Grassroots’ practitioners, who, in the main, tend to be drawn from the ranks of the non- and de-churched—populations that have risen exponentially over the past half-century. But practitioners also include active members of traditional religious faiths, who appear to be unconflicted in adding non-orthodox practices to their personal spiritual mix. Though acknowledging a need for caution regarding the motives of anyone pushing such a spirituality, Leaves concedes the potential of grassroots’ spiritualities to attract: “This newfound self-belief in the competency of human beings to attend to their own spiritual needs weakens the controlling influence of the Christian Church and permits people to redefine both their religion and God,” he notes.

Religious Naturalism

The fourth and final alternative path to faith expounded by Leaves is that of religious naturalism. With a ‘green’ approach to faith that is non-realist in essence—indeed, it has developed from the work of non-realist co-pioneer, Lloyd Geering—religious naturalists find their divine within nature. All realms of the eco-system of the planet are seen as sacred to them; to be revered, treasured, and nurtured, and from which inspiration is drawn. The

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224 Forman, Grassroots Spirituality, 11.
225 Leaves, The God Problem, 47.
226 It is notable that this also is the case among some denominations of the Christian Church—The Anglican Church in Australia, for example, where women attendees outnumber men by almost two to one. Ref: Brighton, Castle, and Bellamy, ‘SCGA Report Book 3A’, 108.
227 Ibid, 56-57.
228 Except where otherwise referenced, the above overview of Grassroots’ Spirituality has been drawn from Leaves, The God Problem, 6-7; 45-57, and 78-80.
229 This overview of the Religious Naturalism approach has been drawn from Ibid, 7-8; 59-68, and 80-81.
supernatural elements that make up the Divine beings and realm of traditional religion are replaced by the entirely natural elements that comprise the divine realm of religious naturalism. And humanity is but part of the intricate and interlinked web of life, which has evolved as a unitary and precious whole. Religious naturalists are immersed within their sacred, and are fully appreciative, and in awe and wonder, of its beauty. Every part of the planet—animal, vegetable, and mineral—is invaluable, and in need of responsible care and attention from humanity in order for it to thrive in the present and continue into the future. For religious naturalists, this life is all that there is, and with this planet the only one humanity can expect, the moral imperative for humanity is to maintain and nurture it. 230

8.7.3.4 The Relationship between the Four Responses

Plainly, the four responses to the ‘problem of God’ highlighted by Leaves are diverse in their foci and features, and thus the tabular comparison offered in Table 8.7.3.4, below, can contrast them in broad terms only.

230 Ibid.
### Table 8.7.3.4: Responses to ‘The God Problem’: A Comparison Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Panentheism</th>
<th>Non-Realism</th>
<th>Grassroots’ Spirituality</th>
<th>Religious Naturalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>God/ The D/divine</strong></td>
<td>Sacred Mystery. ‘God-presence’ real, but not supernatural or personal. All-</td>
<td>God a human concept. God not a metaphysical being, but rather a</td>
<td>Immanent divine within. Humans able to attend to their own</td>
<td>The Earth seen as sacred, viewed in awe and wonder. What is natural is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>encompassing Spirit, within humanity but beyond everyday life. Jesus not</td>
<td>metaphor for a spiritual ideal representing love and the perfect. Jesus</td>
<td>spiritual needs, and many spiritual paths available from which</td>
<td>the divine. No supernatural, objective ‘God’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>divine, but a doorway to the divine; an inclusive boundary-breaker.</td>
<td>an exemplary and ethical teacher; love in human form.</td>
<td>to choose. Aim is to enhance wellbeing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Church/Doctrine</strong></td>
<td>God to be found not only in the Christian Church but in every religious</td>
<td>Essentially, a human-centred religion, but religious thought and practice</td>
<td>A non-church response. No hierarchy or figurehead involved—</td>
<td>A non-church response. Deep concern for eco-system and cosmos. Moral imperative for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tradition. Church of future: simple communities of love, care, and</td>
<td>affirmed. Thus, still a place for the Church, but Christian doctrine</td>
<td>all equal.</td>
<td>humanity to nurture and maintain the Earth and all in it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>encouragement.</td>
<td>reinterpretated—now understood existentially, and may be seen as ‘rules of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relational Focus</strong></td>
<td>Yes. Interconnectivity of life recognized. The human desire for</td>
<td>Yes. Loving, peaceful, and just relationships central.</td>
<td>To some extent. Interconnectivity of life recognized.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>connection with both others and the sacred understood, respected, and to be</td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual spiritual journeying, but practices often undertaken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>encouraged.</td>
<td></td>
<td>in small, companionable groups.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example of Current Adherents</strong></td>
<td>Liberal Christians, or liberals from any faith tradition. A conscious no-</td>
<td>Not addressed (though the associated ‘Sea of Faith’ network apparently</td>
<td>Mostly women (2:1), and from the ranks of the non- or de-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>barrier philosophy, so open to all.</td>
<td>growing in Western world).</td>
<td>churched. Some churchgoing practitioners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Associated Approaches and Advocates</strong></td>
<td>Liberal Christianity John Shelby Spong</td>
<td>Radical Christianity Don Cupitt Lloyd Geering</td>
<td>The Spirituality Revolution</td>
<td>Non-Realism Lloyd Geering Ursula Goodenough</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 8.7.4 A Critique of Leaves’s Typology

In contrast to the empirically-based **Typology of Relational Spirituality**, Nigel Leaves’s typology is constructed by drawing together and analyzing the writings of other theologians and philosophers, both past and present; expanding and illustrating the arguments by drawing on his own experience and observations. Though Leaves openly aligns himself to one of the approaches about which he is writing, his work reads as measured and informative, rather than overtly partial. While it might be argued that there are additional ways in which individuals

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231 Information presented in this table has been drawn from Ibid, 5-7; 23-68; 73-81. Some additional information on the non-realist approach has been drawn from the website of the Sea of Faith Network. Accessed 2 February 2010. Available from [http://www.sofn.org.uk](http://www.sofn.org.uk)
are now approaching the ‘problem of God’ (humanism, for example), Leaves makes no claim to be presenting a comprehensive typology, portraying instead four somewhat diverse, postmodern approaches to spiritual/religious thinking and practice.

8.7.5 The Emergent Typology in Relation to Leaves’s Typology

The relevance of Leaves’s work to the current research is not for its undoubtedly invaluable contribution to the debate on ways to solve the ‘God problem’ for the future (the interest of that to this paper notwithstanding), but to consider the actual types of faith that the author highlights, and their similarities or dissimilarities to those uncovered in the current research.

One point of note is that both studies—albeit one theoretically-based, and the other empirically-based—have emerged not only from the same geographical base (Australia), but have links to both the same Christian tradition (Anglican) and the same Diocese (Perth) in which Leaves’s first-hand observations regarding the attributes of one his types expressly were made.

Furthermore, though Leaves’s typology extends well beyond the Christian tradition (indeed, it could be argued that one only of his types could be classified as part of the Christian tradition), the freedom held by Perth-based Anglicans to hold to positions within a wide spectrum of belief makes it relevant to question whether or not any participant/s of the current study conform in any way to one or other of Leaves’s types. If robust evidence were found, Leaves’s types would serve to endorse the existence of specific types, or features of types, within the emergent TRS (and, indeed, vice versa). But, if not, they might provide insight into alternative approaches to the D/divine that lie at either side of the current TRS continuum.

On examination, no holistic parallels were found between types across the two typologies. This was not unexpected given the differing focus of each study, and the indirect and open questioning within the current study which did not overtly seek-out the type of information included within Leaves’s expositions. However, selected features of some of

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232 As noted earlier, Leaves’s work has not been presented as a comprehensive typology, and therefore cannot be evaluated as such.

233 As highlighted elsewhere, the current study was undertaken in Perth, Western Australia, where Nigel Leaves has lived and worked. Leaves notes in his publication that some of his observations—specifically, those relating to Grassroots’ Spirituality—were made when he was Director of the Anglican Diocese of Perth’s Wollaston College (see Leaves, The God Problem, 48-49). It is stressed that the current researcher has no connection to the author in question.

234 Grassroots’ Spirituality and Religious Naturalism, for example, do not require any belief in God per se, and the God of Non Realism—a symbolic human construct representing love and the perfect—bears little resemblance to the traditional God of the Christian faith. And, while orthodox Christians might argue that the beliefs of the liberal-leaning panentheists are not Christian beliefs, it is suggested that, in general, this response would now be held to be within the Christian spectrum of belief.

235 See Chapter Six. Moreover, Leaves notes that Australia has been described as the world’s most non-religious nation (source/s uncited). Leaves, The God Problem, 6.
Leaves’s types can be found among the spiritual exploring, practice, and/or ideology of many of the participants of the TRS study—a salient finding which offers tacit support for Leaves’s supposition that the supernatural God of traditional Christian faith has become or is becoming a problem for some, who, in turn, “are creating new ways of understanding and relating to ‘God’”. 236 For example, the researcher is aware that some participants among The Spiritually Settled (who do not relate to an objective deity) are indeed exploring some of the myriad spiritual expressions of Grassroots’ Spirituality. And, though it seems improbable that all will have been exposed to the ideological underpinnings of Religious Naturalism, some members of the type plainly access the divine in nature.237 The loyalty of The Spiritually Settled to their respective church communities would appear to preclude any thought of their ‘jumping ship’, 238 so to speak, but nonetheless some yearn for deep spiritual experiences. For this reason, from a pastoral perspective, further exploration of the alternative responses of Grassroots’ Spirituality and/or Religious Naturalism—arguably, the least threatening to extant Christian doctrine of Leaves’s four types239—might be of particular help to them. Additional alternative media not directly mentioned by Leaves—music, to name a supreme example—also may be of benefit (and, indeed, to those of other types) in this way.

There is no doubt that, of all six types of the TRS, The Spiritually Surrendered—situated at the opposite extreme of the (current) continuum from The Spiritually Settled—are the least likely to subscribe to any of Leaves’s alternative responses, in that, for them, the supernatural God of traditional Christianity is not a ‘problem’ but rather the solution.240 However, while there was no conclusive evidence that either the Panentheist or Non-Realist outlooks had been adopted by any participants of the current research, the more liberal approach evident among those of The Spiritually Serene and The Spiritually Sustained certainly would not prohibit either type from exploring, and then, if appropriate, embracing the tenets of either response. Indeed, it is suggested that the ease and readiness with which The Spiritually Serene, in particular—who, in one sense, have moved beyond doctrinal religion—

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236 Ibid, ix.
237 Responses to the natural world are not unique to The Spiritually Settled, of course. Similar, if subtly different, responses—for example, seeing God (the Divine, as opposed to the divine) reflected in the natural world; or witnessing the power and majesty of God in this, his creation—also were evident among participants of other spiritual types.
238 As noted in Chapter Seven, section 7.11.5.2, The Spiritually Settled are seeking neither to move outside the Christian church nor challenge it in any way.
239 The affiliation of Religious Naturalism to the non-realistic approach notwithstanding.
240 Indeed, this type might be said to be more in line with the fundamentalist approach to Christianity—itself part of the ‘God problem’ for those subscribing to the new approaches expounded by Leaves.
employ symbol and analogy; are comfortable and familiar with abstract concepts; have integrated their beliefs and their being; manifest deep reflectiveness; are sensitive toward those of other faiths and beliefs; and are oriented toward beauty and the perfect, wherever it may be found, are attributes likely to make even the more-radical Non-Realist ideology wholly acceptable to them, at least in principle.

The finding of this brief comparison between the two typologies may not have been robust in terms of strong type-alignments, but it has cross-endorsed several features relating to the types under review. And the broader scope of Leaves’s typology—going as it does beyond the Christian faith and into the realm of secular spirituality—has highlighted attributes (in the main, relating to the Divine-related Self) of additional types that, with further research, may be found to lie within\textsuperscript{241} or beyond\textsuperscript{242} the TRS continuum. Moreover, potential exists for a cross-matching exercise to be undertaken in which relational triads would be constructed for those falling within Leaves’s typology. Averaging these triads by type, and comparing the resulting patterns with those typical of TRS types, would give an indication of where—or, indeed, if—spiritual correlates exist between types of the two typologies. The emergence of correlating patterns would highlight alternative forms of spiritual expression that further research might find to be a good ‘fit’ for seekers among members of either typology.\textsuperscript{243}

\section*{8.8 Summary and Implications}

8.8.1 The relationship of the TRS to the models under review

It is clear from this discussion that each of the featured models is unique, differing variously in foundation, nature, scope, and/or purpose. And while these differences have obfuscated comparisons between the models and the TRS, areas of complementarity and contrast have emerged nonetheless. Dialogue with each of the models has revealed strengths and weaknesses of the TRS, and highlighted areas of potential for further research.\textsuperscript{244} A summary of the findings follows below.

\textsuperscript{241} Specifically, Grassroots’ Spirituality and Religious Naturalism.
\textsuperscript{242} Specifically, Panentheism and Non-Realism.
\textsuperscript{243} For example, a Grassroots’ Spirituality practitioner found to have a relational triad similar to that of The Spiritually Spirited of the TRS might find sustenance in, and feel most at ease with, the latter form of spiritual expression—and vice versa. Plainly, this exercise also could be undertaken with types within John Mabry’s Faith Styles’ typology.
\textsuperscript{244} See summary in Chapter Ten.
8.8.1.1 James W Fowler, Faith Development Theory

Important conceptual parallels between the faith-development model of James W Fowler and the emergent TRS raises the possibility that, with further research on the latter, the models might successfully be combined in order to complete the ‘story’ (to use Fowler’s metaphor) of human spirituality—either individually or collectively. In this event, potential exists for use of both the relational triad as an instrument of measure, and the Relational Self Model of Spirituality as a medium for presentation.

8.8.1.2 John R Mabry, Faith Styles’ Typology

Examination of the Faith Styles’ typology of John Mabry—encompassing six styles of faith/belief manifest across, within, and beyond religious faiths and denominations—highlights the TRS’s more-detailed refinement of types, but emphasizes its narrower reach. It underscores the potential for the TRS continuum of types to be expanded or extended.

8.8.1.3 Richard Flory and Donald E Miller, Post-Boomer Typology

A clear parallel between a TRS type and one of the four types in Richard Flory and Donald E Miller’s typology suggests that the TRS has captured something of the ‘potential revolution’ in spiritual expression that Flory and Miller believe to be taking place among young churchgoers. The remaining types are not evident within the TRS, but the Christian base of both studies raises the possibility that, with further research, these types might indeed be found, expanding the TRS continuum. It is suspected that parallels of types within both typologies may exist within (and beyond) other religious traditions.

8.8.1.4 Nigel Leaves, ‘The God Problem’ Typology

Methodological differences ruled-out the finding of absolute parallels between types on the TRS and the four new spiritual approaches expounded by Nigel Leaves, but common features were uncovered nonetheless. This supports Leaves’s supposition that the supernatural God of traditional Christianity now is a ‘problem’ for some, and, in turn, shows the TRS to be reflecting at least something of the evolving face of Christianity. The broader scope of Leaves’s typology—including but moving beyond the Christian church—endorses the potential for extending the TRS continuum to include non-Christian spiritual forms. Potential exists for the cross-matching of types using the relational triad as an investigative tool.
8.8.2 Positioning the Typology of Relational Spirituality

As a spiritual typology that has been constructed from research within one denomination of one faith-tradition, it is clear that the TRS currently has the narrowest reach of all the typological models under review. By the same token, however, descriptions of types within the TRS are the most specific and least generalized, affording the most detailed information. Additional research within other Christian denominations and faith-traditions would broaden the reach of the TRS, and lead (though not inevitably) to the expansion or extension the TRS continuum. Moreover, with a data-gathering method purposefully designed to make no assumptions about the type, form, or even existence of belief, and underpinned by a triadic relational structure believed to be universal, it is suggested that, conceptually at least, the TRS has the capability to embrace spirituality of all forms, with a reach that is global.

8.8.3 The Role of the Relational Triad

The above dialogue between the TRS and the three contemporary typologies—each connected in some way to human spirituality—necessarily has concentrated on the contents of spirituality/faith as it relates to the differing focus of each typology. But a critical question that must be raised is that of why people align to one type and not another. Why would some people be drawn to the canons of Panentheism over those of Non-Realism, for example? Why would some be drawn to the expressions of Innovators over Reclaimers? And why would some instinctively feel more comfortable in the mode of The Spiritually Surrendered rather than that of The Spiritually Sustained? Certainly, a complex interaction of factors including life events and experience; developmental issues (such as those pinpointed by Fowler), and personality features (such as those highlighted by instruments of measure such as the Enneagram and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) will be influential. But might it be that relational factors also play their part in this mix, placing a renewed spotlight not on the emergent typology (the TRS) of the current research but rather on the relational triad at its foundation? Where Leaves’s typology is concerned, for example, would the relational triad of those who are drawn to the more individualistic therapeutic practices of Grassroots’ Spirituality set-out

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245 Were types identical or similar to those already within the TRS to be found within other denominations and faiths (as might be anticipated), no change may be necessary. Alternatively, some degree of difference might require the addition of sub-types, situated between or at either side of types already on the TRS continuum. The finding of new types would require extension of the continuum.

246 Specifically, the interview questions within the current research were designed to be open and non-specific. Among other things—as detailed in Chapter Six—the questions were framed in such a way as to make no assumptions about belief/faith among the participants (notwithstanding that all were active members of Christian communities); and to encourage the idiosyncratic vocabulary of each participant.
with a *Solitary Self* that is more dominant than their *Humanity-Related Self*? If so, this might suggest that one’s dominant relational self is a, if not the, determinant of spiritual practice. Alternatively, in that Grassroots’ Spirituality is known to be favoured by twice as many women as men,\(^{247}\) might further research show that such practices tend to be favoured disproportionately by those in primary-caregiver roles, who manifest a skewed rise in the *Humanity-related Self*\(^{248}\) and who thus seek to better-balance life? If so, this would lead to the question of whether or not humanity is disposed toward an even-balance relationally.

Intriguingly, this latter question is addressed to some degree within the current study with the finding that participants found to be of *The Spiritually Serene* type not only were more prone to have an even spread across the relational selves than any other type, but encompassed the only three participants who had an almost-exactly-even spread. Critically, *The Spiritually Serene* not only are the eldest type-grouping within the TRS\(^{249}\) but are the grouping which most closely mirror the features and qualities that have been identified elsewhere in this paper as being characteristic of the more spiritually developed.\(^{250}\) This might simply be a reflection of the general life-situation of this grouping of similarly-aged participants, of course; but there is also the possibility that having an even spread across the selves is a balance that, in Western society at least,\(^{252}\) comes with spiritual maturity; a reflection of a spiritual approach that has developed with a lifetime of experience. Plainly, further research is required.

\(^{247}\) As footnoted earlier in this chapter, a similar gender split prevails within some mainstream churches, including the Anglican Church of Australia, where women attendees outnumber men by almost two to one. Ref: Brighton, Castle, and Bellamy, ‘SCGA Report’, 108.

\(^{248}\) As was demonstrated in Chapter Seven (section 7.3.1), the relational triad was found to correlate reliably to the life-situation of participants.

\(^{249}\) *The Spiritually Serene* had an average age of seventy years, and a (noticeably narrow) age-range of between 64 and 80 years.

\(^{250}\) Specifically, in Chapter Eight by James W Fowler; and in Chapter Two by Henri J M Nouwen, David N Ellkins and colleagues; Eugene C Roehlkepartain and the Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence; Clive Beck; Lawrence L LaPierre, Malcolm Hollick, Peter C Hill and colleagues; George D Boone, and David Tacey.

\(^{251}\) This factor raises the possibility that the TRS may have potential to act as a foundation for a developmental model by maturation to be built at a later date. (See also Chapter Seven, section 7.7.4).

\(^{252}\) It is acknowledged that this is unlikely to be the case within Eastern cultures—not least because the latter has a more collective and less individualistic emphasis, in which it might be supposed that the individual is more likely to manifest a higher H-reading, and a correspondingly lower S-reading.
8.8.4 A Future for the Emerging Research

James Fowler’s Faith Development Theory stands-out within this discussion for a number of reasons, not least for the complexity of its construction, and the breadth and depth in human understanding that it endeavours to offer. But a further salient factor is that, its critics notwithstanding, Fowler’s theory appears to be standing the test of time, still influential almost forty years after research on it first began.\(^{253}\) This can be explained in part by Fowler making no attempt to include within his theory the content of faith,\(^{254}\) despite his interview-data patently containing sufficient information to allow him to do so. And in a world in which incumbent notions and expressions of faith increasingly are subject to change, Fowler’s concentration on the constructs underpinning faith, rather than on that faith itself, should allow it to remain relevant to new approaches as they emerge. In contrast—and in-keeping with all three typologies under review here—the Typology of Relational Spirituality clearly is more transient (at least in its current form), with its six types of relational spirituality differentiated most noticeably on the ever-changing and diverse contents of the Divine-related Self. This, of course, serves an express purpose in illuminating the spiritual needs and expressions of our time, fulfilling a primary goal of the research project.\(^{255}\) However, though all four typologies plainly would be open to updating with relative ease in future, it is notable that, unlike its peers, the TRS encompasses a foundational constituent that may prove to have longevity in and of itself—and in its current form. Specifically, the relational triad that lies at the core of all six of its types highlights distinct patterns of spirituality, in terms of the ratio evident between three relational components (namely, relationship to self, others, and whatever is held to be D/divine) common to all humanity—regardless of age, faith, or culture. With specific patterns currently aligned to specific types of spirituality, the relational triad potentially is a key that, with further research, may lead to deeper understandings of human being and doing.

\(^{253}\) As noted elsewhere in this chapter, the interviews that underpin FDT were conducted between 1972 and 1981. Ref: Fowler, Stages of Faith, 313.

\(^{254}\) In a similar way, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Enneagram models make no attempt to encapsulate the content of personality. Notably, they too have longevity.

\(^{255}\) Similarly, the content of faith within Mabry’s typological model (analogous to that within the Divine-related Self of the current research) has current value in assisting spiritual guides in their work with clients (indeed, as noted elsewhere in this chapter, Mabry’s work was published by Spiritual Directors’ International—a factor which indicates that such information is of value to spiritual guides). And the content of faith highlighted within the contemporary typologies of both Leaves and Flory & Miller offers an understanding that may allow the Christian Church to shape the church of the future in the most effective way.
Chapter Nine
Discussion 2: General Discussion

9.1 Introduction

HAVING LOCATED THE IDEOGRAPHICAL SITE for the emergent Typology of Relational
Spirituality, evaluated its potential for expansion; and identified the concept of the
relational triad as a research-finding of promise, the discussion continues here in a
more generalized way. As grounded-theorist Kathy Charmaz has helpfully observed, the quest is a
subjective one; can involve “theoretical playfulness” in striving to offer an imaginative
understanding and interpretation of the research findings in relation to the subject under
investigation, and involves “seeing possibilities, establishing connections, and asking questions”.
With these objectives in mind, this chapter seeks to weave an exploratory—if somewhat
fragmented—path through the research journey and findings from it that have not yet been
discussed. It seeks to tie-up loose ends, and draw-out several additional threads of potential
interest. The chapter will begin by considering the innovations and limitations of the project, and
will examine the research findings for any potential to construct a developmental model of
spirituality in future, before moving on to analyze the worth of music as used within the empirical
study. Thereafter, it will explore potential practical uses to which the research findings, in their
current form, might be put; before examining the findings for any general insight into human
spirituality in the twenty-first century. Finally, it will consider whether or not the research findings
and any of its analytical tools might have potential to serve as foundational building blocks in the
construction of a universal model of spirituality.

9.2 The Research Project: Innovations and Limitations

9.2.1 Limitations of the Research

There is no doubt that the current research project has been of an ambitious nature, incorporating

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1 As noted in Chapter Five, this is one of the tasks of the literature review within constructivist grounded theory.
2 Charmaz, Constructing Grounded Theory, 135. Erik Erikson comments along similar lines: “We must take our
theories with a serious playfulness and a playful seriousness”. Erik Erikson, in the introduction to his 1972
Godkin Lectures at Harvard University. As cited in Fowler, Stages of Faith, xiii.
3 Charmaz, Constructing Grounded Theory, 135. Initially cited in Chapter Five, Table 5.5.3.
a complex analytical process, and an outcome that is multi-layered. And it is plain that it did not achieve what it set out to achieve, in the sense that the initial vision for the project had been to build a developmental model of spirituality—an objective that ultimately had to be aborted in favour of undertaking a full examination of the typology that was first to be constructed from the study-data.\textsuperscript{4} Furthermore, from a logistical perspective, though considerable time and thought was put into the research design, it is acknowledged unequivocally that areas exist in which improvements might be made in any future replication of the empirical study.\textsuperscript{5} And, additionally, the study not only was unable to include children, as initially planned, but was restricted in terms of sample size and scope.\textsuperscript{6} Paradoxically, however, this latter limitation might also be seen as one of the strengths of the project, in that it consciously sought not to ‘muddy the waters’ by adding variables that would add to the complexity of data-analysis,\textsuperscript{7} and potentially lead to the construction of theory that lacked in ‘credibility’, ‘usefulness’, or ‘resonance’.\textsuperscript{8}

9.2.2 Innovations of the Research

Its limitations notwithstanding, this research has given rise to a number of innovations in relation to the study of contemporary human spirituality, some or all of which, it is hoped, future research may find to be of conceptual value beyond the restricted bounds of the project. The \textit{Typology of Relational Spirituality} emerged as the primary development of the study, of course, and has been discussed at length in Chapter Eight, where comparisons with other models showed it to have validity, though—as anticipated, given its restricted sample-population—not to be comprehensive. Other original contributions are, firstly, the study’s use of music to serve as a conduit to the spiritual; and, secondly, the creation of the \textit{relational triad}—a statistically-based investigative tool

\textsuperscript{4} For further details of the refocusing of the research in this way, please see Chapter Seven, section 7.8. See section 9.3 of this chapter, for discussion on the potential for a developmental model, based on the current findings, to be built in future.

\textsuperscript{5} For example, it is acknowledged that the sample-population for the study was small; that potential exists to expand or improve on the interview questions (awareness of which became especially salient to the researcher following the secondary, post-analysis, literature-review within this paper); that narrative thinking could have been drawn out to a greater degree than it was; and that the bounded scope of the project overall meant that the analysis was unable to engage satisfactorily—or, in some cases, at all—with demographic differentials such as gender; personality; introversion/extroversion; intelligence, etc.

\textsuperscript{6} See reasons detailed in Chapter Six, the study-population—comprising forty-seven adult participants of all ages—was drawn from one denomination of the Christian church, within one geographical location.

\textsuperscript{7} See comments from both Sheldrake and Schneiders cautioning against all-inclusive approaches to studies in spirituality in Chapter Two, section 2.3.4.3.

\textsuperscript{8} This relates to Charmaz’s position (initially cited in Chapter Five, Table 5.5.3) that the value of a grounded-theory study centres on its credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness. Charmaz, \textit{Constructing Grounded Theory}, 182-183.
which allows spirituality to be measured in terms of the particular relational focus of the individual or grouping. Finally, *The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality* was conceptualized to work in tandem with the relational triad, in order to allow the spirituality of the individual (or spiritual type) to be charted in presentational form.  

The worth and potential of these research tools will be examined in more detail below.

### 9.3 Potential for a Developmental Model of Spirituality

This research project fell short of its initial aim of building a developmental model of spirituality principally because of the finding that the spirituality of some participants was so fundamentally different from that of others that it was not possible to compare them in terms of growth and development. But signs exist that the research process and/or some of its findings might provide a suitable foundation on which to build a model of spiritual development by maturation in future.

One such pointer is the distinctive and incremental age-rise evident between the six types currently on the TRS—as highlighted in Chapter Seven.  

And linked to this is the observation that, of the six types on the emergent typology, *The Spiritually Serene*—notably, the oldest-aged grouping of the TRS—most closely mirror the features, qualities, and characteristics that have been identified by Henri Nouwen and others as being characteristic of the spiritually mature.  

Furthermore, as mooted in Chapter Seven, the existence of striking similarities between *The Spiritually Sustained* and *The Spiritually Serene* raises the possibility that the former type (S4) is a younger counterpart of the latter (S3).  

Clearly, then, further research is needed—firstly, to

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9 For summary-detail of the TRS, the relational triad, and The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality, please see Chapter Seven, section 7.13.

10 See Chapter Seven, section 7.7.4.

11 *The Spiritually Serene* had an average age of seventy years, and a (noticeably narrow) age-range of between 64 and 80 years.

12 See Chapter Two, section 2.5.

13 This is not to suggest that older age is a prerequisite for spiritual maturity—indeed, as manifest in the current study, not every older participant was classified to *The Spiritually Serene* type. Moreover, the researcher is aware of some younger participants of the study whose interview responses suggest a high degree of spiritual maturity. And, as Robert Coles’s work (for example) in the field of the spiritual and moral lives of children makes clear, signs of spiritual maturity can be evident at a young age. See, for example, Robert Coles, *The Spiritual Life of Children* (London: HarperCollins, 1992); and Robert Coles, *The Moral Life of Children* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, c1986).

14 See Chapter Seven, sections 7.11.3.2 and 7.11.4.2.

15 It might be argued, then, that these two types should not have been set apart, but, rather, presented as one type. This possibility was duly considered by the researcher, but, ultimately, the difference in approach to the D/divine—the primary differential of the emergent typology—manifest by each of these types was such that it seemed to justify the decision to distinguish them. Further discussion on the D/divine-differential is offered later in this chapter.
broaden the research to add those spiritual types that (as established in Chapter Eight) currently are not represented on the TRS; and, secondly, to determine whether or not a developmental model might be able to be built across the types of the extended continuum.

In contrast to the above is the alternative possibility that—following the construction of a more comprehensive continuum of spiritual types—it might be more fitting to build a developmental model for each type. This follows the observation made in Chapter Seven that The Spiritually Serene—who, it has been established, manifest characteristics of the more spiritually mature—all are parents and/or grandparents, and that all are, or have been, in long-term relationships with a spouse/partner. And the suggestion was made that these relational factors may have contributed to the formation of this particular spiritual type. It is recognised, however, that spiritual maturity is not limited to those within these particular demographic populations, and this not only flags the existence of another spiritual type, but also suggests that, within a typology that is based on relational measures, a developmental model might most fittingly be constructed for each type. A further endorsement of this approach is the wide age-span (26-88 years) evident among The Spiritually Sustained—the largest type-grouping within the TRS—who plainly cannot all be at the same stage of spiritual development.

9.4 The Use of Music in the Current Research

9.4.1 Introduction

As detailed elsewhere, music was employed in a specific way within the empirical component of the current research with a view to assisting study-participants both to settle into the interview situation and in their reflections—quests which, in turn, sought to enhance the accuracy of the data, and so maximise the potential validity of the research findings. But how effective was this endeavour? And might music be a medium worthy of consideration in future research projects?

16 See Chapter Seven, section 7.11.3.2.
17 No pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, for example, can be within this demographic population, and yet each reasonably might be supposed to manifest the highest level of spiritual maturity. Similarly, Mother Teresa of Calcutta was not within the demographic, and yet was named by James W Fowler as one of a small number of people exemplifying Stage 7 (Universalizing Faith) of Fowler's Faith Development Theory.
18 See Chapter Seven, section 7.11.4.1.
19 Chapters Four, Five, and Six of this paper give the full background to, and details of, the use of music in the current study.
As will be seen, investigating the answers to these questions led to new insights regarding the overall research project and its outcomes.

9.4.2 Music as a Medium: The Researcher’s Perspective

Clearly, the only sure way to determine the worth of music as employed in the current study would be to undertake a parallel study without the use of music, and compare the results. In the absence of this insight, however, answers can only be subjective; but the researcher believes the use of music not only to have been justified, but that it added to the study advantageously. Among other things, it offered a useful starting point to the interview in providing a non-pressured time of stillness and reflection for both the participant and researcher, and a shared experience between the two which translated into a mutual bond. Further, it clearly relaxed some participants; inspired others, and moved still more. It allowed narrative thinking to enter the interview at the earliest possible stage; and, in a number of cases, presented a comfortable and familiar story for the participant to share.

9.4.3 Music as a Medium: The Participants’ Perspective

This positive sense on the part of the researcher was endorsed by the participants themselves, each of whom was invited to comment at the end of his/her interview on whether or not the music had been of help, and for thoughts on its use in the interview situation. It is acknowledged that, in the interests of accuracy, inviting feedback directly to the researcher in this way was not ideal, and might have influenced the outcome. Nevertheless, the feedback that was received overwhelmingly endorsed the use of music, with ninety-four per cent of the forty-five participants who responded to the question reporting that they had indeed found it helpful. A further four per cent found it somewhat helpful. One participant only (equating to two per cent of the sample) did not find that it assisted in the interview—but this was because she had been fully comfortable in

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20 It is recognized that some participants might have felt unable to offer anything but a positive comment in these circumstances, and that providing an opportunity to provide feedback anonymously might have been preferable. However, the latter method is unlikely to have yielded so high a return, and, coupled with music’s being an indirect rather than direct subject of the research, was deemed to be impractical in the circumstances.

21 Of the remaining two participants, one interview had to be cut short before this final question was asked (due to time constraints on the part of the participant); and one participant had been unable to find a recording of her chosen music, but unfortunately had not advised the researcher of this beforehand. In this latter instance, however, the participant was able to talk well from memory about the chosen piece without actually listening to it.
the situation to begin with. As she reported:

I find it very easy to talk about my faith in general—and actually I was already talking to God before you arrived. So, no, I don’t think it really added more.

Notably, this participant went on to be classified to *The Spiritually Surrendered* type; and her comment here not only underlines the strength and depth typical of the relationship between S1’s and God, but supports the supposition that God (/Jesus/Holy Spirit) may be the sole incumbent of the S1 Divine.\(^{22}\)

9.4.4 Ways in which Music Assisted in the Research Endeavour

As had been hoped, the use of music did indeed serve a number of purposes for participants—in some cases practical, and in some cases spiritual. Overall, seven broad reasons—manifesting some degree of overlap—were offered by participants for the way in which the use of music had assisted them in the interview situation. These are shown in Table 9.4.4, below.

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\(^{22}\) This is because this participant’s comment suggests that music—which is integral to the D/divine of some other participants—is not part of her D/divine. Indeed, neither does music appear to have served here as a conduit to the spiritual. However, the small number of participants classified to this spiritual type means this cannot be determined without further research.
9.4.5 The Worth of Music as a Conduit to the Spiritual (And its Link to Spiritual Type)

A selection of comments from participants on the value to them of the musical component of the study follows below. It is significant to note that, even here, the characteristics of spiritual-type often are salient—highlighting the all-encompassing nature of at least some spiritual type-formations, and the many ways in which spiritual type can manifest. The centrality of God in the life of The Spiritually Surrendered, for example, and the life-lessons that are to be learnt through Scripture, both were highlighted by a second participant of the S1 spiritual type.23 This participant’s music of choice was a worship song featuring the suffering of Jesus, which served as a powerful evoker of the story of Jesus and the meaning that was to be found within it:

It reminded me of the essence of God, who reveals himself to us through Christ…The suffering issue was raised there in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the response of life is to be a living sacrifice. It was a nice little summary. And I guess it guided me, it transported me to reflect there, and to be there.

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23 See also the quotation of another S1 participant at section 9.4.3, above.
The passion and joy of *The Spiritually Spirited*, and their openeness to God’s prompting, are evident in this comment from an S2 participant—also for whom a worship song, with Jesus as its subject, was the musical choice. However, in this instance, the music served as a reminder of the nature of the relationship between the participant and God/Jesus, and set the context for the ensuing interview:

> It was great [as a way to start the interview] because God chose the starting point! There’s all sorts of music I could have chosen because I’ve got lots. I could have picked Mozart, I could have picked something else. But, for some reason, that idea of singing a love song to Jesus is pretty core, I think. So yes, yes, a great way to start!

The deep, often profound, reflection and the use of symbol characteristic of *The Spiritually Serene* both are evident in the following from an S3 participant—a musician—whose chosen music was an excerpt from the slow movement of a Rachmaninoff symphony. The essence of the music clearly encapsulated the deepest reaches of this participant’s being:

> Life is private in the sense that the things that matter most to us are so difficult to share with one another—in part, because we each live in our own perceptual world...What you see, I may not be able to see—I may not know that it exists—and so on. And we have no way of knowing that our way of looking at things is different from other people’s...For that reason, the things that mean most to us are really quite hard to share. Some things are easy—a sunset, a blue sky, we can delight in together; but the things that matter most of all are very hard. You can’t explain them, and to share them at all is difficult. But the music [that I chose]: if somebody said to me ‘what in life has mattered most to you?’ I would say, ‘listen to that. That will tell you.’ And if they can take it in aurally, it may be possible for them to understand it in another way. In a flood of sound, *it is* what matters to me.

For a busy S4 participant, practical concerns (not, in this instance, necessarily reflective of type) were of importance:

> It provided me with a still point. It was a good way of disconnecting from the twelve hours that had gone before, to the place where I needed to be now. It was a good way to do that. And I enjoyed being able to disconnect and just focus on the music.

And additional benefits regarding the use of music were noted by the following *Spiritually Settled* participants; for the first of whom—in line with the S5 type—the personal divine can be seen to be framed in forms other than God; in this instance, in both nature and music:
[My chosen music] was an extension of my appreciation of the beautiful things in life. The green trees, the birds in the garden, those sorts of things. I suppose I’m tuned-in to nature. And music is part of it. I was at my door yesterday, and the wind was whistling in. That’s nature’s music. So listening to music like [the piece I selected] gives me a lift.

I found it helpful. Relaxing. It always gets my mind ticking over. And I tend to forget other things that are going on.

Such comments indicate that, when deployed as it has been within this research, music had indeed assisted participants as hoped, and, across the participant-base, had served every purpose for which it was intended. And it is heartening to note that, though the use of music clearly assisted some participants more than others, there is no evidence of any negative outcome from its use.

9.4.6 Music and Narrative

The widespread use and significance of narrative on many levels in human life was explored extensively in Chapter Three of this paper, and its link with music touched on in Chapter Four. And the relationship between music and narrative—and, indeed, between music, narrative, and spirituality—became patently clear in a practical sense in the participants’ extensive use of narrative in talking of their chosen music and its meaning to them. More than eighty-five per cent of participants shared a story of one form or another relating to their chosen music—which had served for some as a reminder of external narratives of various genres (most notably biblical stories, but also narratives from history, for example); but, for others, had called to mind specific personal stories—memories of childhood; special people, places, events, and so on.

Once again, some distinction according to spiritual type was evident both in the choice of musical genre and the type of narratives that were evoked by the music. Not surprisingly, perhaps, worship songs, with specific Christian/biblical content, were strongly favoured by participants of

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24 Namely, the use of known and loved pieces of music, chosen by the participants themselves, and implemented as detailed within Chapter Six.

25 The remaining participants chose pieces of music for the internal qualities of the music itself, aware that a subsequent ‘affect’ of value—that of being uplifted, inspired, relaxed, or calmed, for example—would follow.
the $S1$ and $S2$ type; and non-religious pieces—drawn from popular culture, for example—were the predominant choice for participants of the $S5$ type. And a broad mix of genres was evident among the musical choices of spiritual types $S3$, $S4$, and $S6$.\footnote{Some exceptions to these general rules were salient with respect to participants of the $S1$, $S2$, and $S5$ types, however—highlighting the individuality and complexity of each human life, and the inadequacies that inevitably come with any attempt to ‘box’ individuals into a set typological framework.}

*NOTE:* In the interests of future research, further information on these particular findings—including genres of music chosen—can be found in the Appendices of this thesis.

### 9.4.7 Conclusion

This discussion has shown that music has served as a worthwhile, if not invaluable, addition to the empirical component of the current research; successfully serving a number of purposes—including as a conduit to the spiritual, and as a manifestation of the spiritual. And, in highlighting the complementarity of music and spirituality, and music’s close relationship with narrative forms of expression (which, as discussed in Chapter Three, is widely understood to be pivotal to human identity and human meaning-making), it is suggested that music is a medium of considerable potential, worthy of serious consideration in future empirical research projects in the field of spirituality.\footnote{Notwithstanding, caution would need to be exercised regarding the precise way in which music was employed in any study. This is because—as touched on in Chapter Four—music can be used in an exploitative way, and can be damaging if employed without appropriate knowledge and care.} A further outcome of this discussion is the observation that, within this study at least, spiritual type was manifest in both the musical choices and associated narratives of a number of participants, suggesting that spiritual type can be identified in many ways, and, for some, may be all-encompassing.

### 9.5 Practical Potential of the Research Findings

#### 9.5.1 Introduction

It is spirituality rather than music, of course, that is the direct focus of the current research, and thus further discussion into the use of music as a medium in the field of spirituality is beyond the brief of the project. Nonetheless, it is evident from the explorations, above,\footnote{And, indeed, the explorations of Chapter Four.} that music has...
capacity to serve in a range of practical situations beyond the academic arena. But of what immediate value, practically, are the other emergent findings? This section seeks to investigate.

9.5.2 Practical Application of the Typology of Relational Spirituality

In general terms, the value of a typology might be said to lie in its ability to classify what is being examined into identifiable types according to a particular characteristic or set of characteristics. Accordingly, a typology identifies what is typical of each of its types, and how each type differs from all others within the typology. Clearly, such information can have many uses—whether for knowledge and understanding; to illustrate diversity; or, more practically, in order to act on the information in some way. For example, a typology might raise awareness of trends and patterns that are establishing within or across a given population, or distinguish between types that are flourishing in a certain situation and those that are not, allowing interventions to be devised and employed, as appropriate.

These same factors apply to the Typology of Relational Spirituality; and so, at least for the TRS's initial source-population—namely, the Anglican Diocese of Perth, Australia—the findings in their current form can offer various strands of information which may be of practical assistance in any or all of these ways. Diocesan leaders, for example, might find the following of interest:

- People of at least six spiritual types are to be found within their diocese
- These spiritual types differ—and profoundly in some cases
- The types are differentiated most notably on their approach to the Divine
- The types also differ in their degree of focus on, and in their relationship with, both the self and others
- Certain types are compatible, and will be comfortable together in a parish community
- Certain types are incompatible, and are unlikely to be comfortable together
- In turn, parish priests who are of certain spiritual types are unlikely to attract parishioners who are of certain other types

29 Specifically, the Typology of Relational Spirituality; the relational triad, and The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality.

30 The TRS in its current form, of course, is bound to its initial study-population—a population which has been found to comprise six spiritual types. The discussion in Chapter Eight, however, has established that there are additional spiritual types not currently on the TRS continuum, suggesting that future research within other demographic populations is likely to uncover further types. This, in turn, would broaden the reach of the typology—further discussion on which is offered later in this chapter.

31 The following information has been drawn from Chapters Seven and Eight of this paper.
In more general terms, it further can be said that:

- beliefs within the diocese appear to be shifting, in keeping with shifts evident in other parts of the Western world
- within some parishes, some members are uncertain of, or are floundering, in their faith. Some, for example, do not relate to the supernatural, triune God of Christianity
- in other parishes, new and vital forms of spiritual expression are establishing

Such information has practical implications on all levels—for example, on a parish level, in the planning of services and sermons; and in pastoral care and outreach. And, on an administrative level, to assist with church planting; in the appointment of parish priests; planning for the future, and so on.

9.5.3 Practical Application of Other Research Findings

Thus, the TRS has uses—albeit limited—in its current form. But a way in which the TRS differs from most other typologies is that its underpinning constructs allow it to be used not only across and within groups of people, but on an individual basis, where it incorporates and engages with the unique qualities and characteristics of each individual being. And these constructs have potential for immediate use as working tools. Spiritual directors or counsellors, for example, might find the following of assistance in working with individual clients:

- **Gauging the spiritual type of new clients**

  Employing the music, interview, and coding method, as used within the current study, a spiritual director/counsellor should be able to gauge the spiritual type of a new client by matching it (as closely as possible) to one of the six types currently on the TRS. This would give the director/counsellor immediate information about the spiritual type of the client, serving as a useful starting point for spiritual direction/counselling. It might also serve well in marriage-preparation courses to highlight areas of spiritual compatibility between a couple, and areas of potential conflict requiring work and mutual understanding.

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32 Namely, the relational triad and its presentational counterpart, The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality.

33 Currently, of course, it is not known how valid the TRS is beyond its specific source-population. Thus, until further research is undertaken to examine the possibility of there being additional spiritual types on the TRS continuum, this particular usage can be recommended only for spiritual directors working with clients who belong to the source-population.

34 It should be remembered that plotting the relational triad of an individual will not necessarily reveal the spiritual type of that individual—in other words, the shape of an individual’s triad will not inevitably mirror any one of the six relational-triad patterns that are believed to typify the six spiritual types currently within the Typology of Relational Spirituality (as noted in Chapter Seven, these patterns were uncovered when the relational triads of groups of like-minded people—in this case, alike primarily in terms of their approach to the D/divine—were averaged-out). Rather, it is only when the reflections, concerns, and approach to the D/divine (in particular) of the individual are discerned, and the outcome compared to the pen-pictures of the spiritual types within the TRS, that the spiritual type of that individual can become known. Thus, the relational triad is a concept of limited value in terms of understanding the spiritual type of the individual.
Charting spiritual growth

A point-in-time ‘snapshot’ of the spirituality of a client can be recorded by charting the main spiritual qualities, characteristics, and concerns of the individual (gained from the interview, and noted verbatim where possible), together with the proportion of focus in each relational area, using The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality. Recharting the model at set intervals would allow the spiritual growth and development of the individual to be monitored.

Highlighting unusual shifts in relational focus

If charted over time, the relational triad component of a client’s Model would pick up any unusual or unexpected shift in the degree of relational focus. For example, it would be worthy of note if the D-reading of an individual dropped suddenly from being very high to being very low, or vice versa. And, while it would not be unusual for, say, a young single man, self-employed, and living alone, to have a relatively high S-reading; or a married mother-of-three to have a higher-than-average H-reading, were these readings to change significantly and unexpectedly, it might indicate a spiritual shift; a change in life-circumstance, or highlight a relational-area in which intervention by a spiritual director/ counsellor might be helpful.

Parish priests also might find the above tools useful in situations of one-to-one pastoral-care. But there are other ways too in which they might employ the investigative tools. For example, were an incumbent priest to know and understand the various spiritual types within his/her parish community, it would enable ministries to be tailored to meet the needs of the various types; and assist in the planning of services and sermons, etc—all of which might help to encourage newcomers, and/or lessen the likelihood of parishioners leaving the community. In turn, when appointing a parish priest, church administrators might find it beneficial were they able to select a priest whose spiritual type matched or complemented the predominant spiritual type or types within a given parish.

9.5.4 Potential for an Alternative Means to Determine Spiritual Type

It is recognized that any attempt to gauge the spiritual type of a large number of people within any community is unlikely to be without its difficulties, however. This is the case because, for the endeavour to be worthwhile, most members of a community would need to participate; and, not only would this be time-consuming, but there would be ethical and privacy implications, requiring careful planning and the consent and trust of each individual. And it seems likely that at least

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35 For discussion on the ability of the relational triad to reflect such personal circumstances, see Chapter Seven, section 7.3.1.
36 In that it would involve undertaking of a large number of interviews, and subsequent transcription and coding.
some members of a community would be unwilling to participate in such an exercise. Such problems might be overcome, however, were a questionnaire to be devised that would draw-out the same basic information regarding spiritual type without the need for an interview;\textsuperscript{37} and which could be completed anonymously, where necessary. The researcher believes that developing such a questionnaire from the current research findings would be relatively straightforward. Notwithstanding, in that additional spiritual types—not uncovered within the limited parameters of the current research—may be on the TRS continuum, additional research seems warranted ahead of the devising of any such questionnaire. Furthermore, it is noted that the use of a questionnaire to determine spiritual type would be suitable only in circumstances where information specific to the individual—such as that provided by The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality—were not required.

9.5.5 Conclusion

This research, then, has been shown to have present value in terms of providing practical tools that may be of assistance to spiritual directors, church leaders, and others actively involved in the field of human spiritual growth and wellbeing. In addition, it provides concrete and specific information regarding the spiritual make-up of the source-population of the study; and potential clearly exists to provide similar information—with the option of accessing it via a questionnaire format—to any population in which the study were to be undertaken. Furthermore—and in contrast to most typologies, which are not designed to differentiate between people of the same type—the underpinning constructs of the TRS offer the option to retain at least something of the personal story of each individual, in that not only can spiritual type be identified, but the proportional focus of the individual can be measured in each one of three relational areas, and spiritual qualities and characteristics charted.

\textsuperscript{37} It is noted that comparable measures are employed for typologies such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Enneagram. Similarly, the Faith Development Scale devised by Gary K Leak and associates seeks to provide an index of faith development, based on James W Fowler’s Faith Development Theory (for further details of Leak et al’s questionnaire-style scale, see Chapter Eight, section 8.4.3.5).
Chapter Nine: Discussion 2

9.6 Theoretical Potential of the Research Findings

9.6.1 Introduction

The findings, then, have practical potential. But, more critically for the purposes of this thesis, to what extent do they shed light on the understanding of human spirituality in the twenty-first century? As noted in Chapter Two, Sandra Schneiders suggests that academic studies of spirituality need to be set into their big-picture perspective in order to be understood fully, and this section seeks to do that by drawing-out a series of observations from the findings, each of which seeks to offer some insight into contemporary spirituality.

9.6.2 Observation: Several Factors May Influence Spiritual Formation and/or Type

There is no question that there are numerous, already well-documented influences on individual spiritual formation and spiritual type. But in the interests of any future research, the following observations can be made from the current research findings:

- There is some suggestion of personality differences between individuals of different types on the TRS. For example, The Spiritually Spirited (S2) were found to be more open and extrovert than, say, The Spiritually Surrendered (S1), Sustained (S4), or Settled (S5).

- In general terms, gender did not emerge as a major factor in type formation, but it did appear to be significant in the case of those of the S2 type, and, to a lesser extent, S5.

- Those who have come to Christianity as a result of conversion experiences all were found to be of either the S1 or S2 spiritual types. These types tend not only to have a higher focus on the D/divine than all other types, but frame their Divine almost exclusively in the form of the supernatural God of Christianity.

- Participants of the same spiritual type often were found in communities together—and thus teaching and/or mentoring may be an influence on spiritual type. However, there is some evidence of participants of types S1 and S2, in particular, searching for communities of like-minded members.

9.6.3 Observation: Signs Exist of a Broadening in Scope of ‘Horizons of Ultimate Value’

It was ascertained in Chapter Two that spirituality is considered to centre on what is judged by the individual to be D/divine, or ‘of ultimate value’. Furthermore, the academic study of spirituality

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38 See Chapter Two, section 2.3.4.2.
39 See, for example, the work of James W Fowler, Henri J M Nouwen, William James, plus authors of spiritual typologies highlighted in Chapter Eight.
was established to be context-critical, with all-inclusive studies that cross major boundaries—cultural or religious, for example—deemed problematic in that inevitably they de-contextualize the lived experience that is the object of study. These factors together were behind the narrowing of the current study to participants drawn from one denomination of the Christian church, within one geographical area; a restricted framework in which it was anticipated that participants might share a 'horizon of ultimate value'—namely, the triune God of Christianity. But the finding emerged that, while the Christian God was indeed most commonly perceived as the Ultimate Value/Divine, this was not so in every case. And, in other cases, additional forms of the divine/ultimate value were evident—perceived by some as that which is beautiful, perfect, stirring, or inspirational within nature, music, or amid other forms of human artistic expression, for example. This suggests that, within the Christian church of the twenty-first century, there is a broadening in scope of what is held to be D/divine, and that the narratives of the Christian faith may be beginning to be symbolically reinterpreted—at least within the study-population. This endorses a claim made by Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead that, in line with a major cultural shift taking place in Western society, a similar shift is underway in the realm of the sacred (D/divine), with a decline in forms of the sacred that emphasize a transcendent authority (Divine), and an increase in forms that emphasize inner authority and subjective experience (divine).

These observations have numerous implications, but, for the Church, they suggest that, if it is not already doing so, the Church’s approach to teaching, ministry, and outreach may need to be broadened or adjusted if it is to remain effective.

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40 See quotations from William James, Sandra Schneiders, and Joann Wolski Conn, for example, in Chapter Two, sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4. As noted elsewhere within this paper, the terms ‘D/divine’ and ‘that which is held to be of ultimate value’ (also ‘the sacred’) can be taken to be synonymous.

41 See Chapter Two, section 2.3.4.3.

42 This was not a foregone conclusion, however. As detailed in Chapter Six, the open and non-content-specific format of the questioning used within the study made no presuppositions regarding the form (or, indeed, existence) of the D/divine in the life of each individual. Rather, these details were left open for each participant to provide as s/he wished.

43 As footnoted in Chapter One, this is a shift from life-as (hierarchical, deferential, and conforming to external authority) to subjective-life (a striving for authentic connection with the inner depths of one’s unique life-in-relation). Ref: Heelas and Woodhead, The Spiritual Revolution, 2-3.

9.6.4 Observation: The ‘Location’ of the D/divine Differs According to Spiritual Type

The pen-pictures of the six types of relational spirituality within the TRS have revealed that all six types are distinguished most noticeably by their approach to the D/divine.\(^{45}\) Plainly, then, the D/divine plays a critical role in the spiritual being and practice of the individual. Related to this is the observation that distinctions between spiritual types are evident in terms of the metaphorical location of the D/divine—as shown in Table 9.6.4a, below:\(^{46}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type No.</th>
<th>Spiritual Type</th>
<th>Location of the D/divine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>The Spiritually Surrendered</td>
<td>At head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>The Spiritually Spirited</td>
<td>Alongside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>The Spiritually Serene</td>
<td>Within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>The Spiritually Sustained</td>
<td>Foundational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>The Spiritually Settled</td>
<td>At a distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>The Spiritually Sceptical</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These placements also can be represented visually—as shown in Figure 9.6.4b, below:

\(^{45}\) As reported in the pen-pictures of Chapter Seven, however, this was not only the only distinguishing factor. See section 9.6.10, below, for discussion.

\(^{46}\) These comparisons also were highlighted in Chapter Seven, Table 7.11.7.
These figurative placements are a reflection of the nature of the relationship between the respective individual and the D/divine, of course, and may be helpful in offering a characterization of the relationship in a form that is easily remembered. For example, the Divine situated at the head reflects the hierarchical and submissive nature of the relationship between the Divine (in this case, God) and The Spiritually Surrendered, with S1’s looking up to their God, who leads the way. The Divine (again, God) situated alongside The Spiritually Spirited reflects the companionable nature of this relationship, with God as best friend, and, in some cases, lover or bridegroom. The D/divine ‘within’ mirrors the integrated nature of the spirituality of The Spiritually Serene (S3). The D/divine beneath—or foundational to—The Spiritually Sustained emphasizes the D/divine’s role as bedrock support and springboard in the life of S4’s—and so on.

9.6.5 Observation: The Relational Triad Provides a Literal ‘Shape’ to Spiritual Type

It could be said that these same placements also are represented visually, at least to some extent—most notably for spiritual types S1, S2, and S3—by the relational triads that represent each type within the typology, as shown in Figure 9.6.5, below.
Here, the \textit{S1}'s subordination of the Solitary Self (represented by the particularly low, pink-coloured bar) in favour of focusing on the Divine 'above' (yellow bar), who leads the way, is graphically depicted—an observation that is directly reflected in the following comment from an \textit{S1} participant:

\begin{quote}
The more I grow as a Christian… the more I realize that it’s all [God] and it’s not me… Oh, it’s all him. And the less of me the better really.
\end{quote}

The loving companionship that is characteristic of the \textit{S2} relationship with the Divine, coupled with the fundamental importance of community (orange bar) within \textit{S2}-spirituality, also is appropriately illustrated in the identical bars that lie side-by-side representing the H- and D-related selves. And the self-integration and sense of balance which typifies \textit{S3} spirituality is evident to some degree in the pattern of the \textit{S3} triad—the most evenly spread of all six \textit{relational triads}. It is acknowledged that the remaining patterns are harder to interpret visually, with the shape of the triad offering less 'instant' information about spiritual type. Nonetheless, the primary focus on others typical of both \textit{The Spiritually Sustained} and \textit{The Spiritually Settled} is manifest, as is the weak relationship with the D/divine typical of both \textit{The Spiritually Settled} and \textit{The Spiritually Sceptical}.

In some ways, then, the \textit{relational triad} is able to provide a literal shape to human spirituality, forming a pattern that in and of itself reflects at least something of the figurative shape of each spiritual type on the \textit{TRS}. Not only does it provide a visual distinction between the types on the \textit{TRS}, but it instantly demonstrates something of the connection and contrasts between them.

\textbf{9.6.6 Observation: The \textit{Relational Triad} can Highlight Differences in Religious Background}

It was noted in Chapter Seven that the most likely entry-point to Christianity for \textit{S1} and \textit{S2} participants of the current study was as a result of a conversion experience in late teenage or early

\begin{footnote}
A fuller form of this quotation can be found in Chapter Seven, section 7.11.1.2.
\end{footnote}
adult years. In contrast, almost all $S_3$, $S_4$ and $S_5$ participants have traditional and life-long backgrounds within the Christian church (Anglican denomination), and have not had a conversion experience. These distinctions in background are somewhat apparent in the patterns of the respective relational triads of the types (see Figure 9.6.5, above), where the triads for types $S_1$ and $S_2$ can be seen to be unique, in contrast to a clear similarity in shape for those of types $S_3$, $S_4$, and $S_5$. This suggests that there are fundamental links between these latter three types, though the patterns of the relational triads also retain and reflect the singular spiritual formation of each.

9.6.7 Observation: The Relational Triad can Highlight Distinctions in the Form of the D/divine

As noted above, participants of the current study framed their D/divine most commonly in the form of God—as might have been expected in a study undertaken within the Christian church. But it is salient that, unlike all other types, types $S_1$ and $S_2$ framed their D/divine almost exclusively in the form of the supernatural triune God. Furthermore, types $S_1$ and $S_2$ not only were found to have a higher degree of focus on the D/divine than all other types, but are the only two types for which the D-reading emerged as higher than the H-reading. Taken together, these findings underline the nature and strength of the relationship between these particular participants and God, and raise the possibility that, should any new spiritual type be added to the TRS in future, if it is represented by a relational triad which has a D-reading that is higher than both S- and H-readings, it too may be a type for which the D/divine is found exclusively in the form of a supernatural God.

9.6.8 Observation: The Relational Triad shows Human Spirituality to be Unique

The typology that was constructed from this research highlights six different types of spirituality to be found within one branch of the Christian church; and there are signs to suggest that other types, or sub-types, would be found were additional research to be undertaken further afield. As can be seen from the various discussions of this paper—not least those within this chapter—

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48 See comparison in Chapter Seven, Table 7.11.7.
49 It should be noted that forms held by other types to be D/divine (the beauty of nature, for example) are appreciated by types $S_1$ and $S_2$, but are valued as being part of God’s creation, and thus are reflections of God rather than divine in and of themselves.
50 The D-reading for Type $S_2$ is shown as equal to the H-reading in Figure 9.6.5, but it must be remembered that the underpinning figures for the triads were rounded to the nearest 5%. The raw figures for this type showed a D-reading that was marginally higher than the H-reading.
51 See discussions in Chapter Eight, and summary in section 8.8.
being able to group people together within types in such a way has its uses. But it also has the
disadvantage of losing the concept of individuality—and, in this case, the concept of individual
spirituality. But the relational triad that underpins the emergent TRS typology serves as a
worthwhile reminder of the spiritual uniqueness of each individual in that, saliently, within each
TRS type-grouping—their similarities notwithstanding—no two participants were found to have an
identical relational triad: the measurement-breakdown for each was unique. Certainly, this might
not have been the case had the study been significantly larger in terms of participant-numbers,
but, in these instances, the charting of The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality—incorporating the
singular characteristics of each participant—would serve the same purpose.

9.6.9 Observation: Spiritual Types on the TRS Reflect an Evolving Church

All six spiritual types to have emerged from this research not only provide information about the
source-population from which the participants were drawn, but might be said to add at least
something to the meta-narrative of Western spirituality in the twenty-first century. The link between
The Spiritually Spirited and the emergent spiritual orientation of ‘Expressive Communalism’ (as
identified by Flory and Miller) for example, is clear. And the dissatisfaction with their status quo
evident among The Spiritually Sceptical also may be a reflection of contemporary times. Further,
Nigel Leaves’s supposition that the supernatural God of the Christian faith is becoming a problem
for some is indirectly supported by the existence of The Spiritually Settled—the second-oldest
and second-largest of the type-groupings—who made little or no mention of God in their
respective interviews. And the comparatively low D-reading on the S5 relational triad (see Figure
9.6.5, above) suggests that God—or, indeed, a divine of any form—has little impact in or on the
day-to-day life of the individual.

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52 See section 9.5.2, plus observations within section 9.6.
53 See Chapter Eight, section 8.6.5.
54 See Chapter Seven, section 7.11.6.2.
55 See Chapter Eight, section 8.7.
56 As noted in Chapter Seven (section 7.11.5.1), the S5 grouping had an average age of 55; a median age of 65,
and comprised 23% of the study-population.
9.6.10 Observation: The D/divine is Not the Only Distinguishing Marker of Spiritual Type

In line with the underpinning components of spirituality assumed for the current research, and further to the related observations made in section 9.6.4, above, the six types currently on the TRS are distinguished most noticeably by their approach to the D/divine. However, it is significant to note that, following the classification of each participant to the most fitting type according to his/her relationship with the D/divine, further analysis revealed that the types also were set apart from one another in terms of the type of relationship that members had with both others and with the solitary self (relationships that are represented on the relevant relational triads as the H- and S-readings).

To illustrate this, as can be seen in the pen pictures offered in Chapter Seven, a triad of specific relationships is evident for each type. This is especially noticeable for types S1 and S2, where type-members (all of whom have undergone a conversion experience) display a spirituality that is evidently purposeful, dynamic, and lived-out within consciously-established boundaries. For example, the religious beliefs of The Spiritually Surrendered clearly are behind their subsuming of the solitary self within their Divine—their primary focus; and S1’s have a caring approach to others that is based on their understanding of what God wants of them. The spirituality of The Spiritually Spirited unmistakably centres on the integral and essential link between faith and community, with community involvement of immense importance to them; and, where the solitary self is concerned, S2’s are likely to submit to what they see as God’s plan for their own personal lives. The Spiritually Serene manifest a spirituality that is integrated and balanced between all three relational selves. The Spiritually Sustained know themselves well; draw on the Divine for support, and live lives that are strongly oriented toward others. The Spiritually Settled also focus their lives firmly on others, but have an uncertain relationship with the D/divine which may result in at least some S5’s feeling somewhat inauthentic or incomplete. And The Spiritually Sceptical—though too small in number and diverse in personality to allow proper

57 Namely, the capacity for self-transcendence, the perceiving of what constitutes ultimate value (the D/divine), and the conscious moving toward the latter through the former. These components draw on the understandings of spirituality put forward by both Sandra Schneiders and Joann Wolski Conn (see Chapter Two, section 2.2.4). Furthermore, the spiritual life as experience was established to be inherently relational—formed, developing, and expressed in a triad of relationships with the self, with others, and with D/divine (the ultimate value perceived)—an understanding put forward by Henri J M Nouwen (and endorsed by others). See Chapter Two, section 2.2.6.

58 See section 7.11.
conclusions to be drawn—displayed a high focus on the solitary self; a mixed approach to others, and dissatisfaction in their relationship with the D/divine.

These factors emphasize the relational nature of human spirituality—an observation the implications of which will be discussed in more detail in section 9.8, below.

9.6.11 Conclusion

The observations made here offer a number of distinct insights into spirituality as it manifests in the twenty-first-century Western world and, together, highlight signs of change in traditionally-based faith-formation within the study-population. The findings show that, even amid a small sample of one denomination of the Christian church, there is diversity, even polarization, in spiritual formation and expression; and that relationships with the D/divine are disparate in form and strength. Not only is there now more than one way in which the D/divine is conceptualized, but the personal D/divine can have a markedly different place and purpose in the life of the individual. Further, the existence of relational markers in addition to that with the D/divine, and the interplay evident between them, shows that human spirituality per se is complex, and inextricably bound to the life-experience of the individual as manifest in and through these relationships. This, in turn, underscores the nature of human spirituality as being at once inherently relational, yet exclusive to the individual.

9.7 The Research Findings and Spirituality in the Twenty-First Century

9.7.1 Introduction

The human cost of the spiritual despondency that is prevalent within the contemporary Western world was highlighted in Chapter One, where it was noted that creeping depression, materialism, and a sense of despair are escalating; and on a scale that led David Tacey to warn, "spirituality is a major issue and requires immediate attention if we are to creatively respond to the spiralling outbreaks of depression, suicide, addiction, and psychological suffering". The empirical component of the current research necessarily has concentrated on spirituality within a limited domain—namely, as it is expressed in religious (Anglican/Christian) circles—and, clearly, this

59 Tacey, The Spirituality Revolution, 3.
restricts inferences that can be drawn from it. However, this section seeks to explore how the findings might at least dialogue with the spiritual circumstance of the broader community. What light, if any, can the findings throw on the imperative issue of pervasive spiritual despair?

9.7.2 Promoting New Understandings of the D/divine within the Secular World

It is notable that, though the emergent findings uncovered spiritual dissatisfaction and uncertainty among some members of the study-population, they do not reflect general or widespread spiritual despair. However, this might have been anticipated in that (as noted elsewhere in this paper) the actively religious—whether of an intrinsically- or extrinsically-religious orientation—are known to enjoy a number of benefits that are not experienced by the non-actively religious. Additional benefits that are not so widely acknowledged, however, but that have become evident in the course of this research, are that the spiritually active have ready access to a given way of both framing their D/divine (predominantly God within a Christian community, for example), and of entering into relationship with the D/divine—neither of which benefits, in general, are afforded to the spiritually passive. It is suggested that these two factors may be significant. This is because, if the current research is correct in its framing of human spirituality in terms of a triadic form of relationships, including that with the D/divine, a need for relationship with the D/divine is inherent to everyone; albeit, inevitably, to differing degrees. And, if a personal D/divine cannot be found, a substitute erroneously sought in the form of substance-abuse or over-consumption seems likely to lead to despair.

The current research supports this supposition in its finding that the only participants of the current research who expressed any degree of spiritual yearning or dissatisfaction were to be found among The Spiritually Settled and The Spiritually Sceptical—both spiritual types set apart by having a relationship with the D/divine that is, or is becoming, problematic; coupled with a notably low D-reading on the relational triad. This is in accord with Tacey’s earlier-noted observation that

60 See footnotes in Chapter One, section 1.2.2, for definitions of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations.
61 See Chapter One, section 1.3.5.
62 For example, within traditional church communities, services of worship provide regular exposure to ritual, symbol, sacred music, etc—any or all of which may help bring churchgoers closer to the D/divine, and/or provide outlets for spiritual expression.
63 This was borne-out in the current research in the finding that each spiritual type had a differing degree of focus (and, in some cases, significantly different) in the area of the Divine-related Self.
64 See discussion on the known effects of over-consumption in Chapter One.
“[t]he yearning for sacredness, spiritual meaning, security, and personal engagement with the spirit are the primary needs and longings of the contemporary world”. And it may be, then, that an opportunity exists for spiritual leaders to help meet the spiritual needs not only of S5 and S6 church members, but also of interested members of wider society, by routinely offering study- or discussion-groups, for example, that aim to broaden understandings in conceptions of the D/divine. This certainly would require embracing notions of the symbolic; exploring appropriate outlets for spiritual practice, and might also benefit from the use of practical conduits such as music and narrative.

9.7.3 Spiritual Malaise: Who is Most at Risk?

It is clear from the current study that some Christians have neither need nor desire to reframe their D/divine from the supernatural, Trinitarian God of their faith; but, nonetheless, there are signs that others are beginning to conceptualize their personal D/divine in new and (for them) more helpful ways. And, for some of the latter grouping, this reframing is being undertaken from within their faith communities, where, of course, benefits can be derived from the other known advantages of belonging to such a community, including those that impact on the Humanity-related and Solitary spiritual selves of each individual. It may be that the incoming forms of spiritual practice now emerging outside the auspices of formal religion—such as those highlighted by Nigel Leaves—are mirroring these beneficial effects within the secular world, and, if so, practitioners might be expected to share with their churchgoing counterparts a lower risk of spiritual despondency. Who, then, is most at risk? The current research findings would indicate that those least likely to succumb to spiritual despair, depression, and a clinging to the materialistic are the spiritually-active who know and relate to their D/divine—in-line with spiritual types S1, S2, S3 and S4 of the TRS. Thereafter, are the spiritually-active who have not identified, and/or do not relate to, their D/divine, but who would receive at least some spiritual sustenance from their community involvement—such as The Spiritually Settled (S5) of the TRS. But the spiritually-passive who

66 The researcher is aware that this is being undertaken already in some church communities, though it is does not yet appear to be widespread. Further, such broadening of the ‘horizons of ultimate value’ already is evident among those of some other spiritual types—and most notably, The Spiritually Serene.
67 See Chapter Eight, section 8.7.
68 Plainly, empirical research in this area would be required for this to be known without doubt.
neither know nor relate to the D/divine would appear to be the demographic most in danger, having no means, outlet, nor spiritual-community through and from which to receive spiritual nourishment.69

9.7.4 The Relational Triad: a Marker of Spiritual Despondency?

Broadening the current research to the secular world—and, indeed, to other faith traditions—would allow the validity of this latter supposition to be put to the test, at which point it would be interesting to note the shape of the relational triad for those who are not spiritually active. Would this demographic have a D-reading that is significantly low, for example? And, if so, might the existence of a particularly low D-reading on the triad present a visual spiritual marker that might reflect—or, more importantly, help to predict—likely instances of depression, anxiety, substance-abuse, and/or creeping ‘affluenza’?70 Plainly, further research is required.

9.7.5 Conclusion

The limiting of the current research to one denomination of the Christian Church also limits its ability to engage with more broadly-based issues. Nonetheless, the findings suggest that those most susceptible to spiritual despair and its associated behaviours may be those who neither belong to a spiritually-active community, nor know and engage with a personal D/divine—and that the latter both may be needs fundamental to humanity. The findings also highlight the relational triad as a spiritual-gauge of future potential in this field.

9.8 Relational Spirituality: Universal Possibilities

9.8.1 Introduction

The Introduction to this paper noted the paradox that, though the twenty-first-century world has provided humanity with the means to communicate more widely, swiftly, and effectively than ever before, impasses, misunderstandings, and breakdowns in communication have soured many inter-

69 This supposition is upheld in part (and indirectly) by psychologist Oliver James, whose research—as noted in the Introduction to this paper—found that actively-religious people were less likely than non-believers to succumb to depression and the excesses of the consumer culture (with the exception of those whose religious practice was motivated purely by self-serving ends).

70 As noted in Chapter One, section 1.1, affluenza is the colloquial term for a Western cultural drive in which extreme value is placed on money, possessions, appearance (physical and social), status, and celebrity. Ref: James, Affluenza, 20.
group relationships, and the contemporary world continues to be scarred by ongoing, even escalating, division and conflict. It is clear that the issue is complex and widespread, and not open to simple solutions; but it might safely be said that a lack of tolerance for difference is at the root of the problem, with ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’ evident on almost every level of human society. Roehlkepartain, Benson, King, and Wagener note the defining and divisive roles played by religion and spirituality in most of the world’s major geopolitical conflicts.\(^71\) So might the promotion of sameness and commonality in human spiritual being—both within and beyond religious circles—be a response in the right direction? This question cannot be addressed comprehensively here, but it nonetheless provides a way in which the current research findings might profitably engage in the debate. Linked to, and building on observations made in sections 9.6 and 9.7, above, this section seeks to examine how a model of spirituality that assumes spirituality to be a relational construct might be applicable universally, inclusive of all.

9.8.2 Similar but Different: Evidence of Spiritual Diversity among Study-Participants

As noted elsewhere, the relational approach views spirituality as formed, experienced, and developing in and through a triad of relationships—that with the solitary self, that with others, and that with whatever the individual holds to be D/divine—in line with Henri Nouwen’s thinking (among that of others\(^72\) ) that “the spiritual life is a reaching out to our innermost self, to our fellow beings and to our God”.\(^73\) Members of the six spiritual types on the emergent TRS clearly ‘reach out’ in each of these three relational areas, but it is notable that they do so in ways that are distinctive—and, in some cases, saliently so.\(^74\) It might be said, for example, that the difference between The Spiritually Surrendered and The Spiritually Sceptical is polar.\(^75\) Yet each of the types on the TRS was constructed from study-data obtained from a group of participants who, on the


\(^72\) See discussion on spirituality as a relational construct in Chapter Two, section 2.2.6.

\(^73\) Nouwen, Reaching Out, 16. This quotation initially was cited in Chapter Two, section 2.2.6.

\(^74\) As noted in Chapter Six, one reason for the selection of the specific population-base chosen for the study was because of the freedom afforded to its members to hold to a wide spectrum of belief. This factor undoubtedly will have contributed to the wide variance in spiritual type evident among participants; and it is suggested that similar distinctions may not be as evident within other Christian communities and faiths; and particularly those in which there is strict adherence to tenets of belief.

\(^75\) This might also be said of the difference between The Spiritually Surrendered and The Spiritually Settled.
face of it, have a lot in common. Among other things, all live in Western-culture Australia; are actively religious; are Christian; are Anglican; are members of the same church Diocese, and all live within a relatively close proximity of one another.

9.8.3 The Potential for Widespread Use of Relational Measures of Spirituality

The disparity in spiritual type evident between individual participants notwithstanding, the spirituality of every participant, without exception, was able to be charted successfully using both the relational triad and The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality. And no two were identical. It is posited, then, that the relational measures on which the TRS is based—which, critically, are non-content-specific—are common to humankind. Thus, they should apply equally well to members of other denominations of the Christian faith; other monotheisms such as Judaism and Islam; other religious faiths; those within secular society, and to those of other cultures. For, even were no personal D/divine to be found (as might be argued for those of Buddhist faith,²  or for some within secular Western society), a relational triad still can be charted, but with a zero D-reading; and The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality subsequently would be charted to incorporate two, as opposed to three, segments—a strategy that would apply, of course, to any similar (if rare) situation involving either the Solitary Self or the Humanity-related Self.

9.8.4 The Common Core of Human Spirituality

It might be supposed that, if charted within populations other than the Western-based faith community in which the current study was undertaken, the proportional breakdown between the three selves of the relational triad across different spiritual types might be markedly different from that found within the current study. Here, the primary relational-self interplay across participants was found to be that between the Humanity-related and Divine-related selves, with the relational triad as depicted in Figure 9.8.4, below.

² The researcher would not hold to this argument necessarily, however. Although those of Buddhist faith—in their denying of a supernatural creator God—do not have a Divine, they are likely to have a dDivine. This is supported in the finding—reported elsewhere in this paper—that some participants of the current study also do not relate to a supernatural creator God, but plainly construct their divine in other ways: symbolically; within nature, or in and through other elements of devotion, for example.
Were the study to be moved into a Western secular community, however, it seems more likely that the primary interplay across spiritual types would be between the Humanity-related and Solitary selves, and that the Solitary Self might manifest at a generally-higher level than that of the Divine-related Self. And further distinctions surely would be inevitable within other cultures and religions. For example, it might be anticipated that the Solitary Self would be at a lower level across-the-board within the collectively-oriented Eastern cultures than that found within the individualistic West; and that—unlike the average relational triad for the current study-population—the average D-reading for any religious-population adhering to strict doctrinal beliefs would be higher than that of both other relational-selves, and so on. In the same way, were the hypothesis put forward in section 9.3, above, to be correct, and members of The Spiritually Serene type were indeed among the more spiritually mature, the relational triad that represents the type—namely, a balanced spread across the triad—would not necessarily be mirrored precisely by the more spiritually mature within other cultures.\footnote{Daniel Helminiak, on the other hand, might argue that this triad would remain relatively constant across cultures, in that in the final Cosmic Stage of his model of spiritual development (a stage which, to some extent at least, mirrors The Spiritually Serene of the TRS), “[o]ne would be fully open to all that is, ever willing to change and adjust as circumstances demand, alive always to the present moment… in touch with the depths of one’s own self…in harmony with oneself and with all else….”: Ref. Daniel A Helminiak, Spiritual Development: An Interdisciplinary Study (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987), 88-89. I am grateful to Nancy Ault for this observation.}
Further research undoubtedly is warranted in this area, but there appears to be some basis on which to suggest that the relational measures underpinning the TRS—and, by extension, a relational approach to spirituality—have the potential to be both inclusive and of universal reach. Not only do these measures retain the individuality of populations (and, indeed, the individual), and acknowledge difference, but they do so while concurrently stressing the common core and essence of human spirituality.

9.8.5 An Outline of a Universal Model of Relational Spirituality

The Typology of Relational Spirituality in its current form—in other words, as constructed within the current research—encompasses six spiritual types found within a Western-Christian-Anglican population. Figure 9.8.5a, below, illustrates these components of the TRS, and the relationship between them, in an organizational-structure form.
Earlier discussions have established that the typology is incomplete, and that other types, or sub-types, exist that might later be added to the six types currently within the typology; and it is clear that these could be added to the above model simply and efficiently. But how might this model and its constituent types relate, or be linked in any way, to a relational typology constructed within, say, an Eastern-culture, non-religion-based setting? Figure 9.8.5b, below, offers an organizational-structure overview of the relationship between the two; and, indeed, of the basis on which a universal model of relational spirituality might be established.
NOTES:

1. The number of spiritual types in each case will vary, and is not fixed
2. A further tier might be needed (subordinate to Culture) to allow for geographical differences
Here, then, the interplay between relational constituents provides the common theme on which a universal model of spirituality might be constructed, arguably enabling the inclusion of any individual, anywhere in the world (at least in principle—the scale of the undertaking clearly making the exercise prohibitive in practice). Hypothetically, however, were an academic study of human spirituality approached from a relational perspective to be planned on a large scale—for comparative purposes, for example—a typological continuum (such as that illustrated in Figure 9.8.5a) would be open for construction within each population. Each spiritual type within each continuum would be represented by its own relational triad, and its major components could be summarized and highlighted using The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality. In bringing the continuums together, it would be worthy of note were common factors, or any specific spiritual types, to be found mirrored within disparate populations. And it might be projected that a number of spiritual types would manifest within some populations (religion-based populations in which a wide spectrum of spiritual praxis or belief were encouraged or tolerated, for example), while considerably fewer would be anticipated within others (non-religion/non-praxis-based spirituality, or strictly-doctrinal religious faiths, for example).

Furthermore, from a broad-picture perspective, it would be hoped that any such exercise would allow differences across and between people and populations to be understood and respected, while at once stressing the shared essential nature of human spiritual being.

9.8.6 Conclusion

This discussion has explored how a model of spirituality that assumes spirituality to be a relational construct might be applicable universally. Setting the scene for this was the spiritual diversity evident among current study-participants; and this factor, coupled with the ability to successfully chart the spirituality of each participant—in his or her uniqueness—using both the relational triad and The Relational-Self Model of Spirituality, suggests that a relational approach to spirituality,

78 It is recognized that, were any such study to be undertaken, a universally-applicable research design would be difficult to achieve, with, for example, religious and/or cultural sensitivities almost certainly requiring adaptations to be made to any research framework, even if non-content-specific questioning (such as that used within the current study) were used. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that studies within each demographic population undoubtedly would require research-leaders from within that same population.
using relationally-based building blocks, has the potential to be both inclusive and of universal reach.

9.9 Conclusion

The departure of this project from its initially-intended direction notwithstanding, this chapter has endeavoured to present an exploration of the emergent findings as they relate to the primary research questions; and it has sought to do so in a way that is respectful, imaginative, yet ‘theoretically playful’. On a practical level, it is suggested that the emergent Typology of Relational Spirituality, together with its underpinning constructs, may hold value in the present. And, theoretically, observations drawn from the research-findings have endorsed the understandings of other researchers in some areas, and proffered new understandings of contemporary human spirituality in others. It may be, however, that, in a world too often marked by difference and division, it is the conceptualizing of the relational triad—an instrument of measure that gauges the spiritual make-up of individuals or groupings, while implicitly endorsing the relational approach to spirituality and, in turn, highlighting common ground and inclusivity—that is the most important construct to have emerged from this research. What doors might open, for example, were similar or identical relational-patterns to be found across and between those of differing faiths, creeds, or cultures? To re-quote Robert Funk:

The future of the Christian faith may turn out to be a minor aspect of the cultural shifts that are shaping our future. The themes that have dominated the institutional churches may no longer be of central concern to us. But no matter. Yet at the heart of the old faith tradition there are topics and themes that are central to the human condition and the fate of the planet in the next millennium. Our task is to locate those themes and set them in a new and broader context.

For Nigel Leaves, resolutions to ‘the God problem’ currently form one such theme. But might the intrinsically relational nature of spirituality—central to the understandings of many scholars in the field, including Henri Nouwen and James W Fowler—be another core theme that needs now to be set within ‘a new and broader context’?

79 See section 9.1, above.
81 See discussion in Chapter Eight, section 8.7.
Faith is something that has much to give and to teach a world in which economic globalization and political change is, of course, offering many opportunities, but also presenting many challenges…

[W]e want to allow people to respect and value the other person’s beliefs…and to let the people of different faiths see the values that they so often share.

Tony Blair

Chapter Ten
Conclusion

10.1 Introduction: Research Aims and Goals

The particular shifts and developments that have come together in the English-speaking world of the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries unquestionably have provided an exciting and vibrant environment in which to live.

Yet their collective effect on the long-term spiritual health and emotional wellbeing of many is concerning scholars, health professionals, and church leaders alike. This research sought to use empirical means to investigate spiritual formation, growth, and expression within this context; and to examine where, how, and, indeed, if ultimate meaning and purpose are being found in an increasingly pluralist world in which a consumerist culture has established, and emotional distress is known to be insidious and widespread. The construction of a model of spiritual development was planned with a view to understanding the figurative ‘shape’ of contemporary spirituality, and to determine how spiritual growth might best be gauged.

10.2 The Research Path

Adopting an inter- and multi-disciplinary approach—ultimately encompassing Christian spirituality, theology, psychology, sociology, history, literature, philosophy, and music—the research began by framing an understanding of spirituality for the purposes of the research; locating the project within the arena of academic studies in spirituality; and investigating the identifiable characteristics, qualities, and attributes of spirituality with a view to designing the most appropriate format for the empirical study. The research moved on to identify two enabling media—namely, narrative and music—both of which ultimately were established as potential conduits to the spiritual, through which individuals might be assisted to access and articulate their experiences. Initial investigations led to the choice of constructivist grounded theory as the most fitting methodology for the empirical work, and the study was designed accordingly. The population-base was narrowed to adults within
the Anglican Church in Western Australia, and ultimately the study was undertaken with forty-seven participants, ranging in age from their mid twenties to late eighties, drawn from several different parishes. Data was collected by means of one-to-one semi-structured interviews, each of which began with the playing of a piece of music that had been self-selected by each respective participant. And the interview incorporated several questions that aimed to use narrative-means by which to draw out something of what McAdams has called the ‘sacred story of the self’.¹ The triadic relational structure to spirituality that was assumed in the research featured significantly in the analysis of study data.

### 10.3 The Findings in Overview

The redirection of the research during the analytical process led to the construction of a model of spirituality different in form to that initially envisaged, but the overall focus of the project remained constant. The *Typology of Relational Spirituality* that was constructed incorporates six distinct, and, in some cases, divergent, spiritual types—some of which reflect intrinsic religious faith, and others extrinsic faith. Polarization was evident among the participant group, with some displaying confidence, certainty, and assurance in their spirituality and beliefs, while others clearly were uncertain, dissatisfied, and even sceptical: a disparity which suggests spiritual shifting, and/or that some individuals currently are coping better than others. Dialogue with other spiritual models suggests that the emergent typology encapsulates at least something of the evolving face of Christianity, but that it is incomplete and hence open to expansion. Further, signs exist that the typology has potential to serve as a springboard from which a developmental model—or, indeed, models²—may be constructed in future.

A number of general observations were made from the findings regarding the status of human spirituality in the twenty-first century. These included the observation of a broadening in understanding and conceptualization of the D/divine, and, indeed, the place and purpose of the D/divine in the life of the individual. And it was further observed that all three relational markers—concerning the individual’s relationship with self, others, plus the D/divine—are active and

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¹ See Chapter Three, section 3.4.4.

² As noted in Chapter Nine, section 9.3, the diversity between some types was such that it was suggested that a developmental model might more fittingly be constructed for each spiritual type.
instrumental in spiritual formation and expression; and that the nature of, and the weighting placed on, each of the relationships may vary significantly according to spiritual type.

It was salient that, among the study-population at least, those found to be struggling spiritually—albeit small in number—were those for whom the D/divine had become, or was becoming, problematic. This finding, considered in the light of scholarship in the field of the psychology of religion, led to the supposition that those least likely to succumb to spiritual despondency and the excesses of contemporary living are the spiritually-active who know and relate to their D/divine;\textsuperscript{3} and, thereafter, the spiritually-active who have not identified their D/divine but who nonetheless receive spiritual sustenance from their spiritual community. The demographic most in danger of spiritual distress are thought to be the spiritually-passive who neither know nor relate to a D/divine, and who have no means, outlet, nor spiritual community through and from which to receive spiritual nourishment. Were this supposition to be confirmed in future studies, it would endorse the role and place of the Christian Church (and, indeed, other \textit{bona fide} faith/spiritual communities), but would suggest that, for the benefit of many, teachings—most notably in relation to conceptualizing the D/divine—should now be broadened. In turn, this may make outreach activities more productive for the Church, and potentially invaluable to the wider community.

Finally, the relative diversity of spirituality found among study-participants, and the recognition that the spirituality of each individual could be measured and charted using the relationally-based research tools that were devised in the course of the study-analysis, led to the supposition that, conceptually at least, the \textit{Typology of Relational Spirituality} might offer a practical framework for embracing spirituality of all forms and types, and with a universal reach.

\textsuperscript{3} It might be argued that this supposition therefore endorses extremist forms of religious behaviour as being beneficial to the individual—but this is not the case. Plainly, the examination of extremism did not form part of the current empirical study, and is an area of investigation in its own right. Of ultimate interest to the current research, however, would be whether or not extremists manifest a relational triad that has an exceptionally high D-reading, to the detriment of both Humanity-related and Solitary Selves, and which alters little over time—as might be hypothesized.
10.4 Practical Implications of the Research

For Kathy Charmaz, the constructivist-grounded-theory methodology that was employed in this research ideally will end with a grounded theory that is credible, original, useful, and has resonance. It is clear that the model of spirituality that was constructed during the course of the project—which essentially forms that grounded theory—is original; and it is further hoped that the subsequent discussions will have credibility, resonance, and use at least for the population-base from which the study-participants were drawn. Whether or not the model is of benefit beyond these boundaries may depend on a subjective appraisal of whether or not the findings have engaged successfully with the primary research questions. Notwithstanding, the emergent theory is believed to have potential, both practically and theoretically, in a number of ways. Many of its theoretical implications have been summarized, above, but, from a practical—and broad-based—perspective, it is suggested that the underpinning constructs of the Typology make it suitable for use by spiritual directors, counsellors, or priests in order to gauge spiritual type—and with it, proportional relational foci—among individuals or groupings. As detailed in Chapter Nine, this exercise may be of value on many levels; and potentially would provide a wealth of information about spiritual type, form, and growth in contemporary society. Finally, the explorations of Chapters Three and Four of this paper offer insights into two powerful, enabling media which, it has been argued, are effective—and universally-valid—conduits to the spiritual. While narrative is long-established as an interview tool, of course, the use of music is believed to be less so; and it is posited that, if used in a specific way, and with knowledge and care, music may be invaluable in academic studies of spirituality beyond the boundaries of the current investigation.

10.5 Future research

It is evident that this research has just scratched the surface of its topic; and, as acknowledged in Chapter One, the narrowing of the empirical study in terms of sample population means that any contribution that it can make can be a starting point only in the quest to understand and chart contemporary spiritual form and development. Thus, to consolidate and confirm the findings,
further investigation is required in a number of areas. These areas have been highlighted throughout the course of the paper; but arguably the most pertinent are as follows:

- Extending the study—and, potentially, the *Typology*—to include children
- Extending the study to include those within other denominations; non-Christian faiths, and within secular society
- Extending the study cross-culturally
- Investigating the implications of overlapping relational-categories[^6]
- Examining whether a particularly low D-reading on the *relational triad* is linked conclusively to spiritual despondency and the culture of ‘affluenza’[^7]
- Examining whether an even-balance across the *relational triad* is indeed a visual marker of spiritual maturity; and, if so, whether this is so across cultures
- Investigating whether or not there is evidence to suggest that a developmental model of spirituality might usefully be constructed for all or any of the types of the *Typology*.

Furthermore, to increase the accessibility and usefulness of the *Typology*, further research is needed to determine whether or not it is suitable for accessing via means of a questionnaire.[^8]

### 10.6 Conclusion

The opening epigraph to this thesis was David Tacey’s 2003 observation that: “In the present global culture, with the need for common values and visions in a multicultural and plural world, the time is propitious for the discovery of a universal spirituality.”[^9] More recently, in a video-link on the website for the now globally-establishing ’Tony Blair Faith Foundation’, former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, expresses his belief that not only are the world’s major faiths a force for good, but invariably are united by mutual values that tend to be overlooked or misunderstood:

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[^6]: See Chapter Seven, section 7.10.
[^7]: See Chapter Nine, section 9.7.4. As noted in Chapter One, section 1.1, *affluenza* is the colloquial term for a Western cultural drive in which extreme value is placed on money, possessions, appearance (physical and social), status, and celebrity. Ref: James, *Affluenza*, 20.
[^8]: See discussion in Chapter Nine, section 9.5.4. As noted, this would be particularly useful in situations which required determining the spiritual type of a large number of people.
Personally, I've always believed that faith is an essential part of the modern world. As globalization pushes us ever closer, it is vital it is not used as a force for conflict and division. Faith is not something that is either old-fashioned or to be used for extremism. Rather, faith is something that has much to give and to teach a world in which economic globalization and political change is, of course, offering many opportunities, but also presenting many challenges... [W]e want to allow people to respect and value the other person's beliefs; to understand what those beliefs really are, and to let the people of different faiths see the values that they so often share.  

This thesis supports the premise that faith can hold value, and would argue that not only do people of different faiths often share fundamental values, but, more profoundly, that they—and, indeed, all people—share a core of spiritual being. Spiritually framed as a triad of relationships with self, with others, and with that which is held to be D/divine—as espoused by Henri Nouwen—not only offers an inclusive paradigm, but, indeed, an inclusive measure, of human spirituality. It is a similitude that might open creative dialogue toward building strong and supportive human relationships across religious—and, indeed, social and cultural—difference. The irony exists, however, that spiritual being is inextricably bound to the singular life-experience of the individual—manifest and developing in and through each of the three relationships—making spiritual form inherently unique. Spirituality in the multifarious world of the twenty-first century, then, is inclusive yet exclusive: an apposite paradox that surely reflects the beauty and complexity of what it means to be human.

ASN/November 2010

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Appendices

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Appendix 1

Understandings of ‘spirituality’ as articulated by study-participants

The range of understandings of the word, *spirituality*, offered by study-participants suggests that *spirituality* is a term that holds subjective meaning for many. A selection of examples follows:

- *Spirituality is life. I am spirit; therefore, I am.*
- *[Spirituality] is everything about us. It’s what is most important about a person and what I want to know most about them. Being and doing.*
- *You may think of it as someone’s faith. But it’s actually just who you are. The spirit is you.*
- *To me, spirituality is faith.*
- *I have bad associations with the word. So, for me, it’s Christianity, not spirituality. [It’s about] my relationship with God and Christ. It’s about what we’ve been given. About obedience, true love, mercy, and grace.*
- *It’s my relationship with God, and through to others. A triangle. I am fed in relationship with God and community. And we are fed not just by community, but to go out [into the world].*
- *It means different things to different people. But, to me, it is getting outside yourself, and, as soul, contemplating what is wonderful—all that is filled with love, wisdom, and goodness.*
- *Your spirituality makes you answerable for your actions. You do as you would be done by. Be true to who you are and to your values.*
- *It’s that part of us that wants more, that thinks there must be something else. A longing to understand why we are here, that inner quest.*
- *It’s inner, but it should be reflected outwards.*
- *People who aren’t spiritual lack a spark of wonder. Lack inner substance. Spiritual people are questioning, vulnerable, they don’t know all the answers.*
- *I define it as what it isn’t. It is the other side of pragmatism.*

Notably, most of the understandings offered by participants could be categorized into one of four principal areas; with *spirituality* variously understood as:

- The overarching term for the whole human being—the ‘I am’
- Synonymous with, and inseparable from, Christian faith
- A discernable human quality that some have and some do not
- Relating to the interior life of the self

A constant, if not unanticipated, thread that emerged is that, for all its current ambiguity, *spirituality* is seen to relate to highest-order concerns.
Report on the Musical Selections of Study-Participants

As noted in Chapter Six of this thesis, for the purposes of this research, study-participants were asked to self-select a piece of music that was both loved by, and of significance in some way to, them.

In the interests of any future research in this area, a breakdown of these musical selections according to several demographic factors is offered below. As will be seen, a complex interaction of factors is evident.

The musical genres chosen by participants are shown in Table A, below:

Table A: Musical Genres Selected by Study-Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSICAL GENRE:</th>
<th>Traditional Hymn</th>
<th>Worship Song</th>
<th>Other Sacred Music</th>
<th>Classical</th>
<th>Light Classical</th>
<th>Popular (incl. Folk &amp; Country)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A shows that popular music was the most common single choice, with worship songs the second most popular. Sacred music, however (represented here by traditional hymns, worship songs, and other sacred pieces), was chosen by more participants overall than non-sacred music (the latter represented by classical, light classical, and popular music).

When considered according to spiritual type, the number of selections made by participants in each musical-genre was as shown in Table B, below (it should be remembered that the number of participants in each spiritual type was not uniform):

Table B: Musical Genres Selected According to Spiritual Type of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSICAL GENRE</th>
<th>Traditional Hymn</th>
<th>Worship Song</th>
<th>Other Sacred Music</th>
<th>Classical</th>
<th>Light Classical</th>
<th>Popular (incl. Folk &amp; Country)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL TYPE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1:Surrendered</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2:Spirited</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3:Serene</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4:Sustained</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5:Settled</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6:Sceptical</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B, above, shows some evidence of uniformity of choice according to spiritual type, and particularly among The Spiritually Surrendered and The Spiritually Spirited, who (not surprisingly, perhaps) were proportionally more likely than all other spiritual types to choose worship songs over any other musical genre.
Table C, below, shows the number of selections made in each musical-genre according to the age-decade of participants (again, the number of participants in each age-decade was not of a uniform spread):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSICAL GENRE</th>
<th>Traditional Hymn</th>
<th>Worship Song</th>
<th>Other Sacred Music</th>
<th>Classical</th>
<th>Light Classical</th>
<th>Popular (incl. Folk &amp; Country)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGE-DECADE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table C highlights that, notwithstanding other factors (spiritual type, for example), age also can influence musical preferences—and most notably here in the choices of traditional hymns and worship songs.

Table D, below, shows the number of selections made in each genre according to the community-of-origin of participants (it is advised that the number of participants in each community was not uniformly spread):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSICAL GENRE</th>
<th>Traditional Hymn</th>
<th>Worship Song</th>
<th>Other Sacred Music</th>
<th>Classical</th>
<th>Light Classical</th>
<th>Popular (incl. Folk &amp; Country)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY-OF-ORIGIN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community 6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table D suggests that community-of-origin can be an influencing factor in musical preferences (see particularly here, Community 6). However, this is not so in every case, as highlighted here by the preferences of members of Community 1—a non-connected group of individuals drawn from different parishes; who, as noted elsewhere, effectively served as a control group for the empirical study.
Table E shows the time of life at which each participant first came to know his/her selected musical piece.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME OF LIFE</th>
<th>20's</th>
<th>30's</th>
<th>40's</th>
<th>50's</th>
<th>60's</th>
<th>70's</th>
<th>80's</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childhood</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenage years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early adulthood</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlife</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from this table that well-loved pieces of music can establish at any time of life; and that music that has been known since childhood is not necessarily held in higher regard or is more spiritually ‘affective’ than newer pieces. Indeed, in general terms within this study, more recently known pieces of music were chosen in greater number than longer-known pieces.
Appendices

Appendix 3
Narratives Evoked by the Selected Music of Study-Participants

Table F, below, shows the subject-matter of the narratives that were evoked by the participants’ musical selections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NARRATIVE SUBJECT</th>
<th>Related to Christian Faith</th>
<th>Significant Time in Life</th>
<th>Significant Person/People</th>
<th>Significant Event</th>
<th>Significant Place</th>
<th>Message in Lyrics (not faith-related)</th>
<th>No Story-Music Loved for Itself</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Totals exceed participant-numbers because the narratives of some could be classified to more than one category.

It can be seen that faith-related narratives/associations constituted the highest number of narratives overall; and it is salient that those who selected a worship song as their musical choice were those most likely to have such faith-related narratives.

More than two-thirds of participants selected music that had no faith-associations for them. Of the narratives evoked by the music of these latter participants, childhood proved to be the most commonly remembered time of life; and family members who had died were the most commonly remembered people. Past events that had been difficult, but that been successfully come through; and events at which the participant had heard or sung his/her selected music, together constituted the two most common memories of events. Country of birth (most notably here, England) held the most associations of place.

Messages taken from lyrics tended to be related to personal ideals or values. And many of those whose music held no particular story for them, mentioned the triggering of positive-affect feelings or emotions (eg, stirring, awe-inspiring, moving, calming, peaceful, haunting, uplifting).
Appendix 4

Copy of consent form signed by study-participants

Murdoch University Theology Programme, School of Social Sciences and Humanities

I am a PhD student at Murdoch University investigating Christian spiritual development across the life-span, under the supervision of Dr Nancy Ault. The purpose of this study is to add to knowledge and understanding of contemporary Christian spirituality, and the stages of spiritual development. It is hoped that the resulting information will give the church, its ministers, and care-givers insight into the spiritual growth and needs of people of all ages, and also that it will aid understanding of the way in which music interacts with spirituality.

You can help in this study by consenting to be interviewed at a place and time of your choosing. I anticipate that the time required for the interview will be one hour. The interview will begin with general demographic questions (such as your age, place of birth, occupation, church-going history, etc). It will continue with the playing of a piece of music that has been chosen in advance by you; and then you will be asked about the significance of this music. Further questions concerning spiritual matters (for example, your reflections on life, and what you feel is important in it) will follow.

It is recognised that the nature of this research is in an area that ordinarily is considered personal and private, and, while your assistance will be greatly appreciated, please be assured that you will not be obliged to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time. For purposes of accuracy, the interview will be recorded, but your name and contact details will not be added to this recording. All information given by you during the interview is confidential and no names or other information that might identify you will be used in any publication arising from the research. Feedback on the study will be provided in writing to all participants who wish to receive it once the research has been completed. If you would like to receive this feedback, you will be asked for an address to which to send it at the time of the interview.

Some participants may be asked to assist further by consenting to a later, follow-up interview. You are not obliged to participate in such an interview should you not wish to do so.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the details below. If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact either myself, Alisoun Nicol, on 0437 063151, or my supervisor, Dr Nancy Ault, on 9360 2602.

My supervisor and I are happy to discuss with you any concerns you may have on how this study has been conducted. If you wish to talk to an independent person about your concerns you can contact Murdoch University’s Human Research Ethics Committee on 9360 6677.
Appendix 4, continued

Page 2

PLEASE READ AND COMPLETE

I, ____________________________ (your name), have read the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this activity, but I know that I may change my mind and stop at any time.

I understand that all information provided is treated as confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree for my interview to be recorded, provided that the recording does not include my name or other identifying information. I understand that the recording will be erased on completion of the research.

I agree that research data gathered for this study may be published provided my name or other information which might identify me is not used.

Participant: _______________________________ Date: __________________

Chief Investigator: __________________________ Date: __________________

Investigator: _______________________________ Date: __________________

Investigator's Name: Alisoun Nicol


Bibliography


Bibliography


