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A description of the faith development of five students attending a church-related college

Haggray, Dennis Alonza, Ph.D.

Iowa State University, 1993
A description of the faith development of five students attending a church-related college

by

Dennis Alonza Haggray

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department: Professional Studies in Education
Major: Education (Higher Education)

Approved:
Signature was redacted for privacy.

In Charge of Major Work
Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Major Department
Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Education Major
Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Graduate College

Iowa States University
Ames, Iowa

1993

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of the late Mr. Edward Haggray, Sr. (April 7, 1920 - February 14, 1972), and in memory of our late daughter and first born child, Frances Nicole Haggray (born May 28, 1992).

Edward's (Dad's) faith in life and in God kept him traveling onward and upward as he struggled with cancer while caring for a wife and seven children. Because of Edward (my dad), I am a strong African-American male whose faith in self never waivers. Thanks for giving me the faith to follow in and beyond your footsteps.

Nicole struggled for life and died at 4 1/2 months in the womb. "We felt your presence, we knew you were there, we long to see you, in heaven we dare" (DAH).

I will keep the faith!

Love always.

"... If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20--King James Version).
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

"I respect faith, but doubt is what gets you an education." (Wilson Mizner, cited in Hovey, 1965, p. 175)

How faith develops within the traditional-age college student is an issue for student services practitioners and theorists to address in the 1990s (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). Faith development is too often neglected by student services practitioners and developmental theorists who advocate a whole person approach (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Whole person is defined by Barr and Upcraft (1990) to mean the development of the whole individual, including intellectual capacity and achievement, emotional make-up, physical condition, social relationships, vocational aptitudes and skills, moral and religious values, economic resources and aesthetic appreciations.

Effective student services programs in the 1990s should encompass programming for the whole person, including the religious dimensions of a person's life (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). Helping students understand and attend to all of the various aspects of their lives can enhance their academic experiences (Lyons, 1990).

The problem that student services practitioners are confronted with as they seek to apply traditional theories of student development is that student developmental theories do not include faith development for the traditional-age college student. A review of the research literature on student developmental theories from the 1960s to the 1980s revealed that the primary concerns of the student developmental theorists were about the student's emotional, cognitive, physical, and social well being (Delworth & Hanson, 1989). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) asserted that:
the major emphasis on development of college students (during the 1960s, 1970s, and into the 1980s) focused on areas of attitudes and value change; sources of influences on religious values have received comparatively little attention. (p. 303)

Research on the faith development of college age students has increased during the last decade. Recent research studies on faith development can provide student services practitioners and theorists with another way of assessing and understanding the student as a whole person in the future (Barr & Upcraft, 1990).

Faith development is an emerging theory of human development. Faith development is defined as the making, maintenance, and transformation of human meaning. It is a mode of knowing and being in the world (Fowler, 1981). Fowler (1981) proposed a six stage hierarchical theory of faith development that complements other developmental theories (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). According to Fowler (1981), all persons have faith. Fowler’s (1981) description of faith is:

*a human universal. Faith is inexhaustibly mysterious. We are endowed at birth with nascent capacities of faith. How these capacities are activated and grow depends to a large extent on how we are welcomed into the world and what kinds of environments we grow in. Faith is interactive and social; it requires community, language, and nurture. (p. 13)*

Fowler (1981, 1986) believes his theory of faith development is compatible with established theories of identity development. Fowler (1981) used Erikson’s (1968) research to demonstrate that identity development and faith development are integral components within structural developmental theory. For example, Fowler (1981) concurs with
Erikson (1968) in advocating that the central task of youth is the development of identity. Fowler (1981) stated,

I believe this [compatibility of faith development and identity development theories] is because Erikson's influence on me has been both pervasive and subtle; it has touched me at convicational depths that the structural developmentalists have not addressed. (p. 110)

Fowler's (1981) perspective on faith and identity is that faith does not develop in isolation from identity development. In addition, Fowler (1981) suggested that faith development and identity development are two central tasks that all individuals can master.

Faith development and identity development are discussed from Fowler's (1981) perspective that faith development occurs throughout identity development. Fowler (1981, 1986) suggested that faith is identity. For example, Fowler indicated that faith as identity develops in early childhood at the pre-stage and stage one of his six stage developmental theory. Fowler (1981) posited identities are shaped throughout life by various relationships and within the communities within which persons live. Fowler (1981) pointed out that relationships in life influence identity formation; a person's identity development is based on mutual trust and loving relationships. A person who lacks faith is generally lacking in identity (Fowler, 1986).

Myers (1991) concurred that self-knowledge and identity are integral components of a person's faith development. She concluded that faith development issues emerge throughout identity development. According to Myers (1991) faith development as a research topic has potential to add to the existing body of literature on college students' development, because it will
enhance the practitioner's understanding of how faith develops within traditional-age college students. Furthermore, the theory of faith development is a response to the gaps in traditional developmental theories that neither addressed nor provided implications for understanding faith development among traditional-age college students during the decades preceding the 1990s (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). Fowler (1981) suggested that faith is a human universal. If this is assertion is true, traditional-age college students are likely to have developmental needs in this area of their lives.

This study is necessary because faith development and identity development are significant components within the development of every individual (Fowler, 1981). The researcher believes it is important for student services practitioners to learn about the applicability of faith development to traditional-age college students. The researcher used interviews as a qualitative research method to describe and examine the faith development of students attending a midwestern church-related college (see description of college site in Chapter IV).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to present a detailed and comprehensive description of the perceived faith development of five students who attend a midwestern church-related college. Specifically, the researcher will describe the respondents' perceived faith development using Fowler's Faith Development Interview Guide (FDIG) (Fowler, 1981) to obtain the primary data for the study.
Research Question

The research question for this study was: What do the respondents say about their faith development? The research question developed out of the review of the research literature on faith development theory as it relates to traditional-age college students. The research question provided the direction for the study by describing the perceived faith development of the five respondents who participated in the study. Each respondent provided a description of their faith development based on questions in Fowler's Faith Development Interview Guide and selected follow-up questions determined by the researcher. Using a consistent set of questions from the FDIG for each respondent and appropriate follow up questions enabled the researcher to focus on the research question for this study. The research question was not designed to assess the respondents' stages of faith according to Fowler's theory.

Assumptions of the Study

There are three basic assumptions in this study. The first assumption is that all people experience faith development during their lives. This does not necessarily imply that their faith development is based on a traditional religious orientation or tradition, but rather that faith, as defined by Fowler (1981), "is universal" (p. 13).

The second assumption is that student services practitioners and theorists who embrace the whole person concept of student development want to understand the individual faith development of the students they serve if they are to be effective (Delworth & Hanson, 1989). If the theory of faith development is not understood by practitioners, some students may not have all of their psycho-social needs met during their college years.
The third assumption is that the students participating in the study responded honestly to the questions in the interview.

Limitations of the Study

Fowler (1981) contends that all persons have faith. However, the research findings in this thesis will not be generalizable to other traditional-age college students attending this midwestern church-related college or any other institution of higher education, because generalizable knowledge is an inappropriate goal for interpretive research (Erickson (1986), quoted in Merriam (1988), p. 175). The data generated in this thesis provide a description of the faith development of the participating respondents, and, therefore, is limited to the respondents interviewed.

Another limitation of this thesis is that it does not address the religious influences within a church-related college environment on the faith development of the respondents. For example, some church-related colleges require their students to accept and participate in certain religious practices as a part of becoming a community member. However, the midwestern church-related college that is the subject of this study does not require a student to participate in religious activities (College Bulletin, 1991-93).

Significance of the Study

Church-related colleges, as defined by this study, often claim as one of their purposes the development of the whole person, which includes faith development. The midwestern church-related college that is the setting of this study mirrors this perspective. The College Bulletin (1991-93) stated that "a liberal education offers the opportunity to strengthen and deepen an awareness
of broadly encompassing religious dimensions of life" (p. 160). Most of the research on faith development of traditional-age college students is based on Fowler's theory utilizing respondents from higher education institutional settings (Parks, 1986). A study on the topic of faith development of students in a church-related college may provide a model for practitioners to enhance their understanding of the experiences of faith development in their students.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the study and so must be defined for the reader in order to provide an understanding of the meanings associated with these terms.

Church-Related Colleges: "institutions of higher learning that: (a) want to be and aim to be church-related, (b) a college that makes proper provision for religion in all its dimensions, (c) puts their values and those of their church into recognizable operation, (d) are able to count on their church's understanding of the educational task, (e) receive tangible support from their church, (f) inform and illumine their denomination on all matters that would appear to be relevant or useful and must welcome being informed and illumined in return, and (g) know why they want to be so related" (Parsonage, 1978, p. 73).

Change: "a progression through an invariant sequence of hierarchical stages, with each stage representing a qualitatively different way of thinking... change is a product of the interaction between person and environment." (Delworth & Hanson, 1989, p.118).

Faith: regarded as belief or as a mental assent to some truth, whether about the nature of God (supernatural truth) or about the past (historical truth). Faith is understood to be the basic orientation of the total person that may include belief, but is best described as trust, confidence, or loyalty (Harvey, 1964).

Faith Development: has to do with the making, maintenance, and transformation of human meaning. It is a mode of knowing and being.
In faith, we shape our lives in relation to comprehensive convictions or assumptions about reality (Fowler, 1981).

Non-traditional student: any student fitting the description of a first generation student, or any student returning to or coming to college who is age 23 or older (Cross, 1972).

Respondent: a person who agrees to provide data for the study by answering questions asked by the interviewer (Merriam, 1989).

Spiritual Development: a process of growing in faith and knowledge concerning one's relationship with God. It is a process that not only requires faith and knowledge, but also discipline, grace, obedience, study/meditation, and service (Sittser, 1985).

Student Development: "the theories and practices related to college student learning and growth. Student development involves the intellectual, emotional, cultural, moral, physical, and interpersonal dimensions of life" (Brown in Delworth & Hansen, 1989, p. 191).

Student Services Practitioner: a professional trained to work with individual students, groups of students, and others who interact with students to (1) assess students' development status and diagnose their developmental needs, (2) help students determine appropriate goals and experiences, (3) design and implement programs intended to foster development, (4) evaluate each student's developmental progress, and (5) record this attainment (Brown in Delworth & Hansen, 1989, p. 16).

Traditional-Age College Student: any student who fits the age category eighteen to twenty-two years old and is not a first-generation college student (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Whole Person: encompasses the total human attributes of the individual, including one's emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual, and social attributes (Delworth & Hansen, 1989).

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

The remainder of the dissertation is outlined as follows. In Chapter I, the researcher presents the purpose of the study, assumptions, limitations, significance of the study, and definitions of terms. In Chapter II, a review of the
research literature on selected developmental theories, Fowler's faith development theory and an overview of selected literature on religious attitudes and values of traditional-age college students are presented.

In Chapter III, the researcher describes the methods used to conduct the study, including sample selection, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and methods used to assure trustworthiness of the data. The research question that provided the focus for the study and interview questions are provided.

In Chapter IV, the findings of the study are given. They are presented in the form of narrative case reports based on the respondents' interviews. The findings of the study provide an overall description of the perceived faith development of the respondents.

In Chapter V, the researcher provides a summary of the findings of the study and recommendations for future practice and research for persons concerned about the faith development of traditional-age students attending a church-related college.

Appropriate bibliographic references and appendices follow the chapters.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The chapter consists of three parts. First, an overview of the literature on developmental theories is provided as a context for understanding theories of human growth and development that are applicable to traditional-age college students. Second, Fowler's faith development theory is examined in order to provide an understanding of the theory and its usefulness for study of traditional-age college students. Third, an overview of the religious attitudes of traditional-age college students is provided as background information to provide a context for the study.

An Overview of Selected Student Development Theories

Introduction

Developmental theories formulated during the past thirty years have provided the framework for working with students and understanding their human growth and development (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). An understanding of the implications of these theories provides student services personnel with a core of knowledge to draw upon for the purpose of advancing the notion of the student as a whole person, and promoting life-long learning for all students.

Prior to the 1960s, the American Council on Education recognized that the student was to be viewed as an active participant in the educational process. The American Council on Education (1937) declared,

The concept of education is broadened to include attention to the student's well-rounded development, physically, socially, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually. The student is thought of as a responsible participant in his own development and not as a
passive recipient of an imprinted economic, political, or religious doctrine, or vocational skill. As a responsible participant in the societal process of our American democracy, his full and balanced maturity is viewed as a major end goal of education. (p. 1)

It became apparent to the student services profession during the 1980s that ideas and thoughts alone were not enough to guide their practice (Delworth & Hanson, 1989). These views provided an impetus for student personnel workers to sustain their previous assumptions about the growth and development of traditional-age college students. It was the organizing and ordering of ideas which led to the development of theory to be applied within the student services profession and development of an understanding of students as whole persons (Delworth & Hanson, 1989).

**Purpose of Theory**

Theory is useful in our practical understanding of growth and development. According to Delworth & Hanson (1989),

(1) theory helps us to organize data, the useful facts that we collect, (2) theory helps us to explain to others what we do, (3) theory is useful in student development because it defines our goals and thereby provides a rationale for why we engage in certain activities, (4) theory aids the student services professional in his or her daily decisions regarding students, staff resources, and policy formation, (5) theories can help us plan for the future. (pp. 73-74)

The student services profession has used various theories since the 1960s and early 1970s to explain students' growth and development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Growth in theory development is one of the most striking and significant trends in the study of collegiate impact. Accordingly, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) identify more than twenty contributors to the development of theories within student services. Because most of the prominent contributors to
theory development come from psychology backgrounds, many of the theories operative in the field of student development are almost exclusively psychological in character.

Delworth and Hanson (1989) concluded that "the different theories can best be seen as a mosaic of necessary pieces" (p. 78). They found that the theories seem to cluster into five categories or families. These include: (1) psychosocial theories, (2) cognitive developmental theories, (3) maturity models, (4) typology methods, and (5) person-environment interaction models. A description of each theory cluster follows. Each family of theories shares certain basic assumptions and uses similar constructs to describe development or point to influential factors in development. Each cluster provides a useful vantage point from which to view college students and outline parameters to be addressed by student services practitioners. The theories and contributing authors are discussed below. They are not identified in any particular order of importance.

Psychosocial Theories

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) described psychosocial theories as, "a family of theories that view individual development essentially as a process that involves the accomplishment of a series of development tasks" (p. 19). Each developmental task or step is created by the convergence of a particular growth phase and environmental demands that pose certain tasks, usually viewed as the learning of attitudes, the formation of a particular facet of one's self, and the learning of specific skills that must be mastered if one is to successfully manage that particular life phase. Developmental tasks in these theories tend to be sequential and chronological (Delworth & Hanson, 1989).
Most of an individual's development is the result of interaction between person and environment (Delworth & Hanson, 1989). Timing within the developmental sequence is a major element. Barr and Upcraft (1990) found that the issue of identity formation and the ability of the individual to control his or her attitudes, emotions, and feelings, significantly contribute to the psychological changes that a person may experience as he or she interacts with sociocultural demands. The interaction of sociocultural demands and psychological changes creates a sense of "crisis" in a person's life. "Crisis" can lead to growth or stagnation, or it can be detrimental to a person's welfare (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). A key task in these developmental theories is the development of a belief system. As the person encounters what Keniston (1971) calls "youth," tension between self and society emerges.

The crisis that exists in this period of youth is compounded by the individual's desire to develop a personal world-view that is consistent with the norms, values, and customs of society (Keniston, 1971). Because maturity in these theories is often viewed as chronological, how a person develops physically, sexually, and cognitively plays a significant role in his or her ascendancy to become a whole person (Delworth & Hanson, 1989). Erikson (1968) stated, "the pattern of maturation collides with societal demands, raising to top priority the issues of self-identification. As identity becomes the focal point of these theories, the key questions asked by the person going through these stages are, 'Who am I?' and 'What will I be?' (Delworth & Hanson, 1989, p. 79). Growth through these stages or developmental tasks evolves from an epigenetic principle. This epigenetic principle provides the ground plan for one to grow
and experience the world (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). According to Delworth and Hanson (1989),

given the psychosocial theories, a student services professional would be interested in what age the college student is, what decisions, concerns, and needs would likely be uppermost in his or her mind, and what skills, attitudes he or she would need to develop in order to make those decisions and cope with the various tasks. (p. 78)

Among the major theorists whose work contributes to an understanding of psychosocial theories are Erik Erikson, Arthur Chickering, Nevitt Sanford, Kenneth Keniston, James Marcia, and William Cross (Delworth & Hanson, 1989). The contributions of each theorist are briefly described below.

Erikson's (1968) work described the problems, decisions, and issues that affect adolescents' identity development. The tasks of ego development and identity are central to Erikson's work. Erikson (1968) postulates that the ego emerges part by part in a sequence which is directed by a master plan. A person's identity expresses who he or she really is. Apart from family, college students are at a critical point in their ego and identity development. The central issue for many students is, "who am I?" (Erikson, 1968).

Arthur Chickering, in Education and Identity, (1969), provided the practitioner with seven vectors that are important for a college student to master in order to achieve identity and an understanding of himself or herself in relation to his or her environment. The seven vectors are: (1) developing competence, (2) managing emotions, (3) developing autonomy, (4) developing identity, (5) freeing interpersonal relationships, (6) clarifying purpose, and (7) developing integrity. These vectors are sequential.
Nevitt Sanford's (1966) work on growth and change of college students laid the groundwork for understanding the need for a balance of challenge and support in the college environment in order to enhance students' development. Sanford (1966) also maintained that student development is expressed in the integration and communication of the various aspects of the individual's total development.

Another contributor to the field of psychosocial development is Kenneth Keniston (1968, 1971) who asserted that psychosocial development is an interplay between "constitutional givens" and societal conditions reflected in family, educational, economic, and political patterns. Keniston's (1968, 1971) work draws upon the work of Kohlberg and Perry.

James Marcia (1966), who developed the model of Ego and Identity Status, concluded that individuals go through several stages of crisis. A commitment to resolving these crises may lead to identity clarification. Marcia (1966) concluded that students at different developmental statuses are likely to respond to college in different ways to resolve their identity issues.

There are other theorists, such as William Cross (1971), whose model of black identity formation identified four stages of racial development. Cross's theory is called the theory of Nigrescence and describes the development of the "Negro" from "Negro" to black self-pride. While classified as a psychosocial theory, Cross's work is an evolving theory of development.

In each of the above theories, these researchers addressed the cognitive, social, psychosocial, behavioral, environmental, sexual, and physical changes that occur in individuals to the exclusion of their faith development (Cureton, 1989). These theories, however, presume the development of the whole person.
Cognitive Developmental Theories

According to Delworth and Hanson (1989), cognitive developmental theories employ the structuralist view articulated by Jean Piaget. Development is viewed as a sequence of irreversible stages (Delworth & Hanson, 1989; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). The cognitive developmental theorists are primarily concerned with how individuals perceive and reason about the world. Cognitive theorists commonly describe individuals in terms of their capacity to receive information and process it for the purpose of making meaning of reality. How an individual solves problems, deals with crisis in his/her life, and forms identity are matters related to personal behavior and individual patterns in belief. In each of the cognitive developmental theories there are conceptual systems which rely upon form, style, constructs, and schemes, that are available in the person's environment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Although growth and maturation are sequential, individuals must reach a readiness phase and/or attainment phase in order to move on in their development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

The leading theorists in this cognitive developmental category are Jean Piaget, William Perry, Lawrence Kohlberg, K. S. Kitchener and P. M. King, Carol Gilligan, and Jane Loevinger (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Perry (1968) and Kohlberg (1969) provide models of cognitive development that address the moral reasoning and development of an individual. These models are most appropriate in understanding how college students reason, how they come to grips with right and wrong, how they develop their sense of values and justice in society, as well as good and bad. Kohlberg's (1969) work provides the basis for Fowler's theory of faith development (Parks, 1982).
Perry's (1968) scheme of intellectual development views development as a manifestation of logical order. Perry found that students are conceptually, socially, and culturally dependent upon the explicit and implicit realities of their world environment. Because of this dependency, their origins of knowledge, of value and of responsibility are connected to a dualistic perception of the world.

Kohlberg (1969) was concerned with how individuals make moral decisions in view of social and cultural norms. Kohlberg's theory is sequential and progressive.

Cognitive developmental theorists basically exclude any discussion of the faith/spiritual development of persons. Although moral reasoning plays a key role in these theories, the question of faith is not directly addressed. Values are discussed within the structure of cognitive developmental theories to enhance the practitioner's understanding of how moral reasoning impacts faith and religious views (Kohlberg, 1969).

**Maturity Model**

The maturity model is primarily the work of Douglas Heath (1968, 1977). Heath's theory of development is not stage oriented. Heath (1968) drew upon the work of educators and psychological researchers. He created a model that comprehensively delineated the many components involved in the maturity process. Heath's (1968, 1977) view of maturity considered the person in terms of four "self-systems" and five growth dimensions. The maturity model includes the following components.
Self-Systems

1. Intellect
2. Values
3. Self-concepts
4. Interpersonal Relationships

Growth Dimensions

1. Becoming able to represent experiences symbolically
2. Becoming allocentric or other centered
3. Becoming integrated
4. Becoming stable
5. Becoming autonomous

Heath's (1968, 1977) research was primarily done with college students. Heath's (1968,1977) emphasis is clearly on becoming or maturing as he prefers to call it. Development in Heath's model is interdependent. For example,

the developmental process is completed first in the maturation of intellectual-cognitive skills, next in the same sex and then opposite-sex personal relationships . . . maturation stabilizes after the person matures in self-concept and personal values. (Heath 1968, cited in Delworth & Hanson, 1989, p. 100)

Inevitably, seniors are more mature than freshmen because they have had more opportunities to experience, explore, and be nurtured in the college environment. Heath does not make any assumptions nor does he comment about the spiritual development of college students. The maturing person, however, is more aware of self, has a deepening tolerance and caring for others, and more stabilized values which are encouraged by the elements within a college environment (Delworth & Hanson, 1989).

Typology Models

According to Delworth and Hanson (1989) the primary contributors to the typology models include: Patricia Cross (1971), Roy Heath (1964), Martin Trow (1976, 1977), and Myers (1980). According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) typology models "emphasize distinctive, but relatively stable differences among individuals" (p. 367). They found that typology models categorize individuals
into groups based on distinctive characteristics. Typological models are useful in understanding individual differences among college students and in illuminating why students respond differently to their college experiences.

According to Delworth and Hanson (1989), some writers in the area of typology models (i.e. Myers-Briggs and Wirkins) tend to concentrate on psychological typologies, personality functioning and cognitive styles. However, in relation to college students, the models of Roy Heath (1964) and Patricia Cross (1971) are probably the most influential (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). Heath's work concentrates on individual differences while Cross' work takes a sociological approach to understanding student differences.

For the purpose of this review on typology models, Cross's (1971) work is representative. Cross (1971) maintained that her model challenges the traditional models of typology. She found that most of the typological models addressed the typical white, middle-class, academically well-socialized, eighteen to twenty-two year old male. The students in Cross' (1971) study are referred to as new students or first generation students. They have different needs than their predecessors. These new students entered higher education as it became more accessible and concerned about issues of equity. They are socially and economically disadvantaged (Cross, 1971).

According to Cross (1971), first generation college students score in the lowest one-third among high school students on standardized college admissions tests; they have had difficulty in performing traditional academic tasks; they mostly represent ethnic minority groups, blue-collar families and women returning to college; they are first generational students in higher education; they come with a "C" average from high school; they have more of a
vocational interest as opposed to learning for the sake of learning; all of their high school predictors about college indicate failure; they are less academically motivated; they see the learning environment as a threat; their families have no background in higher education; they have problems with reading, writing, science, and math; they are more comfortable with affective tasks than with cognitive tasks; they prefer to deal with concreteness rather than abstractness; and, they need a high degree of feedback.

Cross (1971, 1976) did not address the faith development needs of the students in her research. She concluded that new students present a challenge to traditional student development models that underscore the developmental needs and tendencies of traditional-age college students. How the student interacts with his or her environment within this sociological construct is a key variable to understanding the dimensions of individual development.

**Person-Environment Interaction Models**

According to Delworth and Hanson (1989), the primary contributors to the person-environment-interaction model are Barker (1968), Walsh (1973), Pervin (1968), James Banning (1980), and Holland et al. (1966, 1973). The person-environment-interaction model seeks to explain the relationship between person and environment. The underlying assumption for the theorists using this model is the notion that without an understanding of how people and their environments are related we cannot understand the most basic issues of human behavior such as knowing, feeling, and action (Delworth & Hanson, 1989). Person-environment interaction theorists recognize that individuals do not act in isolation, so they speak in terms of "person-environment interaction." Researchers found that this theory is appropriate for student services.
professionals because it supports student ecology, environment interventions and systems "change agentry" (Huebner 1980, cited in Delworth & Hanson, 1980, p. 117).

The person-environment interaction model explains development in terms of behavior and three distinct developmental paradigms (Huebner 1980, cited in Delworth & Hanson, 1989, p. 117). Banning (1980) found that a person may fit one of the three paradigms according to their development. The first paradigm is personaligism, which suggests that behavior is explained in terms of the growth and development of the person and their attitude. The second paradigm, situationalism, proposes that behavior is influenced by the context of one's environment. The third paradigm is interactionism in which behavior is a function of one's attributes and interaction with the environment. According to Banning (1980), students develop by having the appropriate "fit." Banning (1980) refers to "fit" as the matching of the student along with his or her needs, goals, desires, and vocational interests with a college environment that is uniquely designed to address the students' needs, goals, and desires.

Banning's (1980) model of development does not address the faith development needs of college students. However, there are implications within this model that may address an institution's church-relatedness, its symbols and rituals that may be apparent within the college environment. For example, a church-related college may require all of their students to participate in various religious activities on campus, such as to attend chapel, subscribe to a particular religious doctrine or complete curricular requirements in religion. Participation in religious activities sponsored by a church-related college could have an impact on how students respond to their faith development.
Emerging Theory of Faith Development

Barr and Upcraft (1990) concluded that the decade of the 1980s diverted student services practitioners' attention away from the foundation work of the psychological and social theories of the 1960s and 1970s. They maintained that "the eighties became a decade of filling in the theoretical gaps that were missed by earlier theorist" (Barr & Upcraft, 1990, p. 49). Today, emerging theories include the theory of faith development (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). Faith development theory is emerging as a model theory of student development that is concerned with meaning-making, a student's identity, values, beliefs and spirituality. According to Barr and Upcraft (1990), faith development theory deals with a more specialized theory of human growth that includes the spiritual and cognitive dimensions of college students.

According to Barr and Upcraft (1990), faith development theory adds new understanding to the existing cluster of developmental theories. Dykstra and Parks (1986) believe that faith development theory is gaining acceptance in the field of student services as an emergent theory for the 1990s.

Summary

Generalizations about faith development cannot be adequately assessed by having an understanding of the five cluster theories. While implications and inter-relationships of the five cluster theories can be found in Fowler's work, Parks (1982) and Gilligan (1982) provide a more practical understanding about faith development within their research. If theory is to inform the student services practitioners of the whole person, the five cluster theories may be broadened to include the emerging theory of faith development.
If student services professionals wish to study the implications of faith development for practitioners, the applicability of Fowler's theory may be useful in understanding the student as a whole person. Cognitive, psychological, sociological, typological and environmental theories may provide the foundation that strengthens the work of Fowler. If practitioners are to accept what supports their views on developmental change, they must be willing to be informed by Fowler as he speaks to the faith development issues of a person's life.

Overview of Fowler's Faith Development Theory

The theory of faith development emerged during the mid-1970s. The primary researcher responsible for the emergence of the faith development theory is James W. Fowler. Fowler, a religious educator, published his preliminary research on the theory of faith development in the book Stages of Faith (1981). Barr and Upcraft (1990) stated Fowler's research on faith development has provided the student services profession, as well as other professions, with a significant resource that describes the process and progression of how faith develops within individuals.

According to Dykstra and Parks (1986),

The theory of faith development is a widely known and influential theory among human developmental scholars, seeking to know more about personal faith and religious life. This theory has significantly impacted the religious communities and their ministries of education. (p. 1)

Fowler's theory of faith development builds on the collective wisdom, scholarship, and research of developmental scholars including Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg (Parks, 1986). Fowler's (1981) research adds another dimension to
developmental theory by engaging respondents in a dialogue about their faith. Fowler's theory of faith development is not antithetical to traditional developmental theories that are written to address issues of moral, intellectual, and psychosocial development (Fowler, 1981). Fowler's theory embraces the research on moral, intellectual, and psychosocial development. According to Fowler (1981), people progress through stages of faith which are similar to stages of psychosocial and cognitive development.

Fowler's theory of faith development presents a six-stage hierarchical scheme (a delineation of the six stages follows within this chapter). Fowler (1976) concluded that the stages of faith development range from stage one, early childhood period-dependency to stage six, adulthood-universalizing faith. Each stage distinctively identifies the process of growth that individuals experience. Each growth stage is dependent upon a person's relationships with others and his or her level of cognitive development and moral reasoning.

Fowler's (1981) theory of faith development is not exclusive, but rather an inclusive theory of development that allows individuals from various orientations (i.e., religious as well as non-religious) to grow and develop in faith. Fowler's theory is based on the personal experiences of people and their interaction within the world, utilizing and understanding their world view, their beliefs and the many religious traditions that exist today (Fowler, 1981).

Although Fowler's research was primarily used by religious educators in the 1970s, student services practitioners are beginning to apply the theory of faith development to students during the 1990s. Consequently, the theory of faith development is gaining acceptance among the range of student development
theories and theorists that exist today (Parks, 1986). A summation of Fowler's theory follows.

The Emergence of Faith Development Theory

At the age of thirty-three, Fowler (1981) became cognizant of the reality of faith in his own life. Fowler (1981) stated:

Four AM, in the darkness of a cold winter morning, suddenly I am fully and frighteningly awake. I see it clearly. I am going to die. This body, this mind, this lived and living myth... real life, suddenly feels like a transient dream. In the strange aloneness of this moment, defined by the certainty of death, I awake to the true facts of life. (p. 1)

Fowler (1981) asked, "When all these persons and relations and projects that shape and fill my life are removed, who or what is left?" (p. 1). Although these statements share a glimpse of the personal soul searching Fowler experienced, his response in this utter moment of chaos and questioning led to the unquestioning hope of faith in his life as a "Christian believer." This experience and Fowler's subsequent experiences led him to the development of his stages of faith. Faith, Fowler (1981) concluded, was his only shield of protection to guard against the nakedness of despair, hopelessness, uncertainty, and death. Faith, according to Fowler (1981) is both personal and a human universal.

The emergence of Fowler's (1981) theory came about after Fowler spent a significant amount of time evaluating his own life and listening to the life stories of more than four hundred respondents. The respondents answered questions about faith in their lives. Fowler's research primarily involved adolescents and young adult males, mostly white, largely Christian, and evenly divided by gender and age categories (Fowler, 1981). However, this is one of the major criticisms of Fowler's work by Gilligan (1982). Gilligan (1982) argued that
Fowler's respondent pool is male dominant and therefore, the findings are not representative of the faith development of traditional-age college females (see p. 35, "Strengths and Weaknesses of Fowler's Theory").

Fowler (1981) used interviewing as a method to collect his research data. The participants in Fowler's (1981) study were asked the same questions by a cadre of trained interviewers. The questions that each participant answered constitute what is referred to as the Faith Development Interview Guide (FDIG) (see pp. 58-66, section on Interview Questions). The FDIG consists of four parts. The four parts or categories are: (1) Life Review, (2) Life-shaping Experiences and Relationships, (3) Present Values and Commitments, and (4) Religion. (see Chapter III for further explanation of the categories of questions).

In addition to asking the standard questions in the FDIG, the interviewer added follow-up questions to clarify the respondent's responses or gain additional insights. All of the interviews were tape recorded and transcribed and then examined by content analysis procedures. Content analysis is an objective, systematic research technique for organizing raw data (Borg & Gall, 1989). Content analysis was done on all responses to the four categories of the interview guide according to each level or stage of faith.

According to Fowler (1981) each adult interview yielded a 35 to 40 page single-spaced, typed, verbatim transcript. Longitudinal studies are being conducted by Fowler to validate his theory of faith development (Fowler, 1986).

A Description of Fowler's Faith Development Theory

In Fowler's theory of faith development,

Faith is dynamic. It is a human universal. Faith develops through various modes of knowing and being in the world. Faith is an
orientation of the total person. Faith is interactive and social; it requires community, language, ritual and nurture. Faith matures as we develop morally and psychologically. Faith helps us to shape our lives about reality. Faith sustains our lives, guarantees "our being" and belief in oneself. Faith moves us towards the center of being, power and values. (Fowler, 1981, pp. 1-15)

According to Fowler (1986), faith can be expressed through shared rituals, community, traditional beliefs, and symbols of one's religious tradition. Whatever is the center of value or power, that will be the god or subject of faith (Bolen, 1990; Parks, 1986). As a result, the development of faith in some individuals may be associated with non-religious symbols and non-religious community. Faith development can be related to such factors as ideology, political movements, and social causes. Faith, therefore, is dynamic and so is used as a verb, not a noun (Fowler, 1981). One does not have to be a Christian to have faith or experience faith. Faith as a concept applies to all persons, because of its universality (Fowler, 1986).

Fowler uses four basic tenets of his faith development theory to enlighten our understanding of the concept of faith. Drawing upon the research of Tillich and Neibuhr, Fowler (1981) concluded that the basic tenets of faith development theory can be viewed by seeing faith as relational and as knowing. Faith as relational is grounded in the belief that faith begins in relationship and not in isolation. An example of faith as relational can be understood by analyzing the trust and bonding that occurs between an infant and a parent. According to Fowler (1981), faith as relational is the ground experience of faith which is nurtured in infancy. Likewise, the bonding that occurs between parent and child is explored in the work of Erikson and his first stage of psychosocial development (Erickson, 1968; Fowler, 1986).
Faith as relational is central to Fowler's description of faith as a triad or triangle (Fowler, 1981). The triangle is based on perceived relationships of shared commitment to and trust in a set of values, a cause and/or an ideal (Fowler, 1986). For example, a number of individuals working for a large corporation are presumed to share the values, ideals, and cause of the corporation. They may not know each other, but their loyalty and trust are interrelated through the existence of the corporation, its ideas, and their employment with the corporation (Cureton, 1989). The triangle extends from the person to the organization and its ideas and then to other persons employed within the organization.

Fowler's second basic tenet is faith as knowing (Fowler, 1986). How do we know what we presume to know? The key answer to this question of faith as knowing is primarily cognitive. Through one's senses and experiences in the world, cognitive knowing becomes associated with one's feelings, thoughts, and desires created from within one's inner self. According to Fowler (1986), faith arises within the individual as a way of seeing, perceiving and knowing. Knowing is a process, a way, a plan of becoming. Experiences help shape and define our way of knowing (Fowler, 1981). Knowing is cognitive (Fowler, 1986). Fowler (1981) constructed knowing and faith on the basis of Piaget, Dewey, and Kohlberg's research.

The third tenet, faith as identity, is based on Fowler's (1981) perspective that identity development is central to the task of faith development, if a person is to grow in faith. Fowler (1981) believes that identity is formed during the early childhood days. He further stated that identity is developed through the bond of
trusting relationships with parents or guardians. In addition, identity develops as a person interacts and grows in the world (Fowler, 1981).

The fourth tenet, faith as imagination, has to do with a person's interpretation of the symbols, rituals, and images (e.g., bible, church, communion) that provide meaning for his or her life (Fowler, 1981). Fowler (1981) maintained that symbols, rituals, and images are important in helping to shape a person's worldview. He concluded from his research that people interpret meaning in life through an array of symbols, rituals, and images that are powerful. These symbols, rituals and images communicate, as well as give meaning to life (Fowler, 1982). Imagination can serve as a transforming agent to change a person's reality. Symbols, rituals, and images play an important role in helping to shape a person's beliefs (Fowler, 1981).

The work of Piaget enabled Fowler to develop and describe how people come to know. Knowing is inevitable as a person moves through Fowler's stages of faith (Fowler, 1986). According to Cureton (1989) "faith grows in a person as he/she interacts with the world . . . trust and loyalty increase as a person develops and progresses through the stages of faith development" (p. 27). For Fowler, to grow in faith is a process of building. Cureton (1989) maintained that the theory of faith development is hierarchical and is ultimately grounded in the Judeo-Christian value system. Each of the six stages reflects Fowler's (1981, 1986) research.

**Fowler's Stages of Faith**

A person grows in faith as he or she builds upon the experiences encountered at each of the six stages (Fowler, 1981, 1986).
Pre-stage: Infancy and Undifferentiated Faith—The Emergence of Trust (0-2 Years):

In the pre-stage called undifferentiated faith, the seeds of trust, courage, hope and love are fused in an undifferentiated way and contend with sensed threats of abandonment, inconsistencies, and deprivations in an infant's environment. Though really a pre-stage and largely inaccessible to empirical research of the kind we pursue, the quality of mutuality and the strength of trust, autonomy, hope, and courage (or their opposites) developed in this phase, underlie (or threaten to undermine) all that comes later in faith development. The emergent strength of faith in this stage is the fund of basic trust and relational experience of mutuality with the one(s) responsible for providing love and care.

The danger in this stage is the infant's inability to develop trust for the future. The infant may develop inconsistencies in behavior and may lock him or herself into patterns of isolation and failed maturity. This stage age approximation is from 0-2 years old (Fowler, 1981, p. 121).

Stage One: Intuitive-Projective Faith (2-6 Years):

The transition from the pre-stage to stage one begins with the convergence of thought and language, opening up the use of symbols in speech and ritual play. This stage is the fantasy-filled, imitative phase in which the child can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions, and stories of the visible faith of adults. In this stage a child's thought patterns are very fluid and unrestricted. Their sense of logic is unrestrained and uninhibited. A child can continue to hold onto images created in early development through later life. The first awareness of death, sex, religious views and strong taboos by which cultures and families embrace are powerful influences in the child's imagination.

There is a danger in this stage which arises from the child's imagination through witting or unwitting exploitation of their imagination and unrestrained images of terror and destructiveness. The child's ability to think concretely, logically, and develop sequential thought patterns is the primary goal to attain and leads the child to stage two (Fowler, 1981, pp. 133-134).
Stage Two: Mythic-Literal Faith (10 years):

This person begins to take on for him or herself the stories, beliefs, and observances that symbolize belonging to his or her community. Beliefs and symbols are interpreted in a literal way. Concrete operational thinking in this stage leads to the curbing and ordering of the previous stage imaginations. Coherence and meaning become linear and stories become the major way of giving unity and value to one's own experiences. Fowler contends this is the faith stage of the school child. Symbolic and dramatic experiences that the child encounters can have significant influence on their sense of knowing and being. The new capacity or strength in this stage is the child's development of narrative, stories, and myths through which he or she finds meaning and coherence. Fairness and justice become a part of the child's inner reality.

The danger in this stage is the child's limitation of literalness and excessive reliance upon the principle of reciprocity. A sense of controlling and embracing negative actions toward mistreatment may become apparent. When the child begins to recognize contradictions in his or her own stories, it is time to advance to the next stage (Fowler, 1981, pp. 149-150).

Stage Three: Synthetic-Conventional Faith (Adolescence):

The adolescent in this stage begins to externalize authority. The adolescent's experience of the world extends beyond family to peers, school, society, work, play, and religion. If the adolescent is to successfully master this stage, faith must provide a synthesis of one's values and the information he/she receives. God is viewed as a significant other, companion, guide, and personal support. God becomes very personal to the individual. In this stage the adolescent is apt to develop conformity. The symbols, rituals, language, and the community of the church take on sacred power. The adolescent's faith and trust in God, if nurtured, become stronger. The adolescent in this stage will normally develop suspicions of those with whom he or she do not have trusting relationships.

A key contribution to a breakdown in this stage can be caused by serious clashes or contradictions between valued authority sources, marked changes in policies or practices sanctioned by official
leaders. The adolescent may emotionally or physically run away from home to examine his or her background and values concerning life. These drastic changes may lead the person to stage four (Fowler, 1981, pp. 172-173).

Stage Four: Individuative-Reflective Faith (Young Adulthood):

For many people, Fowler contends this stage emerges between the mid-thirties and forties, however, Fowler refers to this stage as young adulthood. This stage is marked by a double development. The self, previously sustained in its identity and faith compositions by an interpersonal circle of significant others, now claims an identity no longer defined by others and the meaning they attach to one's role. Life symbols become demythologized. The person in this stage is able to draw authority from within. He or she becomes more critical in his/her approach and the outlook of others. Profound intellectual labeling occurs: "I can think for myself." In this stage the person is able to apply his/her own analytical and practical problem solving skills to make meaning of their world. Fowler contends that persons in this stage may drop out of church because they are put off by the dogmas and doctrines that are espoused within the church and the perceived or real inconsistencies and the hypocrisy that follows. In many instances, the person believes that he or she has developed a world view above and beyond the responsiveness of the church.

The excessive confidence in one's own conscious mind and critical thought may lead to the danger of a double-bind for this individual. For example, this individual may subscribe to some of the tenets of the church, but may also speak against the traditional church and its practices. However, restlessness with one's own self-images may lead the person to the next stage (Fowler, 1981, pp. 175-183).

Stage Five: Conjunctive Faith (Approximately Mid-Life):

Conjunctive faith involves the integration into self and an outlook of much that was suppressed or unrecognized in the interest of stage four. The person develops a wholesome sense of cognitive and affective adaptation to reality. For example, knowing and perceiving become an integrated process of intellectual experiences as well as personal life experiences. Truth in this stage is multi-dimensional and organically interdependent. The person may find truth in many religions. One's identity is separate from the group, although there is an integration of one's world view and his or her
experiences. This person is better suited to test their faith against others. The adult person in this stage is more ecumenically involved and revelation (knowing) for him or her takes on a whole new meaning. It is highly conceivable that this person will recommit to the church and its symbols.

The danger in this stage is living life between an untransformed vision of what the world can be. A strong person at this stage who can adjust to the multi-dimensional realities of meaning will move on to Stage Six (Fowler, 1981, pp. 185-198).

Stage Six: Universalizing Faith (Late Adulthood):

Fowler believes this stage is reached by very few persons. The person in this stage becomes a disciplined activist embodied in human form. He or she is able to transcend the world and religion and challenge the normalcy and status quo of societal institutions, as well as certain givens. Survival and living life are not primary concerns in this stage because this person views all things as part of the cosmos—even death. The God of this person's reality is not limited or finite. The believer holds that God is beyond doctrines and creeds and is free to do whatsoever God chooses. Persons who attain this stage are extraordinary people whose redemptive nature leads to a concern for the oppressed and less fortunate of society. They live by their own sense of values and principles although they would die rather than choose between life and death (Fowler, 1981, pp. 199-211).

The literature on Fowler's (1981; 1986) six stages of faith development does not describe or adequately define the age approximation for each stage. For example, Fowler's (1981) Pre-stage (0-2 Years), Stage One (2-6 Years), and Stage Two (10 Years), identify the approximate age categorizations of the stages. Fowler (1981) broadly described the age categories for the last four stages by using age descriptors. Fowler (1981) assumed that all persons will fit into one of the six stages, regardless of age. Because of the lack of numerical age approximations for the last four stages, Parks (1986) claimed that Fowler (1981) may have
missed or left out a possible stage between Stage Three and Stage Four. Parks (1986) contended that a transitional stage between Adolescence and Young Adulthood is needed. Definitive reasons for Fowler's omission of numerical age approximations for Stages Three through Six are not given in the literature. Therefore, research questions addressing this concern by Parks (1986) may contribute to a future understanding of how important the age approximations are to the theory and its six stages.

Fowler's (1981) stages of faith development are grounded in the belief that relationships and knowing establish the tenets of one's faith. As a person moves through the various stages, the hierarchical structure of the stages does not require sequential movement (Fowler, 1981). Bolen (1990) suggested that one stage is not necessarily better than another. A person can experience faith development at any stage.

The theory of faith development is a foundational theory that builds through a gradual progression of growth and experiences in the world that can lead to faith development. Bolen (1990) asserted that Fowler's theory is a theory of form and not content. In other words, the structure for the stages exists, but is not adequately defined. Bolen (1990) pointed out that the theory traces the development of faith in individuals from the beginning to the end. Even though there are six stages of Fowler's theory, one's goal should not be to reach stage six. The goal should be to master the stage a person finds himself or herself in. Faith, according to Fowler (1981), matures as individuals develop morally, psychologically, and spiritually (if they happen to be religious).
Strengths and Weaknesses of Fowler's Theory

The strengths of Fowler's (1981) theory are best understood in terms of his description of faith. Faith is dynamic and universal, therefore it is applicable to all persons. Faith is action and belief that guides our life and faith develops through a shared sense of community and relatedness. Faith, as defined by Fowler (1981) is meaning-making. Fowler (1981) claimed that as human beings we are social animals; we are inextricably bound to that which is physical and spiritual.

The following views represent some of the strengths of Fowler's theory. Bolen (1990) contended that Fowler's theory is internally consistent because he is a structuralist who has drawn from other developmental theorists to form the theory of faith development. Fowler's (1981) work deals with the reality of faith and the process of developing faith within people. As a consequence, Fowler's work does add to the body of knowledge because it enhances the understanding of faith as it relates to the whole person concept.

Furushima's (1985) study on cross cultural issues within faith development affirmed that the theory of faith development as stated by Fowler is not necessarily Christian in orientation. He studied twelve adult members of the Buddhist religious tradition and found that faith in the lives of the Buddhist respondents was evident in their cultural expressions, forms, and disposition. Some of the cultural expression of faith evident in the respondents had to do with personal pride and constraint, and their humility as illustrated in their daily lives. Furushima (1985) concluded that Fowler's theory of faith development is universal.
Dykstra and Parks (1986) stated Fowler's faith development theory has become one of the most widely known and influential theories of human development having to do with faith and religious life. The influence of the theory of faith development is widely discussed among Christian educators, higher education/student development theorists, and other persons working towards a holistic approach to human development (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). According to Parks (1986), the theory of faith development takes a structuralist approach and has at its foundation the primary human concern for all persons, which is identity development. Because the theory is grounded in the notion that the development of trust in infancy is the basis for a healthy persona, Fowler (1981) has used the work of Erikson, Kohlberg, Piaget and others to connect identity and faith development together in the earliest stage of a person's life.

Barr and Upcraft (1990) believe that faith development as a theory applied to the concept of the whole person will be a significant theory of development during the 1990s. They suggest that traditional-age college students are concerned about faith issues during their years in college. The theory of faith development may assist practitioners in helping students actualize their human potential. Research conducted during the late 1970s confirmed this notion that human developmental issues are inextricably bound to the notion of one's system of beliefs (Chamberlain, 1979).

The theory of faith development has its critics. Gilligan (1982) argued that Fowler's theory does not address the ways in which women experience knowing and being in the world. It is her view that the research sample is biased towards males and, therefore, speaks primarily to faith development within a certain male population. Gilligan (1982) argued that the bias in Fowler's technique and
theory of faith development is primarily due to his respondent pool. The respondent pool for Fowler's research was comprised of young adult males, mostly white, largely Christian and evenly divided by age categories.

Related criticism lodged against Fowler's theory is that the subject of faith is difficult to categorize and measure (Bolen, 1990). "Fowler's method of interviewing is unsuited to developing unbiased data" (Bolen, 1990, p. 6). Parks (1986) concluded that the theory of faith development is biased because of Fowler's approach to doing interviews.

Other researchers have stated that the theory of faith development as described initially by Fowler could not be as universally applied across cultures as he stated. Another weakness noted by Parks (1986) is that Fowler's earlier work is another instance of the discrepant data that under re-examination does not clearly distinguish young adulthood from adulthood. She asserted that the young adult stage is a vulnerable position for determining faith because of the tensions and dichotomies experienced in life during earlier stages of development. In addition, Parks (1986) doesn't support a six-stage theory of development. She concluded from her research that there is a critical stage missing between Fowler's stages three and four—a stage between a conventionally assumed faith and a critically appropriated adult faith. Parks (1986) further asserted that five of Fowler's six stages are based on empirical research data, but the sixth and most critical stage is constructed by inference from biographies and from developmental and theological perspectives which are not often objective.

Overall, it can be argued that the theory of faith development does contribute to new ways of thinking about one aspect of lifespan programs that
address the development of a person's belief system (Bolen, 1990). An understanding of faith development strengths and weaknesses can assist researchers in making the theory and its implications applicable to all persons wanting to know more about faith.

The Variables of Faith Development

Fowler (1981) identified seven variables that show the pattern of actions that occur in each stage and how these actions lead to integrated aspects of faith. The movement from one variable to another is not always even. The transition may be ragged, with one variable leading and others attempting to drag or play catch-up with the first (Fowler, 1981; Bolen, 1990). No particular order of importance is assigned to the seven variables. These seven variables are used by Fowler (1981) to determine a person's stage of faith development. However, these variables are not used in this study to determine the stages of faith development of the five respondents because determining the stages of faith for the five respondents is not a purpose of this study (see Appendix I).

Application of Fowler's Theory to Student Services Practitioners

This section briefly presents a rationale for employing Fowler's theory of faith development by student services profession. As stated earlier in the introduction to this study, only nominal attention has been given to the study of spiritual, religious and/or faith development of college students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Barr and Upcraft (1990) stated that student development literature excluded faith development theory during the 1960s and 1970s. Dykstra and Parks (1986) stated that the theory of faith development is emerging as a theory to be understood in addressing human growth issues within a whole
person approach. The student services profession has historical roots in attempting to understand the whole person. Whole person, as defined here, includes one's physical, social, psychological, cognitive, and faith development (Barr & Upcraft, 1990).

The theory of faith development can be included in our understanding of the concept, whole person. According to Fowler (1981) faith is a human universal. It is our collective way of being in the world daily (Fowler, 1981). To neglect and deny the reality of faith and spirituality in the lives of students, as if they had no struggles about faith, would be to deny the whole person's existence. Myers' (1981) belief is:

All forms of life or unique manifestations of spirit; therefore self-worth is inherent and independent of external physical realities. The process of identity development, central to the developmental theories of Chickering and Erikson, is actually a means for one to increase their self-knowledge, thereby enhancing awareness of their spirit (faith), the essence of being (p. 57).

Myers (1991) concluded that identity development cannot be separated from the context of faith development. The focus of student services work propels the notion that identity is the key to the development of each student. Many theories of development are operative in the field of student services. Psychological, cognitive, and physical development theories in and of themselves do not adequately address the issues associated with the faith development of college students (Cureton, 1988; Delworth & Hanson, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Fowler's (1981) theory may provide a foundation for developing an understanding of the dynamics of faith that are operative in the traditional-age college student. Throughout each of Fowler's (1981) six stages, the theory
addresses questions of self-awareness, moral reasoning, justice and knowing, relatedness in community, fairness, and values.

Summary

The previous section provided an overview of Fowler's theory of faith development. Faith development can be one of many theories used within the five cluster theories to enhance student services practitioners' understanding of how students grow and develop as whole persons. The theory of faith development has potential to increase the practitioner's understanding of how students develop their religious ideas and values. The religious attitudes, ideas and values of traditional-age college students are linked to their identity. Faith development should be included in an understanding of the concept "whole person," and how practitioners in student services should respond to the needs of individual students.

Selected Overview of the Literature on Religious Attitudes and Values of Traditional-Age College Students

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) devoted a small section of their book titled, *How College Affects Students*, to the topic of religious attitudes and values of students. They found that the influence of religion on the attitudes and values of students had not received much attention in the literature. A handful of studies have examined the relationship between major academic field and changes in religious affiliation or religiosity, but the findings are not entirely consistent (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 313). Studies on moral development are often related to the religious attitudes of students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).
The literature reported that students in social science (e.g., history) and hard science majors were most likely to change their religious preferences to "none" by their senior year of college while students who majored in business and education were least likely to change their religious preferences and values (Solomon & Oshsner, 1978). This suggests that the academic challenges of the sciences may have had an influence on or caused the students to change their traditional beliefs while attending college. Additional evidence in the literature linked the importance of the nature of the college context between the religious preferences of faculty members and students, to the tendency among students to change their religious commitments throughout the college years (Clark, 1972). Clark (1972) reported that on campuses where the faculty and student body constituted a mix of non-religious and mildly religious, individual student's religious commitments during the college years were seen to move considerably toward the secular. They found that where faculty and students espoused greater commitments to a religion, the institutional climate appeared to support the maintenance of students' initial religious commitments.

A growing body of evidence suggests that while the specific department or nature of the discipline may have little impact in non-cognitive areas, the organizational and interpersonal climate of the department may very well have a significant impact. Departmental influence on personal and educational changes is observable in those departments where faculty and students share common attitudes and values, where interpersonal exchanges are frequent, friendly and not rigidly hierarchical and where there is a department esprit de corps. (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, pp. 652-653)

The implication of the above quote is that students who attend church-related colleges that subscribe to a particular religious tradition where religion plays an active role in the college, and faculty embrace the religious traditions of the
college, may be inclined to strengthen their faith and accept a particular religious orientation. The reverse might be true for those students who attend secular and public institutions of higher education. Feathers (1975) concluded that students tend to choose departments that will match or reinforce what he calls their entering "cognitive ecology." Feather's (1975) view supported the thesis offered by Welty (1976) that academic majors shifted for some students as they moved towards more religious liberalism.

There is evidence in the literature that suggests that where a student lives might impact his or her religious attitudes, values and or faith. Welty (1976) reported that students living in residence halls or private rooms were more likely to have no religious preferences by their senior year. If so, What influences this change from religious to non-religious? and, How can institutions help students to grow in their faith? are questions for student services practitioners to address in their research efforts. Furthermore, a study revealed that students who lived at home experienced only small declines in their religious attitudes and values (Welty, 1976). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) concluded that the only explanation for such findings is that in living at home the student is not only reinforced in the religious value system of parents and siblings, but is also insulated from any of the potentially challenging effects of close and continuing associations with other students whose religious values may be quite different. "Living away from home affords students many more opportunities to test old attitudes (religious faith included) and values against those of others and to experiment with new ones" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 314).
According to Lyons (1990), each student is unique. Some students are religious and some are not. Each brings a unique history of personal circumstances. He stated that those students who are religious practice their faith in many different ways. Likewise, non-religious students should have the ability to practice their beliefs within the collegiate experience. Consequently, those persons who choose to work in student services must be very skilled in recognizing the individual differences that exist among students as they develop into whole persons.

Moos and Lee (1979) identified and concluded that the shift in student attitudes from religious to non-religious on residential campuses is due to the differences in the environmental press of students. Moos and Lee (1979) found that students' religious interests and values, coupled with their sex and pre-college interests and values, were positively related to a residence hall environment that promoted personal relationships or was traditionally socially oriented. Consequently, for those students who lived in residence halls characterized by personal and academic independence, religious values were found to be negatively affected. The notion of the student as a whole person binds the religiousness or non-religiousness of the student to all of their values and attitudes about life, including family, sex, education, economic, and political justice (Moos & Lee, 1979).

The views discussed above point to the significance of the students' personal characteristics and experiences they bring with them to college, and the impact or influence that the collegiate setting may have on religious values and faith. According to a study conducted by the University of Michigan (1991), religious values and participation in religious activities by high school students
are generally on the decline. Historically, studies on college life have confirmed that the religious involvement of students declines significantly during the college years (Astin, 1977; Chickering, 1969; Cureton, 1989; and Heath, 1968). The decline, according to the Michigan report (1991), mirrored a decrease in students' perceptions of the role of religion and faith in their lives. This decline provides an inverse relationship with regard to the increase (in one's personal faith development) during their college years (Sutton, 1991). Positive attitudes of college students and an understanding of faith issues in their lives during the college years may positively influence students' behavior in matters related to moral decisions, academic honesty, and peer relationships (Sutton, 1991).

Conclusion

This chapter provided a review of the literature on developmental theories. Developmental theories have impacted the way that student services practitioners have worked with traditional-age college students over the last thirty years. A review of Fowler's (1981) faith development theory followed the discussion on developmental theories. Fowler's (1981) theory of faith development may provide new ways of assessing students' growth. For example, Barr and Upcraft (1990) believe that faith development theory has potential to increase our understanding of the faith development needs of traditional-age college students.

The theory of faith development deserves further study. As students grow and develop their religious attitudes and values are constantly challenged (Moos & Lee, 1979). If college students' religious attitudes and values go through a state of stagnation or change during the college years, it is important for researchers and student services practitioners to develop some understanding of faith
development within traditional-age college students. Myers (1991) contended that faith is inextricably connected to a person's identity.

Collins, Hurst, and Jacobson (1987), argued that colleges can no longer sustain a blind spot towards a student's spiritual development. They indicated that faith developmental theory is just as important as other developmental theories, because the student as a whole person is inextricably connected to his or her religion and faith. Likewise, Bok (1982) stated higher education cannot continue to pulsate around the notion of value-free learning, because our society and its people are shaped by its values, morals, principles of ethics and religious influences. Billington (1984) stated:

To a very large extent, American universities have fallen down on the job of transmitting values to students. Other institutions are also falling short, but the universities' failure is especially serious because historically they have had the task of imparting the essentials of the western tradition to the leaders of tomorrow. (p. 27)

Perhaps student services practitioners at church-related colleges might find the theory of faith development useful in assessing their students' values or how students use their faith in completing such developmental tasks as decision-making. Faith development theory does focus on how people arrive at developing their system of values and how those values influence the way they make meaning out of their life experiences.

The researcher concluded that an analysis of the research literature on faith development theory and other traditional theories of human development, warrants further study. This research study may provide other researchers with a different way of assessing the usefulness of the theory of faith development.

Faith development is an emerging theory. The theory of faith development may provide new ways of assessing how college students develop
as whole persons. The literature on faith development takes into account that the whole person consists of many components. These components include a person's way of thinking, interacting, and perceiving his or her world.

Fowler (1981) has created a theory of development that draws upon the collective research of several theorists with different perspectives. The literature on faith development theory is developed from traditional theories of human growth. The researcher in this study believes that future research on the theory of faith development will perhaps enhance the understanding of student services professionals as it relates to the faith perspectives of their students.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study was to describe how the respondents perceive their faith development. Fowler's (1981) Faith Development Interview Guide (FDIG) was used to collect the data.

A goal of the study for this researcher was to generate a deeper understanding of each respondent's actual perceptions and experiences related to his or her faith development. Qualitative research procedures were used to conduct the study. Qualitative research methods provided the researcher with an appropriate method for conducting descriptive research (Merriam, 1988).

Qualitative research is defined in different ways. According to Kniker (1991), two definitions that are useful in understanding the nature and scope of qualitative research are that:

- qualitative research is a descriptive record consisting of written and spoken words or behaviors (p. 2), and
- qualitative research refers to descriptions of people from their own point of view (p. 2).

Merriam (1988) maintained that qualitative research is useful to the researcher who wants to gain greater insight and understanding of the problem, event, situation or subject that is being studied. Marshall and Rossman (1989) contended that the strengths of qualitative research in descriptive or exploratory studies are demonstrated through consideration of the context of the study (background and scope of the situation or subject), setting of the study (location and circumstances in which the study is to be conducted), and the respondents' frame of reference (the perspective and real life experiences of the respondent).
A unique characteristic of qualitative research is that it is based on the use of
the individual researcher as the primary data collector or the data gathering
instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). Qualitative research allows the researcher to
change the research design during the study to enhance its flexibility. For example,
it allows for incorporation of additional data gathering methods, other interview
questions or even other respondents who were not initially included in the study
(Merriam, 1988).

Qualitative research helps the researcher explore multiple perspectives and
realities of the research participants from their personal experiences (Merriam, 1988).
Lincoln and Guba (1989) also concluded that qualitative methods are best suited for
analyzing and making sense of multiple realities. For example, in this study a
written description is provided of the perceived faith development of selected
students attending a midwestern church-related college. Through the use of
individual interviews, the respondents revealed their different perceptions and
experiences about their faith development and how their faith has affected their life
experiences. Their words were then used to retell their own stories in the analysis of
the data.

Fowler (1981) used qualitative research methods (i.e. interviews) to conduct
his research studies on faith development during the 1970s. Fowler (1981) described
the respondents' interviews in his study as being "like conversations" (p. 308). He
established with his respondents the goal of sharing "the ways their lives have been
shaped and how they interpret meaning from their lives" (p. 308). The central focus
of the interviews in Fowler's (1981) study on faith development was based the
respondents' life experiences, the challenges they faced, and the interpretations they
made of their life experiences.
Fowler (1981) concluded that qualitative research techniques assist the researcher in developing an understanding of the value-ladenness of faith issues for each respondent. Because a study of faith development must include an investigation of a person's values and beliefs, qualitative research techniques, (i.e, interviews) allow the researcher "to find out what is in and on the minds of the respondents" and to "find out from them things that cannot be directly observed" (Merriam, 1988, p. 72). As Merriam (1988) pointed out, "feelings, thoughts, and intentions cannot be observed" (p. 72). Interviews can provide a means for the researcher to gain access to the value-laden perspectives held by the respondents. On the other hand, quantitative research methods would prevent the researcher from exploring and doing in-depth investigation of the thoughts and feelings behind a person's values and beliefs, because of "the prerequisites for control of the variables in the research study" (Merriam, 1988, pp. 72-73).

The primary data for this study are words which were collected and analyzed by a "human instrument" (i.e. this researcher) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The human instrument is effective in qualitative research because of the ability to adapt to changes in the research situation. For example, the researcher was able to ask follow-up questions of the respondents during their interviews and to observe their non-verbal behaviors associated with answering difficult questions. This study required a human instrument with some previous knowledge of faith development, a level of understanding of Fowler's Faith Development Interview Guide, and how the instrument needed to be administered. In addition, it was important for the researcher to have the ability to recognize and sort the various perspectives and realities of each respondent according to the categories identified in the FDIG.
Research Question

The research question for this study was developed from a review of the literature on faith development and the purpose of the study. The research question is, "What do the respondents in the study say about their faith development?" The rationale for the research question is premised on the fact that current literature on the faith development of traditional-age college students has been minimal. Research on the faith development of traditional-age college students has not progressed to the extent of some developmental theories, such as those created by Erikson (identity development) and Chickering (psychosocial development) (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). In addition, the usefulness of faith development in assessing college students spiritual and affective needs and interests and the linking of faith development to existing developmental theories are areas that have not been adequately examined. Further research may engender a deeper understanding of students' perspectives about their faith and how their faith manifests itself in the higher education setting. New research on faith development of traditional-age college students could complement existing developmental theories and strategies in promoting total student development on college campuses. Further research on faith development may provide student services practitioners and faculty in higher education with more insights about how students perceive themselves in light of questions that are raised about their faith development.

Setting of the Study

The setting for this study was a midwestern church-related college. This midwestern church-related college was selected because it is one of several in the region. The primary reason for selecting respondents from a church-related college
is that the researcher is an ordained Methodist minister and is interested in knowing more about the faith development issues of students who attend church-related colleges.

In an effort to protect the confidentiality of the midwestern church-related college used as the setting of this study, the name of the institution has not been divulged in the written report. Throughout the report, the setting of the study will be referred to as, "the midwestern church-related college."

According to the Book of Discipline of the Methodist Church (1988), all Methodist colleges are charged with the responsibility to not only educate students, but to nurture within them a commitment to a personal understanding of faith and its relationship to understanding God. Because Methodist colleges are funded partially by local congregational gifts, the Methodist denomination believes it is the responsibility of their educational institutions to help students grow in their faith. Church officials believe that those students who grow in their faith as college students will continue to support the work of the denomination.

The criterion used to select this midwestern church-related college was:

in institutional compliance with the Book of Discipline of the Methodist Church (1988) regarding the responsibility of Methodist colleges to nurture students' personal understanding of faith.

**Negotiating Entry**

Negotiating entry refers to the plans the researcher established for appropriately gaining access to the research site and respondents (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Marshall and Rossman (1989) stated that qualitative researchers must be able to demonstrate that they can conduct their research in a way that will
not harm the research participants and that will create a receptive environment for the study.

During the initial phase of the study the researcher contacted the Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO) at the midwestern church-related college to express interest in conducting research on faith development on the campus. The initial contact with the CSAO was made by telephone in November of 1991. In January of 1992, a formal letter was sent to the CSAO reiterating the researcher's interest in conducting the study and requesting permission to conduct the study on the campus (see Appendix E). The letter explained the purpose of the research and stated that the researcher would contact the CSAO to arrange a meeting with him to address any question as well as provide him with a description of the study to be conducted.

In late January, 1992, the researcher visited the CSAO in his office for the purpose of ascertaining the College's interest in the research study. It was at this meeting that the CSAO indicated that he had spoken with other campus administrators and that the researcher had been granted permission to proceed with the study. Also, the CSAO agreed to serve as the official campus contact for the study. The role of the CSAO was to facilitate the researcher's access to the respondents, secure a place on the campus where the researcher could conduct the study and have private time to prepare for the interviews and make notes, provide recording equipment if needed, and respond to any unforeseen problems related to respondent participation that might emerge during the study.

Following the January meeting, the CSAO contacted each of the potential respondents by letter. The letter stated the College's commitment to assisting the researcher in conducting the study as well as encouraging potential respondents to participate in the study (see Appendix F). Through formal and informal
conversations, the researcher kept the campus contact informed of the research activities. The researcher believed that the CSAO was entitled to know about his presence and activities on the campus. The CSAO provided strong support and interest in the study, which helped to minimize problems that could have occurred, such as no place to interview, lack of interest by respondents to participate in the study, and no recording equipment.

Data Sources

The primary data sources used for the study included the five respondents. The single data source for Fowler's research during the 1970s was the taped interviews with respondents. The use of respondents as the primary data source for this study is consistent with the approach used by Fowler (1981) in his initial research on faith development.

Secondary data were collected from selected documents about the college at which the study was conducted. A more detailed explanation of documents as a data source in this study follows later in this chapter.

Respondents

The respondents selected to participate in this study attended a midwestern church-related college. The method used to select the respondents is referred to as purposive sampling (Merriam, 1988). Purposive sampling is the process of establishing criteria for prospective respondents to meet in order to participate in the study (Merriam, 1988). According to Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1985), purposive sampling enables the researcher to select "typical" or representative cases from the general population (p. 45). In addition, purposive sampling is often used in studies
of attitudes and opinions (Ary et al., 1985). Therefore, this sampling method was determined by the researcher to be appropriate for this study.

Potential respondents were chosen from a student body consisting of approximately 1,700 students. The criteria established for selection of the respondents included the completion of nine or more credit hours in religion courses at the college in which the study was conducted. The reason for choosing nine or more credit hours in religion as a criterion to participate in the study was based on the following assumptions:

1. Students taking nine or more credit hours in religion would more than likely be sophomores, juniors, and seniors, because all students attending this college are required to take a minimum of three credit hours in religion in order to graduate. It was considered desirable by the researcher to have more advanced students (i.e., sophomores, juniors, and seniors) participate in the study. Advanced students may be more open in discussing sensitive issues, such as religious beliefs and personal convictions, than first year students. Likewise, advanced students may have had broader experiences in their academic programs and extra-curricular activities than first year students, and thus, more personal experiences to draw upon.

2. Students who have taken nine or more credit hours in religion courses might be willing to participate in a study of faith development, because they might see this study as meaningful to their personal and intellectual growth and development.

3. The selection of students with nine or more credit hours raised concerns about biased responses. Students who have taken nine or more credit hours of courses in religion may come with biased perspectives about faith. According to Fowler (1981), exposure to matters of religion is not necessarily a perceived bias of respondents participating in faith development studies. In addition, the students who volunteered to participate in the study may have been motivated to participate by personal agendas that may have biased their responses. The researcher had no means to control for biased responses.
4. Advanced students would seriously participate in a study sanctioned by the Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO) on their campus.

Following the criterion of nine or more credit hours in religion, a list of thirty-seven potential respondents was received from the CSAO. In actuality, students from any academic area could have been selected for participation in the study. When this study was first proposed the intent was to conduct it with pre-seminary students. Later it was discovered through the CSAO that fewer than five students attending the college were pre-seminary students.

The researcher wrote a letter to the students in January, 1992 asking them to complete a form indicating their interest in participating in a study of faith development and to attend a meeting on the college campus in which the researcher would explain the purpose of the research (see Appendix B). Of the thirty-seven students who received a letter, eleven signed and returned the form. Eight students expressed an interest in learning more about the study and three stated they either had no time or were not interested in participating in the study. All eight students who were interested attended the meeting. Seven of the eight persons attending the meeting agreed to participate in the study. Five of the seven potential respondents had time to participate in the study through the data collection and follow-up phases of the study.

The respondents were five full-time students, including a sophomore, a junior, and three seniors. The group of respondents included two men and three women who were studying at the midwestern church-related college during the 1991-1992 academic year. Focusing the study on the experiences, attitudes and beliefs of the five respondents in their "natural setting" (Merriam, 1988) provided the
detailed and comprehensive descriptions of faith development that follow in Chapter IV.

Procedures Followed for Respondent Participation

In a follow-up meeting in March, 1992 with the five respondents, the details of the study were explained by the researcher and expectations of the respondents were identified. At this meeting the researcher reiterated the purpose of the study, how the study would be conducted, and the reason for conducting a study on faith development at a church-related college. Questions from the respondents about the study were answered, issues of confidentiality were discussed, and the role of the respondents in reviewing the transcript data for accuracy was explained. This time was also used to talk informally with the respondents about their experiences in college and their backgrounds in order to establish rapport with them prior to conducting the actual interviews.

Merriam (1988) indicated that the researcher must consider the ethical responsibility he or she has to protect the respondents from violation of their anonymity or other risks associated with the information they reveal. At the second meeting with the five respondents, the researcher reiterated the rules of confidentiality that would be adhered to during the study and the respondents' rights as research participants. The respondents were asked to read and sign a consent form (see Appendix C). The consent form identified how the data were to be used, involvement of the respondents in reviewing and confirming the data, and methods that would be used to protect their identities in the research study. The consent form explained that participation in the study was voluntary and that any of the respondents could withdraw from the study at any point, if they chose to do so.
Respondents were also told that they could refrain from answering any questions they felt were too personal. The respondents were advised by the researcher that the raw transcript data would be made available to them for review prior to finalizing the study and that any inaccuracies or statements they did not want included in the study could be deleted or modified.

Following the March, 1992 meeting with the respondents, the researcher wrote a thank you letter and made a personal telephone call to each respondent. The telephone call provided the researcher and the respondents with personal time to discuss any reservations or concerns they had about participating in the study. During the telephone calls, each of the five respondents re-emphasized their enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the study. No reservations or concerns were expressed by the respondents.

Documents

Documents were used as a secondary source of data for this study. The purpose of reviewing documents was to collect background information about the midwestern church-related college to gain a better understanding of the setting of the study. According to Merriam (1988), document analysis is useful because it "helps to ground the inquiry in the real-world issues and day to day concerns" of the research participants (p. 109). The documents selected provided information about the mission, curriculum, structure, student life, and rules and regulations for the midwestern church-related college.

To protect the confidentiality of the institution that is the setting of this study, the name of the college has been omitted from the listing of documents below and
throughout the research report. The documents from the midwestern church related college included:


Descriptive information from the documents was recorded on document summary forms to help organize the data for analysis. (see Appendix D).

Data Collection

Data collection began in April, 1992, and continued through July, 1992. Semi-structured interviews with five respondents enrolled at the midwestern church-related college, provided the primary data for the study. Semi-structured interviews as used in this study, refer to interviews in which each respondent was asked a set of pre-determined questions from Fowler's (1981) FDIG, as well as open-ended follow-up questions conceived by the researcher. This approach allowed free-flowing responses from the respondents instead of restricting them to a specified set of answers (Ary et al., 1985). Secondary descriptive data were collected from analysis of selected documents about the college and its students.

Interviews

Fowler's Faith Development Interview Guide (FDIG) was used to conduct interviews with the respondents. The FDIG provided a common set of interview questions, allowing for greater consistency in covering each of the thematic areas of
Fowler's theory. The respondents' answers to the FDIG generated additional questions, such as, How do you define faith? and How do you describe your faith? The semi-structured nature of the interviews enabled the researcher to pursue the respondents' line of answers with some degree of flexibility, a procedure suggested by Fowler (1981) in using the FDIG. Fowler (1981) believes that the respondent is more likely to share detailed information if the researcher pursues answers that would not be given if he or she only addressed the pre-determined interview questions.

Each respondent was interviewed either two or three times. Two of the respondents participated in three interviews because more time was required for data collection. The remaining three respondents participated in two interviews. Each interview lasted approximately two and one-half hours, for a total of five to six hours of interview time for each respondent. A total of twelve interviews were conducted with the respondents. A breakdown of the interviews is as follows: Respondent A, "Jack" - 2; Respondent B, "Michael" - 3; Respondent C, "Paige" - 3; Respondent D, "Vanessa" - 2; and Respondent E, "Maggie" - 2. (Note: These were the pseudonyms chosen by the respondents).

The questions from the FDIG and the follow up questions asked of each respondent provided extensive data collection. Although the interviews were semi-structured, the researcher attempted to approach each interview with a consistent purpose, as suggested by Fowler (1981) in his research protocol. Fowler (1981) stated that he "makes the person's own life experiences, responses to challenges, and constructions of meanings, the subject of the interview" (p. 308). The semi-structured interview approach enabled the researcher to gain a deeper and more
comprehensive understanding of the life events, perceptions and experiences of the respondents.

Each interview was taped recorded and later transcribed. Because of the large amounts of data and related information generated in qualitative research, the researcher developed an interview summary form to record and organize the interview data related to the thematic areas of the study (see Appendix G). Follow-up questions that developed from each interview were recorded so that the researcher could pursue these additional questions with each respondent. A written record was maintained by the researcher of thoughts and ideas about how to handle the data, questions about the processes being used, and plans the researcher felt would be useful in organizing and analyzing the data.

**Interview Questions**

The predetermined interview questions used in this study came directly from Fowler's (1981) FDIG. Each respondent was asked all of the questions in the FDIG. The FDIG interview questions fit within the categories of Fowler's (1981) faith development theory (e.g., Life, Review, Life-Shaping Experiences and Relationships). Follow-up questions were also asked of each respondent. Fowler (1981) suggested that researchers conducting interviews with the FDIG, should remember certain guidelines when attempting to study faith development. These guidelines provide a set of procedures for researchers to follow who desire to replicate Fowler's methods. The researcher informed each respondent of these procedures at the time of their first interview. They include:

- **A.** There are no right or wrong answers to the questions in the FDIG.
- **B.** The respondent should feel free to decline answering any question he or she finds unduly intrusive.
C. The interview should flow like a conversation.

D. The skilled researcher should do extensive clarification with the respondent to help him or her speak precisely in his or her terms about faith in his or her life.

E. Faith, for Fowler, is not necessarily religious. It is belief, attitudes, and values developed through a shared sense of being in the world.

F. At the end of each interview, the researcher should ask the respondent to share any important information that he or she feels was not shared, and

G. Analysis of data helps determine the respondent's stage of faith.

These guidelines were adhered to as closely as possible in this study to be consistent with Fowler's (1981) procedures outlined in his methodology. Flexibility was allowed during the interviews to enable them to flow as conversations. This was done to encourage the respondents to talk more openly and honestly. However, it was not the researcher's intent to replicate Fowler's (1981) study.

Towards the end of each interview, the respondents were given time to add any additional thoughts or perspectives they might have had. At this time the researcher also sought clarification on answers that might have been unclear. Providing time at the end of each interview was done to allow each respondent time to reflect upon their thoughts and feelings about their faith [within in the broad scope of the interview questions] (See respondent narratives, Chapter IV). The respondents also had an opportunity to clarify their responses during follow-up conversations (member checks) with the researcher.
The structured research interview questions and rationale for the FDIG are stated below (Fowler, 1981). Immediately following the identification of each of Fowler's (1981) categories, is a rationale about the purposes of the questions.

**Part I. Life Review**

1. **Factual data:** Date and place of birth? Number and ages of siblings? Occupation of providing parent or parents? Ethnic, racial, and religious identifications? Characterizations of social class-family of origin and now?

2. **Divide life into chapters:** (Major) segments created by changes or experiences - "turning points" or general circumstances.

3. **In order for me to understand the flow or movement of your life and your way of feeling and thinking about it, what other persons and experiences would be important for me to know about?**

4. **Thinking about yourself at present:** What gives your life meaning? What makes life worth living for?

According to Fowler (1981) the questions identified in this section are straightforward questions about the respondent's family. The researcher asking these questions should be interested in developing an understanding of the respondent's life. The purpose of these questions is to focus the respondent on his or her early development, try to have him or her think about turning points, major events, and the different eras of his or her life, and consider how the respondent's family influenced his or her being and presence in the world. Also, these questions are designed to help the respondent reflect, feel, conceptualize, and project his or her ways of seeing and making sense of life (for example, who would the respondent's say were the most influential people in shaping his or her religious beliefs?). Fowler (1981) asserted that instead of posing intellectual problems or moral dilemmas, his
purpose was to make the respondent's own life experience the subject of the interview. Having the respondent's own life experience as the focus of the interview, according to Fowler (1981), enables researchers to "tune their ears to the respondent's ways of thinking, feeling, and conceptualizing" (p. 308).

Part II. Life-Shaping Experiences and Relationships

1. At present, what relationships seem more important for your life (e.g. intimate, familial, work relationship)?

2. You did/did not mention your father in your discussion of significant relationships.

   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? Explain.

   When you think of your mother...(same question as previous)

   Have your perceptions of your parents changed since you were a child? How?

3. Are there other persons who at earlier times or in the present have been significant in the shaping of your outlook on life?

4. Have you experienced losses, crises or suffering that have changed or "colored" your life in special ways?

5. Have you had moments of joy, ecstasy, peak experiences or breakthrough that have shaped or changed your life (e.g., in nature, in sexual experience, or in the presence of inspiring beauty or communication)?

6. What were the taboos in your early life? How have you lived with or without those taboos? Can you indicate how the taboos in your life have changed? What are the taboos now?

7. What experiences have affirmed your sense of meaning in life? What experiences have shaken or disturbed your sense of meaning?
The questions in the Life Review section were designed to generate an in-depth life review of the respondents. The purpose of these questions was to continue to identify persons, events, special experiences, opportunities, and crises that have significantly affected the ways in which the respondents shape their values and priorities, and how they interpret meaning and significance in their lives (Fowler, 1981). Some of the questions in Part II returned the researcher to questions in Part I for clarification. The purpose in asking these questions was to deal with the way the past appears to the respondents and how they now feel.

This section of questions probed to see how the respondents describe their relationship with their parents. In general, the questions helped elicit the respondents' thinking about relationships, control within relationships, and how certain relationships influenced their being, thinking, feeling, and believing in the world.

**Part III. Present Values and Commitments**

1. Can you describe the beliefs and values or attitudes that are most important in guiding your own life?

2. What is the purpose of human life?

3. Do you feel that some approaches to life are more "true" or right than others? Are there some beliefs or values that all or most people ought to hold and act on?

4. Are there symbols or images or rituals that are important to you?

5. What relationships or groups are most important as support for your values and beliefs?

6. You have described some beliefs and values that have become important to you. How important are they? In what ways do
these beliefs and values find expression in your life? Can you give some specific examples of how and when they have had effect? (e.g. times of crisis, decisions, groups affiliated with, causes invested in, risks and costs of commitments).

7. When you have an important decision or choice to make regarding your life, how do you go about deciding? Example?

8. Is there a "plan" for human lives? Are we — individually or as a species — determined or affected in our lives by power beyond human control?

9. When life seems most discouraging and hopeless, what holds you up or renews your hope? Example?

10. When you think about the future, what makes you feel most anxious or uneasy (for yourself and those you love); for society or institutions; for the world)?

11. What does death mean to you? What becomes of us when we die?

12. Why do some persons and groups suffer more than others?

13. Some people believe that we will always have poor people among us, and that in general life rewards people according to their efforts. What are your feelings about this?

14. Do you feel that human life on this planet will go on indefinitely or do you think it is about to end?

According to Fowler (1981) the purpose of these questions is to come closer to Kohlberg’s (1969) strategy of research by problem-posing. Problem-posing questions require the respondents to think more intensely about their answers (Kohlberg, 1969). A series of questions were asked that invited the respondents to let the researcher hear their thoughts and feelings about a set of issues with which faith development everywhere must deal (Bolen, 1990). Questions were asked about death and its finality and life after death. Questions were asked about the
respondents' views of good and bad. Another example of a problem-posing question is, To whom does the respondent feel accountable in life?

The purpose of these questions was to find out more about the respondents' beliefs, values, and commitment shared and experienced through interpersonal relationships. The researcher was particularly interested in what supported the respondents' beliefs and values, who and what might oppose their values, and how the respondents established a set of beliefs.

The researcher also wanted to know how the respondents make decisions and what their beliefs are about right and wrong and good and bad. Questions in Part III helped the researcher to determine what the prevailing beliefs were of the respondents in relation to their values and commitments.

**Part IV. Religion**

1. Do you have or have you had important religious experiences?
2. What feelings do you have when you think about God?
3. Do you consider yourself a religious person?
4. If you pray, what do you feel is going on when you pray?
5. Do you feel that your religious outlook is "true"? In what sense? Are religious traditions other than your own "true"?
6. What is sin (or sins)? How have your feelings about this changed? How did you feel or think about sin as a child, an adolescent, etc.?
7. Some people believe that without religion morality breaks down. What do you feel about this?
8. Where do you feel that you are changing, growing, struggling or wrestling with doubt in your life at the present time? Where is your growing edge?
9. What is your image (or idea) of mature faith?
The purpose of these questions was to clarify if the respondents perceived themselves as religious or non-religious persons. This section of the Interview Guide provided an opportunity for the respondents to establish congruence in their earlier stages of development through the present and to reach greater depth in discussing their faith. Probing and following up for clarity in this category of questions may lead to insights regarding the respondents' experiences in relation to religious symbols, values, commitments, beliefs, and world views. These questions were used to determine if there is a fit with the respondents' previously stated beliefs and attitudes regarding faith.

Data Analysis

Marshall and Rossman (1989) refer to data analysis in qualitative research as, "the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data" (p. 112). Data analysis and data collection are simultaneous processes in qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). For example, while the researcher is collecting the data he or she may feel it necessary to shift the emphasis of interview questions to gain a deeper or better understanding of what the respondent is saying. Therefore, the researcher must allow himself or herself to be open to hearing and seeing the emergence of new questions, ideas, and linkages from one concept to another from the data. This process of testing the data requires an analysis of the data as it is being collected (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

Because of the large amounts of raw data accumulated in qualitative research, the researcher must establish a practical, feasible way to organize, and manage the data prior to analysis. To assist data organization and management in this study,
the researcher developed a working chart (as part of the raw data in the audit trail) to record significant responses from the respondents related to Fowler's (1981) four categories. An interview summary form was used to record notes on the researcher's observations from the interview and to note questions to follow up on or areas to clarify with the respondents (Appendix G). A document summary form was used to record data from the College catalogs and bulletins (Appendix D).

All of the collected data (transcripts, document summaries), notes and observation sheets were assembled. The data were then reviewed, sorted and organized according to Fowler's (1981) four categories used in focusing this study (e.g., Life Review, Life Shaping Experiences and Relationships, Present Values and Commitments and Religion) and selected thematic areas from Fowler's (1981) FDIG.

**Unitization**

Data analysis in this study involved the use of two processes that assisted the researcher in organizing and managing the raw data. These are unitization and categorization (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Unitizing requires a researcher to read through the raw data repeatedly, intuitively identifying and sorting the relevant units of data until all major units are merged and classified under specific headings or categories (Merriam, 1988). Units can be single words or phrases found in the raw data (in this study transcripts) that have some specific meaning relevant to the subject under study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For example, units in the transcript of Respondent A, "Jack," included "respect for father as a disciplinarian," and "my decisions are predetermined [by God]." Units of other respondents included, "my faith is growing," and "my faith is always changing" (See Table 1, page 69-70, for unitizing procedure).
Table 1. Steps Used By Researcher To Unitize and Categorize Transcript Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1.</th>
<th>Posed Interview Question from Fowler's FDIG (Example: Question No. 7, Category II)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What experiences have affirmed your sense of meaning in life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2.</td>
<td>Reviewed Related Response From Typed Transcript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coded Transcript - Respondent &quot;Jack&quot; (Pseudonym)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think an experience that affirmed meaning for me was <strong>when I joined my fraternity</strong>. That gave me something additional outside of God and my family to work for. <strong>Entering college</strong> is a meaningful experience in the fact that I can live by myself, be outside of my parents' control and really see if my faith is stronger than when I was at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3.</td>
<td>Identified Relevant Units of Data from Transcript (underlined above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cut Units From Transcript and Pasted Onto 3 x 5 Index Cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;when I joined my fraternity&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;entering college&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4.</td>
<td>Compared and Contrasted Relevant Units Pasted Onto Index Cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sorted Unit Cards and Labeled According to Appropriate Fowler Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Category II: Life Shaping Experiences and Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Units: &quot;when I joined my fraternity&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;entering college&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5.</td>
<td>Reviewed Categorized Index Cards and Sorted into Appropriate Thematic Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Units: &quot;when I joined my fraternity&quot; and &quot;entering college&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Category: Category II: Life Shaping Experiences and Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thematic Area: Experiences that have affirmed your sense of meaning (Question No. 7, Category II).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Initial Methodological Decisions:

To categorize the units the researcher used four established categories from Fowler's FDIG.

The researcher identified thirty nine thematic areas from interview questions in the FDIG to further reduce and organize data into more manageable, concrete pieces.

Categorization

Categorization refers to the process of classifying units of data (i.e. words or phrases that are found in the data) according to specific categories or conceptual themes (Merriam, 1988). For the purpose of this study, the researcher used Fowler's (1981) four categories from the FDIG to classify the unit data. These categories are: Life Review, Life Shaping Experiences and Relationships, Present Values and Commitments, and Religion. No new categories were created by the researcher. Using Fowler's (1981) categories provided the researcher with a means to describe the respondents' faith development along consistent lines with the questions in the FDIG protocol.

According to Merriam (1988) categorization involves the intuitive process of the researcher deciding which units of relevant data seem most similar to each other and then classifying each unit under the category it best fits. The researcher decides how to classify units based on his or her perceptions and feelings.

Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggested that it is important to maintain a balance between efficiency and design flexibility in collecting and analyzing qualitative data. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989),
generating categories of data to collect ... can be an important focusing
device for the study. However, tightly structured, highly organized data
gathering and analyzing schemes often filter out the unusual, the
serendipitous-the puzzle that if attended to and pursued, would provide a
recasting of the entire research endeavor. Thus, a balance must be struck
between efficiency considerations and design flexibility. (p. 113)

In addition, they asserted that qualitative data can be difficult to organize and
alternative to establishing new categories from the data, the researcher can use
categories that have been developed by someone else. These suggestions indicate
that it is appropriate for the researcher to use previously established categories, such
as Fowler's (1981) four categories, to focus and provide consistency and
manageability in the data collection and analysis process.

After identifying the units of data within the respondents' transcripts,
relevant units of data were cut from a copy of the typed transcripts and pasted onto
3x5 index cards. Each unit card was then reviewed, noted with the respondents'
pseudonyms, and labeled with one of the appropriate four categories used by
Fowler in his research. For example, one transcript contained the question and
response. "At present what relationships seem more important for your life?" This
is a direct question from the FDIG, Category II. The respondent's answer, "my
relationship with my fiancé," was identified as a unit showing who the respondent
feels is more important in her life. (See Table 1, page 69-70, for categorizing
procedure). Consequently, all identified units of data are placed under a category
Merriam, 1988). In the above instance, the respondent's answer represented a unit of
information and was placed under Category II, Life Shaping Experiences and
Relationships.
Developing Thematic Areas

The researcher identified thematic areas based on Fowler's FDIG to further organize the data into more manageable pieces of information. This was done to facilitate interpretation and analysis of the extensive raw data. There were thirty-four thematic areas identified within this study related to Fowler's FDIG. In addition, five thematic areas emerged from the data based on follow up questions the researcher asked each respondent.

Assignment of the categorized data to the appropriate thematic areas involved the following procedures. The researcher sorted the unit index cards according to Fowler's four categories. The researcher then reviewed and analyzed the content of the data by searching through the unit cards, noting the similarities and differences in the respondents' answers and identifying reoccurring answers. Categorized unit cards were then re-sorted according to the thematic areas they best fit. For example, a category in this study was Category III, Present Values and Commitments. An interview question that was asked each respondent in this category was, Is there a plan for human lives? This question was also identified by the researcher as a thematic area. The recurring response from the five respondents was, Yes, there is a plan for human lives. Because of the frequency of this response the researcher determined that this was a significant unit and that it fit within Category IV under the thematic area, Is there a plan for human lives?

The thematic areas identified for this study are identified below and are used in Chapter IV to provide examples of the respondents' answers.

Category I: Life Review

Thematic Areas (4):
1. Personal Profiles
2. Major Turning Points
3. Persons Who Influenced Their Thinking
4. Life Meaning

**Category II: Life Experiences and Relationships**

Thematic Areas (7):
1. Relationships That Are Important for Your Life
2. Relationships With Parents
3. Persons Who Contributed to Shaping Your Life
4. Other Persons Who Contributed To Your Life
5. Losses, Crises, and Suffering That Have Colored Your Life
6. Taboos in Life
7. Experiences That Have Affirmed or Shaken Your Sense of Meaning

**Category III: Present Values and Commitments**

Thematic Areas (14):
1. Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values That Guide Your Life
2. Purpose of Human Life
3. Are Some Approaches to Life More True Than Others
4. Symbols, Rituals, Images, That Are Important To You
5. Relationships or Groups Most Important To You As Support
6. Beliefs and Values Most Important To You
7. Making Important Decisions
8. Is There A Plan For Human Life
9. What Keeps You Going When Life Is Discouraging
10. Feelings About the Future
11. Meaning of Death
12. Why People Suffer
13. Feelings About Poor People
14. Will Life Continue Indefinitely

**Category IV: Religion and God**

Thematic Areas (14):
1. Important Religious or Conversion Experiences
2. Feelings About God
3. Are You Religious
4. Do You Pray
5. Is Your Religious Outlook True
6. Definition of Sin
Establishing Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research means that the researcher has considered and adhered to certain standards that assure the value, applicability, consistency and neutrality of the research study (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Lincoln and Guba (1985) pose several standards for qualitative research. These are: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Each of these standards is discussed below.

Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility refers to the accuracy with which the researcher provides his or her interpretation of the respondents' words obtained during the data collection process. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provided three strategies for assuring credibility in a qualitative study. These are peer debriefing, triangulation, and member checks.

Merriam (1988) defined peer debriefing as the use of a colleague to examine the findings of the study. The peer debriefer used for most of the study is an ordained minister who completed several courses on faith development theory.
while attending seminary. (The first peer debriefer was unable to continue because of personal time conflicts). The second peer debriefer was chosen because he has an understanding of faith development and had a willingness to participate in this process. Several peer debriefings were held during the months of April 1992 through completion of the study. The peer debriefer was helpful in providing insight on interpretations of the respondent's responses, identifying questions for follow-up, and providing another perspective on the methods being used in the study.

Triangulation involves the use of multiple sources of data or data collection methods, as well as multiple investigators (Merriam, 1988). For this study, the researcher used interviews with five respondents as the primary data source and document analysis as the secondary data collection method. All of the respondents were asked to answer all of the questions in the FDIG. This was done to establish some consistency in the data collection process.

The use of member checks to assure credibility involves allowing the respondents an opportunity to review their actual words and representations of their words to determine if conclusions and interpretations made by researchers are plausible (Merriam, 1988). During the interview, the researcher periodically summarized what he thought he heard from the respondents and sought clarification if needed. Each respondent was provided a copy of their entire transcript and draft of the findings. He or she was asked to read the transcript and draft of findings, make comments or notes and recommend changes. There were no major changes in the transcript data or findings as a result of member checks.
Transferability

Marshall and Rossman (1989) referred to transferability as a qualitative concept proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), in which the applicability of research findings in one setting is determined by someone other than the original researcher. Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggested that transferability should not be construed to mean generalization of findings to other populations or settings. To meet the standard of transferability, the researcher included in the study substantial interview data to provide a detailed description of the perceived faith development of the respondents. The study also includes background information for each respondent and a description of the midwestern church-related college which served as the setting for the study. In addition, the researcher included in the discussion of analysis and findings, a detailed summary of the respondents' discussions of the interview questions and actual quotes of the respondents.

Dependability and Confirmability

The standard of dependability takes into consideration that changes can occur in the conditions under which a study is being conducted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Confirmability refers to the objectivity of the data (i.e., would someone other than the researcher be able to verify the results of the study using methods and procedures followed by the original researcher) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The use of an audit trail enables an independent evaluator to verify the findings of a study by reviewing the decisions and methodological procedures used by the researcher to conduct the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1989; Merriam, 1988). The researcher used the following procedures to assure that he made appropriate judgments during the study and that the data can
be verified (to meet the tests of dependability and confirmability). The decisions and methodological procedures used for this study were included in the audit trail. They include: audio tapes of interviews, transcripts for each respondent, copies of transcripts with respondents' comments, a list of categories and thematic areas, document summary forms, interview summary forms, unit cards, written notes on methods, ideas, and questions, peer debriefers' comments and reactions, and various drafts of the research report.

Human Subjects

The Human Subjects Committee of Iowa State University reviewed the proposed research and gave permission for the study to be conducted. In addition, institutional approval to conduct the study was given by the midwestern church-related college that was the setting of the study.

All proposed correspondence sent to each respondent, as well as the FDIG, were provided for examination by the Human Subjects Committee (see Human Subjects Committee Report, Appendix A). At the request of the committee, respondents were informed that the researcher was an ordained Methodist minister. The respondents were given the option to withdraw from the study if being interviewed by a minister presented conflicts or barriers for them.

Reporting the Data

In Chapter IV the researcher presented the findings of the study. Case reports were provided on the perceived faith development of five respondents who attend a midwestern church-related college. The report was written in narrative form and includes: a statement of the purpose of the study, biographical descriptions for each respondent, a description of the college at which the study was conducted, narrative
reports of the respondent's interviews, an analysis and discussion of the findings of the study and recommendations for further research and practice.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of data obtained from the semi-structured interviews with the five respondents and a review of documents (see Chapter III). The purpose of this study is to provide a detailed description of the perceived faith development of the five respondents.

The primary data presented in this chapter were collected through audiorecorded interviews between the interviewer and the respondents. Documents were reviewed and analyzed as a secondary data source.

The researcher negotiated with the respondents regarding their concerns to limit confidential information deemed too personal to include in this study. They expressed their concerns about the confidentiality of certain names, (which have been changed in the narratives) and their hometown locations, which were also changed or deleted. Other names used in this study are assigned to protect the confidentiality of the respondents' associates.

What follows in this chapter is not the typical results section of a dissertation, but rather a portrait of individuals explaining their faith development. The organization of the chapter is divided into five parts. First, the chapter begins with a description of the setting of the study, a midwestern church-related college.

In the second section, five case reports are presented in narrative form. The purpose of providing the narratives is to give a detailed description of the respondents' responses to the interview items in the FDIG. In addition, the narratives illuminate each respondent's statements about their faith development.
The third section is an overview and summary of the five respondents' narratives. This information is presented for the purpose of providing clarity to the data. The narratives are described, discussed and summarized. Similarities and differences in the data obtained through the semi-structured interviews are compared and contrasted. The data are described according to Fowler's four categories.

The fourth section provides an analysis and discussion of the findings using Fowler's theory of faith development as a theoretical background for the discussion. The analysis and discussion of findings are derived from the narratives.

The fifth section is a conclusion of the entire chapter.

Setting of the Study

Midwestern Church-Related College


The setting of this study was a midwestern church-related college (hereafter referred to as midwestern church-related college or the College). This midwestern, church-related college was established in 1860 by the first session of the Western Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Classes started in the fall of the same year with primary instructional emphasis in religious matters. The college was named after an outstanding churchman whose involvement in the political matters of the United States helped him gain recognition among men like Abraham Lincoln, Edwin M. Stanton, and Salmon P. Chase (College Bulletin, 1991-1993).
The college is located in a midwestern state approximately twelve miles from a major metropolitan area. Although the college is in a small town, students enjoy the values of both a small town and a large city.

The college defines itself as a midwestern church-related, liberal arts college, primarily residential, co-educational, and mostly undergraduate. The mission of the college is seen mostly in its commitment to:

- a teaching and learning process which enables students to develop the critical intellectual skills by which they may grow as free, responsible and fulfilled individuals in the world of work, service and scholarship; and those standards of the Judeo-Christian tradition and the Methodist Church which guide members of the college community on issues of personal integrity, moral responsibility, social justices, human sensitivity and citizenship. (College Bulletin, 1991-1993, p. 6)

This church-related college provides a climate of learning in which students may identify and accomplish their own goals within the context of a dynamic community (College Bulletin, 1991-1993). The College's educational programs rest on the conviction that creative self-realization, sensitivity to values and issues, knowledge of the heritage of mankind, and a critical awareness of the relationship of the individual to a society are best engendered by freedom with responsibility (College Bulletin, 1991-1993). At this church-related college, "we believe that all those who live and study within the total college community make a positive and distinctive contribution" (College Bulletin, 1991-1993, p. 7). The college has a current enrollment of 1,700 full-time undergraduate students.

More than seventy percent of the College faculty have earned doctorates or the highest credentials awarded in their fields. Classes are taught by professors who are considered experienced scholars in their fields of study (College Bulletin, 1991-1993).
The College operates on a 4-4-1 calendar year with classes starting in late August and continuing through April. A three week intense summer session occurs during the month of May. Students pursue internships or study abroad opportunities during the three week period.

This midwestern church-related college offers 31 degree programs leading to a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree. There are at least ten pre-professional programs (e.g., Pre-law, theology, veterinary medicine, and dentistry). The academic emphasis of the College is on a strong liberal arts education (College Bulletin, 1991-1993).

This midwestern church-related college advocates the whole person approach to student development. It is clearly articulated that choice and individual responsibility are paramount to developing oneself. For example:

The educational climate at this college is developed around both the expectations of the faculty and the expectations of the students. Faculty expectations are expressed by a designed curriculum which is intended to provide the framework and context within which students pursue their own intellectual goals and direction. Students have freedom to assume responsibility for their academic life, social life, religious life, and for their physical well-being. To take the responsibility for one's academic life implies choice and the setting of priorities. (College Bulletin, 1991-1993, p. 6)

This midwestern church-related college encourages student involvement for social, cultural, religious, academic, and moral development. The College attempts to assist students in developing a healthy respect for life and health. Emphasis on student life at this institution is placed on the development of the whole person which includes opportunities for students to explore all areas of religious life (College Bulletin, 1991-1993, p. 6). For example, there is an active Religious Life Council selected by the students and advised by the college chaplain. The Religious
Life Council is responsible for planning religious activities for the student body for an entire academic year.

The College promotes the opportunity for students to acquire information and experience about other people and ideas. It is stated that the College affirms equal opportunity for all students, faculty, and staff without regard to sex, race, ethnic origin, political views or religion (College Bulletin, 1991-1993). The College seeks to provide a rich and humane environment which reflects the different cultural heritages and perspectives of its students. While the College embraces cultural diversity through its programs, no effort is made on the part of the College to support programs of study which promote separation to the exclusion of any racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, or political group. The College is committed to the philosophy of pluralism and community rather than separation (College Bulletin, 1991-1993). For example, the College promotes the George Washington Carver scholars program which is designed to increase its student diversity.

Accreditations and Memberships

The College is governed by an independent and self-perpetuating Board of Trustees and is fully accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and the University Senate of the Methodist Church. The Board of Trustees is made up of church executives, laypersons, corporate representatives, politicians, community persons and business executives. The Department of Music is an accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Music. The College is recognized and approved by the State Department of Education and is a member of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Its alumnae are admitted to membership in the American Association of University Women. The College holds institutional membership in the American Assembly of Collegiate
Schools of Business, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, Council of Independent Colleges, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and the Association of American Colleges. Accreditation and membership are important to this study because it illustrates the commitment of the church to remain church-related to the University Senate of the Methodist Church, as well as express an institutional commitment to secular standards of education (College Bulletin, 1991-1993).

Case Reports

The case reports in this section of Chapter IV are presented as narratives that tell a story about the development of faith for each respondent. Fowler (1983) concluded that there is an element of faith which informs and gives context for that which is of ultimate importance in the individual's life. Fowler referred to this element as "master stories." He further stated,

Our master stories are the characterizations of the patterns of power-in-action that disclose their ultimate meanings in our lives. These master stories are those narrative accounts which form a core of truth around which an individual organizes his or her life. They are those stories that are used to interpret and respond to the events that impinge on an individual's life. They provide a perspective, a framework, into which an individual places the events and relationships of his or her life. (Fowler, 1981, p. 277)

Fowler defines "master story" very succinctly when he says,

Your master story is the answer you give to the questions of what life is about, or who's really in charge here, or how do I live to make my life a worthy, good one. It's a stance you take toward life and the way that stance affects your way of relating to the world and to others in it. (Fowler, 1983, p. 60)

The purpose of providing the respondents' narratives is to give a detailed description of each respondent's faith development. More specifically, the
narratives directly relate to the research question for this study. The research question is, "What do the respondents in this study say about their faith development?

There are five narratives in this section. Each narrative is presented separately. The five respondents' narratives are identified in numerical and alphabetical order. For example, the respondents are: Narrative I, Respondent A (Jack); Narrative II, Respondent B (Michael); Narrative III, Respondent C (Paige); Narrative IV, Respondent D (Vanessa); and Narrative V, Respondent E (Maggie). The respondents selected their own pseudonyms to protect their identity and assure confidentiality.

Narrative I- Respondent A (Jack)

Jack is a 19 year old white male. He is a sophomore at the College, majoring in economics and management. Jack grew up in central Iowa and described his family as a middle-class farm family. Jack's parents did not attend college. His mother is a homemaker and works part-time in the home as a day care provider. His father is a farmer and works full time at a local factory. Jack has one brother, who is 22 years old; he also has a 13 year old sister.

Jack was exposed to religion, church, God and faith at an early age. For example, he stated, "my family, as far as I can remember, has always been involved in the church and community." Jack's family members are active in the Christian Reformed Church.

Major turning points in Jack's life occurred during his youth, particularly in high school. He said, "as a freshman in high school you are a person of low status." The biggest adjustment or turning point for Jack was going away to college. He
stated, "as a freshman you have to earn your way through school, and I think the biggest change for me has been coming to college."

Although Jack did not identify turning points or incidents of tragedy, he responded by saying, "there's been virtually no tragedy of significance that occurred during my formative years with family, friends, or other close associates."

Throughout the interview with Jack he spoke of being a conscientious student who relied upon his family for direction and guidance in life. Jack believes that his family assisted him in dealing with the developmental changes that boys and girls adjust to in primary, middle and senior high school.

Jack's enthusiasm about going to church as a youth is evident throughout his discussion. He talked about the impact of catechism on his life during his Sunday school days. As a matter of fact, he concluded, "I personally received more out of Sunday school than Sunday morning worship service." Sunday school for Jack reinforced his family values about God and religion.

Jack stated that he was raised to always do his best, never lie, never steal, or engage in premarital sexual activity. He still subscribes to most, if not all, of these values and beliefs.

The persons Jack described as having an impact on his life were his parents, minister and school teachers. Jack seemed to idolize his father as his most significant role model or the person having the most influence on his life. His father taught him "the value of hard work, earning and saving a dollar, how to be a sportsman and how to lead a simple life and enjoy what God has provided for humanity."
Family is very important to Jack. He described the family as "the single most thing that gives his life meaning." Other important persons in Jack's life that provide him with a sense of meaning are his fraternity members and his peers at church.

An interesting dynamic in Jack's life is his relationship to God. For Jack, "life is worth living to glorify God and share your faith with others." God is the single most important relationship outside of family for this respondent. Although his relationships with members of his fraternity and family are important, Jack believes that his relationship with "God is most important."

Jack was very outspoken about his commitment to God. He seemed to have some very absolute views about "glorifying or living for God." His ultimate goal in life is "to please God," he stated. Jack stated numerous times that he tries hard to let his life be a reflection of God to others. This is evident through his commitment as a student chaplain in his fraternity and through his involvement in religious life activities at college.

Jack described both of his parents as hardworking persons. He views his mother as a loving, nurturing person and his father as a hardworking man with a sense of humor who is always concerned about the family's welfare. Jack's father "knows how to get things done." He leads the family in prayer and bible study. His father is described as a punctual man who taught Jack the value of time.

Although Jack subscribes to his family's values, he stated that sometimes his father's discipline was a bit strong. Also, Jack indicated he has no desire to return to the family farm. Nevertheless, Jack admitted that his parents have changed as he and his siblings have grown up to be adults.

Overall, Jack described his childhood as very normal and routine. Jack stated that because of his childhood, he recognizes beauty in the simple things of life. He
said, "I recognize the beauty of creation, created by God." The joy of Jack's life "is receiving a spiritual message from God or having God reveal himself through hymns and scripture." As far as intimate sexual experiences in life are concerned, Jack is waiting and prayerfully looking to find the "right woman."

Jack grew up with some specific taboos in life. Among the taboos Jack was taught are "don't work on Sundays," "keep your room clean," "don't touch the car windows," "be neat," and "don't leave tracks around." He stated, "things of that nature have been taboos for me while growing up." These taboos are held by Jack today. He seems to have the desire to share these same values with his own children one day. However, Jack seems to have abandoned the taboo that you can't do anything on Sundays. Likewise, Jack's father respects the decisions he makes to do activities on Sunday outside of going to church.

Entering college and joining his fraternity have been affirming, positive experiences for Jack. These experiences provided Jack with the opportunity to develop his independence outside of the family, "especially outside of my parents' control," he stated. Key relationships that have shaped and given meaning to Jack's life are "family, fraternity, college friends, Sunday school teachers and his parents."

Jack did not describe any losses or crises that significantly colored (created crisis in) his life. He expressed gratitude to God for having blessed his family to lead a simple life and not experience any significant misfortunes.

In describing the beliefs and values that have been most important in guiding Jack's life he said, "love God, love all, do and be the best you can be, and not break any of the ten commandments." Jack readily admitted that these beliefs have been passed on by family and church. He accepts these values as his own and does not indicate a desire to change any of his beliefs. Also, Jack stated that he believes there
is a wonderful heaven awaiting him after this life. A goal of Jack's is to get to heaven. In his estimation, "getting to heaven means living for God and faithfully doing God's will."

Jack admitted that although his beliefs and attitudes have a strong Christian influence, he believes other "non-Christians" can make it to heaven. Although Jack expressed very little formal knowledge about other religious groups, he thinks that being judgmental about other religions is not the right attitude to have. As a matter of principle, he stated that other groups may believe differently from him, but all have the same basic values and beliefs.

Jack characterized the purpose of human life as "serving God to the best of your abilities." Jack did not discuss other purposes of human life. Jack's attitude about serving God is that it is the only way to heaven. For him, being a doctor, a lawyer or other professional is not all that important if you don't use your profession to the glory of God. Incidentally, after a few moments of reflection Jack did agree that there are other purposes to human life, such as "helping others, continuing the species, and making the world a better place to live."

Jack does not seem to mind if his views are not valued by his peers. He hopes that his peers can accept his views because in his opinion, "they probably would not go to heaven." Jack is optimistic that the Christian life provides a better approach to life. Nevertheless, he is willing to admit that other approaches to life could be true or correct. For Jack, "Christians are so much happier." It is belief in God, according to Jack, that makes life so much more complete. Jack's overall view is that there are beliefs and values that all persons should value. It does not matter to Jack if you are Christian or non-Christian, we should all try to "love one another."
Jack primarily stated that through prayer he is able to make the decisions that are most important to him in life. Learning to pray is something Jack learned from his parents and church. Jack stated that there are some symbols, rituals and images that are important to him as a Christian. He became familiar with these symbols, rituals and images by participating in Catechism. Jack's symbols, rituals, and images are prayer, the Bible, the cross, going to church, family, his pastor and being around other Christians. Most important to Jack as he gets older is the "symbolism expressed in the rituals of baptism, communion and through (his) profession of faith."

Jack repeatedly looks to family, friends, other close Christian friends, his church and his fraternity to help provide support and strength for his beliefs. "When times are tough I depend on their support." Jack believes that God has predetermined a plan for all human existence. "God has a plan for each individual life," according to Jack. "God controls our lives." Jack does not hesitate for a moment to express his views about God controlling the world and human life. According to Jack, sin is inevitable and God knows it. "But, Christians should not keep going against God's will by sinning . . . one day it may be too late."

Jack responded that when he feels hopeless, he turns to God. For Jack, "God is there supporting you in your high and low points." Jack shared a situation with me in his life when he arrived at college. He was lonely and friendless. He prayed and God sent him friends to talk with. Although Jack is able to place God in every situation of life, he does not attribute bad things that happen to people as an act of God.

Jack's anxiety about the future seems to be internalized to self. He expressed concern about a mate, a family and a career. He stated that he is not anxious about
the world because that's in God's control. But, the rise of Satanism, the worship of
the devil and godless people in society do seem to make him anxious. Death for Jack
is a passage to heaven. Therefore, he doesn't seem anxious about dying at this time.
He believes if you have a godly life, you have nothing to fear. According to Jack, "if
you live by the Bible you having nothing to fear." However, Jack had a difficult time
expressing what might happen to those persons who have never been exposed to the
Bible. The question of suffering in the world and living with poor people seemed to
complicate Jack's understanding of God and goodness. He does believe that God
gives humanity suffering, but that "people are poor because of the economic and
political circumstances in society."

Life on this planet will one day end, according to Jack's interpretation and
understanding of the Bible. When the end will occur is not known, but Jack believes
"it is inevitable." Jack is unwavering and unmovable in his beliefs and expressed
them with a strong degree of certainty. Jack is proud of the fact that his parents
raised him as a Christian. Throughout his life, God has been a major influence. For
Jack, each day he experiences God is like a conversion.

According to Jack, God is love, respect and a great big "awe." God created the
earth, controls it and will one day return to gather his fold. As a child, God was a
big man living in the sky, with gray hair and a long beard. As a young adult, Jack
believes that God is three in one, controlling the world. In other words," God is
father, son, and holy spirit." Jack stated that he feels the presence of God each day in
his life. Jack does not question his religious outlook. He believes firmly in being a
Christian. He does seem tolerant of other religions. Likewise, Jack knows that sin
exists. Sin according to Jack, is breaking the commandments outlined in the Bible
and going against God's will.
According to Jack, "morality would not necessarily break down without religion." Jack applauded the fact that there are probably more moral people in society than Christians. As for himself, Jack admitted that he struggles in his own life not to commit sin. He is also wrestling with doubt about his future life.

Jack believes his faith is growing and changing each day. He views his faith as growing through others, the people he comes in contact with. Mature faith for Jack is having the willingness to submit your life to God and do all that is humanly and spiritually possible to please God. Given his own understanding about faith, Jack believes his faith is mature and stated he would rank his faith between a four and a five. Although faith is difficult, Jack admitted, "I'm willing to do my best to get to heaven."

Narrative II - Respondent B (Michael)

Michael is a 22 year old white male student at the College. He is a junior majoring in international studies with an emphasis in politics and government. Michael's family lives in the midwest. His father was a physician before his untimely death in May of 1991. Michael's mother was a homemaker for several years while working as a part-time registered nurse. Currently, Michael's mother is working full-time as a community school coordinator in his hometown. Michael has one brother, who is a senior in high school.

Michael described his family's ethnic background as Irish. He stated, "my family is middle to upper middle class." Both of Michael's parents received a college education. According to Michael, his immediate family are members of the Methodist Church. Michael wants career to pursue career opportunities as a diplomat in the Foreign Service. He is fluent in Russian, Spanish, and German.
Michael is a very active student at college, participating in tennis, special topics committee, working for the Dean of the College and serving on the Religious Life Council at the College. Also, Michael is an active member of two honorary societies. According to Michael, this year is somewhat different from his previous years in college. He indicated that he has had more time to grow in his personal development and faith.

In discussing the questions from the FDIG, Michael stated, "There have been many life shaping experiences in my life." Turning points as a means of discussing life shaping experiences is not what Michael prefers to call it. He stated, turning points for him "are moments of experiencing God and can be life shaping." The death of his grandfather and his father and the birth of his brother are all described by Michael as life shaping experiences. During Michael's early childhood, his grandfather died of a heart attack. He says, "I knew that grandfathers died." His father's death was untimely due to diabetes, although he feels "God's will was done." Michael described the death of his father as a major turning point for him and the remainder of his family. He believes his family is still mourning, but at the same time trying to move forward with their lives.

Other life shaping experiences for Michael were going to high school and becoming a student leader. He believes becoming a student leader made him a "more influential person" among his peers. As a youth, Michael was very active in his local Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF). He was treasurer of the group in junior high school and became the group's president during his senior year of high school.

Growing up and participating in church were family activities for Michael. His father and mother served in key leadership roles in their local church. Michael
recalled participating in youth camps and learning the Bible through church and family. He considers his parents as being devout Christians.

Important persons in Michael's life during his formative years were his grandparents, his parents, and his minister. According to Michael, "my parents definitely have had a huge role in shaping me as a person. "Also, my minister became like a mentor to me." Michael explained that the church was very important to him as a child. "I understood the church through my family, but as I got older, it's a much more personal understanding." Michael admitted that his understanding of faith, God, and the church was very literal as a child. As a young adult, he feels he has grown in his understanding of the Bible and what it means.

The things that have given Michael's life meaning are his church, his parents, and having "a very embracing childhood." He stated that his parents made sure not to spoil him. Michael described his family values as moderately conservative. According to Michael, "doing good and being good in the world" are what makes life worth living for him. Michael believes that he has learned a lot from tragedy in life. He stated, "tragedy will enrich a person." He discussed his father's death as an example of the impact of tragedy. His father's death has helped him understand what it means for a person to die.

The important relationships in Michael's life are with his parents, his brother, his grandparents, and his friends in college. He stated that there are other older adult friends who have had an influence on his life.

Michael's relationship with his father is believed to have been a good one. Although his father worked a lot, Michael enjoyed the family trips and sitting and learning from his father about life in general and his medical practice. Michael described his relationship with his mother as a changing one. Since the death of his
father, he recognizes that his mother needs to be cared for. He believes he has observed his mother in times of vulnerability and that she is not as strong as he thought in dealing with life crises. The death of Michael's father was traumatic for him and his entire family. He has experienced significant losses through his father's and grandfather's suffering. Discussing the death of loved ones appears to be an emotionally charged topic for Michael. Several times during the interview he shed tears of sorrow and joy. He expressed contentment in knowing that his father's suffering is over and that "God took him from it all." Through his relationships with family, the campus minister, his minister at home and other adult friends, Michael indicated he is organizing his life. In addition, he expressed frustration with his personal career goals in life because of his uncertainty about his future. Michael's uncertainties about the future involve his choice of a career, having a spouse and what will become of his immediate family.

Michael believed that peak experiences in his life were associated with his travels abroad. Michael's travel abroad has helped him to understand the world and people of the world as being a part of a global community.

Michael discussed the early taboos of his life in terms of the discipline he received from his parents. As a child, he remembers being grounded by his parents for leaving the yard without permission. However, he openly admitted his home was not as strict as some of his peers. Michael believes he has adopted many of the same ideas that his parents had about parenting. For example, "I adhere to the same principles and I hope I can be like my parents someday."

Some of Michael's guiding principles in life are family, going to church, understanding others, and keeping an open mind. Also, Michael says he's added one more principle to his life in young adulthood. That principle is the value of
diversity. Without question, Michael's travels abroad have affirmed his sense of meaning in life. The death of his loved ones has shaken (disturbed) his sense of meaning, but he accepts their deaths as part of God's will, "whatever that may be."

During our second interview Michael discussed the questions in Category III pertaining to his present values and commitments. He revealed the inner conflict he experiences in reconciling his religion with his political views. For example, he believes society should not have a welfare program such as the one that exists today. However, he does not believe that people will be that caring towards assisting people in need if welfare didn't exist. He stated, "my Republican views don't often fit well with my values about helping others and responding to world crises."

The purpose of human life for Michael is simple. "Life should be simple and the point should be that the purpose of life is doing the will of God. Simply, that's what life should be." Michael believes that Christianity is a basic approach to human life. He asserted that the values and beliefs of Christianity should be practiced by most people, even if they are not Christians, "because Christian values (i.e., love, respect, fairness) are almost universal in other religions." Michael expressed a level of tolerance and appreciation for the major religions of the world, while simultaneously reconciling them with his Christian world views. He believes "other religions have a lot to offer to humanity."

Throughout Michael's life he recalled the symbols, rituals, and images that stood out to him as messages of the Christian faith. His symbols are Jesus, the Bible, the beauty of God's orchestration of the four seasons, peace, and the ritual of communion. For Michael these are powerful symbols which have enhanced his faith.
Michael believes that the groups he is involved with on campus provide support for his values and beliefs. For example, he stated that he feels the religious life council and scripture and supper (Wednesday night service) have helped him in his faith development.

Michael's values and beliefs are very important to him and he recognizes a need to spend quality time doing and meditating upon the things that are important to him. Important decisions for Michael are made by listening to the voice of God for direction. He consults with God about decisions he should make.

Michael does not believe there is a plan for human lives. He believes God has given us free choice to make decisions, to choose death or life in this world or in the world to come. According to Michael, we choose life by doing God's will. Michael believes "God is the supreme being that orders and directs creation, but he gives us choices to make as Christians." Michael's rationalization or theologizing about God is evident in how God fits with his own life struggles. When life is difficult for Michael, he relies on God, friends, and family to help pull him through, as was the case during his father's death.

As a young adult, Michael seemed anxious about world affairs and his career aspirations. He yearns for success, but wonders if a nuclear holocaust is about to occur. Death, for Michael, is a difficult faith issue. Michael's experience with grief has left him to wonder at times about immortality and what God means by talking about "the kingdom of heaven." "I'm not sure what happens after death," Michael said. Likewise, Michael's beliefs about the poor and suffering masses create a paradox or dichotomy in his own value system. In one instance he stated, "the poor ought not be lazy, but all poor people and suffering persons are not lazy." Michael stated that his Republican and conservative ideas have influenced his religious
outlook immensely. The bottom line for Michael is that good may still come forth from suffering.

Michael believes that human life on this planet will one day end, because it is a matter of evolution that God set in motion at the time of creation. In expressing his views about his own religious experiences, Michael stated that his current Christian perspective is based on all of his previous experiences and relationships in life.

"Living for God is a continuous process," he stated. According to Michael, there is strength and power in knowing God and this is what he feels when he thinks of God. Michael believes "prayer is a two way communication between the person and God." Michael affirms his belief in prayer and the power of prayer. His example of using prayer during his father's illness is cogently stated.

As far as his religious outlook is concerned, he believes his views are true and that others' views can also be true. Sin, Michael believes, "is doing something God wouldn't want you to do." Michael did not compromise his views on the issue of sin, although he stated that he developed his own levels or classification of sins. For example, "it may be ok to lie if the situation warrants it." Nevertheless, Michael does not agree with the idea that without religion morality breaks down. He feels that there are many moral people in society, and they will continue to exist even if religion fails to exist.

Michael indicated he is struggling with the biblical issue of immortality, but, he believes that growth is a natural outcome of his struggles. Sometimes he wonders if Jesus was truly the Messiah. This respondent recognizes and seems to appreciate his growing, changing, and struggling in life as God given expectations or measures that he must contend with to grow in faith.
In ranking his faith, Michael believes he is at stage five of Fowler's six stages of faith development. He considered his response "cocky," because of his lack of knowledge about Fowler's stages, but believes he is strong in faith. If he had to choose between staying here on earth or going to be with God in heaven, he would take the secure means and go to heaven. According to Michael his faith is very mature and continues to grow as he experiences life.

Narrative III - Respondent C (Paige)

Paige is a 22 year old white female. She is a graduating senior (May 1992) at the College. Her major is communication. She hopes to find employment in human resources or journalism at a church-related college as her career grows. Paige comes from a family of six, including one brother, three sisters, and her parents. Paige grew up in a rural farming community in the midwest. Her family comes from a German background.

Paige was reared as a Catholic. Her religious outlook and influences during her formative years were shaped by the teachings she received in the Catholic church. Paige stated she is a "proud" Catholic. She claimed "being Catholic and Christian is all the same." Paige's parents are very active in her home church. Her mother is the church secretary and pianist. Her father serves on several boards. Paige's father works for Iowa Utilities. She described her family socioeconomic background as middle class, but "they're the average base."

Of all of the respondents, Paige expressed the most interest in participating in this study. Her initial contact with the researcher revealed that she felt compelled to participate in the study. She stated, "I'm doing this not for you to get your
dissertation, but to help me understand my own faith. People need to talk about their faith."

As a child Paige thought the church was an important symbol. Through her parents, her priest, her TEC (Teens Encounter Christ) groups, as well as grandparents, belief in God became the center of her values. Although Paige indicated she struggles with understanding what faith is, she believes it is necessary to have faith if you desire to go to heaven.

Paige discussed some of the major turning points in her life as being the tragedy she experienced through the loss of loved ones and close peers. She cited two particular situations, one involving the death of her two best friends and the other involving the death of a close family friend. Paige stated, "I now realize what the loss of a loved one can do to help you understand your own life in relation to God."

Another major turning point in Paige's life is recounted in her narratives as she discussed her experience in coming to know God. She described this experience of knowing God as a real awakening. She said her life was a struggle during her senior year in high school, but through TEC she met God and he helped her to structure her life before going to college.

Paige did not become angry at God for the tragedy she experienced in her life. "God obviously had a reason," she stated. The reason is to help her to know "him" (God) and to help her understand the value and blessing of life. Although going to church was a family endeavor for Paige, she admitted "I never really knew God for myself."

Paige recited the basic values of her life as, "trust, love God, be honest, live by the Ten Commandments, respect self and others, and always do God's will." She
believes that and living by these values leads to peace in one's life. Paige's desire to share her faith is being fulfilled by serving as a resource person for TEC groups.

However, there is a contradiction in Paige's life. She admitted not always living up to scriptural expectations, for example, not always being truthful and honest. "But, I'm always praying for forgiveness. I don't want to make God angry with me," she says.

Possessing faith, in Paige's life, is synonymous with belonging to a Christian community. Community is defined by Paige as sharing, trusting, and loving each other. Trust is very important to Paige. Trust is one of her basic values along with being honest and truthful. For example, she believes that her views, which are the views of her parents and her church, "are absolute." Through her parents and the church she has learned how to trust God.

Paige talked about her responsibility as a Christian. Responsibility includes living a God-fearing life, not committing any sin, and having good relationships with the people she encounters. She stated, "I always want to reach out and help people . . . the poor, the homeless, the person who doesn't take communion as well as the person who is struggling to know God." Paige explained she is constantly giving of herself because that is the way her parents reared her through their example at home.

Paige spoke about positive relationships with her parents and siblings. Family is very important to her. She expressed her fears about losing her parents, although her parents just turned 45 years old. This fear she expressed is associated with the fear and anxiety she experienced in losing grandparents and other significant loved ones. Now she knows "life doesn't last forever."
Growing up, Paige avoided what she believes were outward expressions of sin, such as lying, stealing, and drinking. She believes her standards and expectations of herself and other Christians should be higher than those of non-Christians. Yet, she maintained, "I don't want to be the first person who stands in judgment of anyone."

Paige characterized her college years as being full of commitments and activities. She serves in a variety of situations as an officer in several different groups. She participates in the religious life council. She was working at the chaplain's office and was completing a semester long internship in a hospital during the time of her interview. Although her life is busy, she admitted, "I would not have it any other way, because I enjoy what I'm doing."

Paige believes there are contradictions of beliefs among the various communities that she chooses to be involved with. For example, she chose to be a member of a sorority, but believes many of her sorority sisters are not as "Christian" as they claim to be. For that reason, she describes herself as "very personal." Most times, Paige admitted, she chooses to stay to herself. Nevertheless, she believes that there is much to thank God for and hopefully, he will help her to bring her various communities together. Community is another value for Paige that provides life-shaping experiences and relationships.

Paige conveyed a parallel between the relationships she has with God to her relationship with her parents. She said, "my parents are there to protect me, so is God. My father is a man, so is God. God is big and my father is big." She believes she is more at peace or secure with God in her life as well as being close to her parents. Paige's images of God developed as a child. She is hoping that having a
career and a family will not separate her from her parents. Whatever she ends up doing in life, Paige wants to serve God and glorify him.

Paige believes that the persons having the most influence in helping to shape her outlook on life are older adults. Paige contended, "people in my own age category seem superficial." A major loss in her life was the death of her grandpa. She talks about always feeling his presence as if it was God in the room. She remembers the sage advice that her grandpa gave her, "if you have faith in God, you will have everything else."

The greatest moments of joy in Paige's life occurred when she went to a TEC group. She said, "I find joy in nature, family vacations and watching other people grow in Christ," she says. Another joy for Paige would be to raise a family as large as her parents' family and share with them her values about God and the church.

Paige stated that one of her taboos in life is to not disobey the Ten Commandments. She claimed she has never allowed her friends to influence her thinking about do's and don'ts. Nevertheless, during the interview she constantly felt a need to apologize about one incident. Paige claimed she would not have sinned, but she thought she was in love. Paige believes she has learned from that experience and "it won't happen again until God's ready." Premarital sex is a big taboo for Paige. It goes against her church teachings and what she believes. Paige admitted, "I never want to let God down again." The sin of premarital sex, as Paige described it, has destroyed so many relationships with God.

The things, persons, and groups that have been affirming for Paige are good friends, her parents, TEC, and being a faithful Christian. Paige believes the loss of loved ones has disturbed her meaning of life. She believes if she could model her
life after the college chaplain, she would be a good Christian. Although Paige believes she is called to do God's will, she admitted, "I don't want to be a nun."

Paige was not reluctant in discussing her present values and commitments. Belief in God is her strongest value. She has added love, trust, and honesty to her value system. "Those three, including God, are the main morals and values guiding my life." Paige believes things such as drinking and lying are wrong and that the church does not condone them. She defined sin as something God wouldn't do. Paige recognizes that if you sin, you should go to God and he will forgive you, "just don't keep doing it," she said.

According to Paige, the purpose of human life is to show God's love. She stated, "God is the creator of human life and human life is a sign of his love." However, Paige believes there are other approaches to human life that appear to be better, and in some instances better than her own life. Paige's opinion of "better" does not imply material and monetary wealth, but richer lives being at peace with God. Paige hopes that by living a Christ-like life she will become a fuller, richer person.

There are important symbols and rituals that Paige cherishes. For example, she feels her sorority embraces certain religious symbols that are important. Rituals like communion and baptism are important to her. Most importantly, Paige believes the cross and communion symbolize "receiving God in my life."

The relationships and groups that are most important in providing support for Paige are "people who have similar beliefs, the church (as a group), her family, and her campus minister." The beliefs that Paige subscribes to are very important. Although she admitted "falling short," her beliefs are the beliefs of the church, and she said, "I want to go to heaven."
As for making important decisions about her life, Paige believes prior knowledge, prior experience and knowledge of God’s will, will help her when she needs to decide something. Also, "God always makes me think twice before deciding," she said. Her decisions are made with a lot of prayer, but it seems as though God has to force her to make what she believes is the "morally correct" decision. Paige indicated that she does not wish to be punished by God for making wrong decisions. She admitted feeling guilty for having made bad decisions in the past.

Paige believes that God has a plan for human lives. What that plan is, she said, "I don't know." God, according to Paige "has his hand on everything." But, she believes that God gives her choices and it's up to her to make the right choice.

When life seems most discouraging for Paige, she seeks support through her TEC groups. That's because TEC gives her a nurturing community. She also turns to her church, because her church understands her.

Concerning the future, Paige is anxious about what will happen to her and her siblings. Important considerations are who their mates will be and who her mate will be. She is anxious about what her career will be like and if she's made good decisions. Most of all, she expressed concern about her parents as they get older.

Paige described the meaning of death as a growing experience. She believes that the encounters she has had with death through the loss of friends and loved ones, have helped her to understand what life is all about.

Paige recognized that suffering exists in this world. Paige stated that suffering and poor people might be indicative of a wrong choices and lifestyles that people choose to live. Nevertheless, she believes God will take care of poor people
and that Christians must do their part to reach out and help. Paige expressed her gratitude for not having to grow up in a poor family. Although her family is not wealthy, she has witnessed firsthand suffering and poor people while working as a nanny in New York City.

According to Paige, life on this planet will end one day. "It's hard to tell when, but it will go on until judgment day. On that day, Jesus will return and walk the earth," she stated. Although Paige expressed her desire to one day go to heaven, she's not sure about what will happen to non-Christians when human life ceases to be.

Paige discussed her views about God and religion. Paige stated that her TEC groups provide her with important religious experiences. During our interview, we discussed Paige's feelings and thoughts about God. Paige stated her belief that "God is a human being." According to Paige, "God is male and all the feminist perspectives on God being a female are incorrect." Paige's image of God is a man with a long beard, long hair, and dark brown eyes. The cross provides another image of God for Paige. The cross symbolizes "God's outward reach (→) and upward connection (↑) between heaven and earth." Paige's feelings about God were developed during her childhood. She believes God speaks to her and one of her greatest desires is to hear his voice. Currently, she says she feels God's presence in and around her, but she has never heard God's voice.

Paige stated that being Catholic and Christian "equal a religious person." In other words, "you can't be religious unless you have these two elements." Nevertheless, Paige is not apt to say that other religious traditions are wrong. She seems to have a healthy respect for and appreciation of religious traditions other than her own.
Paige believes that when she prays, she is "openly talking and communicating" with God. She explained, "it doesn't matter what the situation is. I feel someone's listening." Paige seems troubled over the fact that her sins may interfere with her communication to God, but she continues to ask God for forgiveness and direction for her life through her prayers. Paige's definition of sin is, "anything that goes against what or how God wants us to live." Her definition is an absolute. "You either do what God sanctions or you commit sin." For her, sin is not supposed to be a part of the Christian life.

Paige believes that "morality breaks down whether you have religion or not." She doesn't accept immorality, but views it as a part of "the human condition."

Paige acknowledged that she is growing, changing, and struggling with family issues, her sexuality, career, and friends. Her most significant struggle is her sexuality. She's growing in love with her family. She's struggling with career choices, and changing with friends.

Faith for Paige, "is a personal feeling . . . it is believing in God and his existence." Not being able to see God makes faith difficult for her. Paige's faith is grounded in a life beyond this world. Her desire is to go to heaven. In order for her to get to heaven she must keep and live out her faith. If she had to choose between staying here on earth and going to be with God in heaven, she would choose remaining on earth. She admitted there are things she would like to do, such as get married. Also, she would like to stay and help others mature in faith. Although her faith is growing and changing, Paige believes that if she had to rank order her faith she would give herself a five. She said, "I would say five. . .just because that next step is what I'm striving for and I feel I'm below that next step." Paige believes that the next step is a perfect step toward God.
Finally, Paige described mature faith as an action on the part of a Christian where he or she "incorporates God into every decision he or she makes." She hopes to have mature faith one day, but until then she will keep struggling to be what God desires of her.

She expressed an appreciation for having participated in this study. She believes it was beneficial to do these interviews and thinks every Christian ought to do this. She believes this research project has helped her to re-examine her own views and discover what's most important to her "life and living for God."

Narrative IV - Respondent D (Vanessa)

The fourth respondent is Vanessa. She is a bright, provocative woman. She comes from a middle class family background. Vanessa is 22 years old and is a double major in sociology and psychology at the College. Her career goal is to operate a center for disadvantaged youth, after obtaining a M.S.W. degree. Vanessa was born in Illinois, but grew up in Chile, South America, and lived in various parts of the midwest. Her parents are currently in the itinerant ministry of the Methodist Church. Both parents are college educated. She described her family's ethnic background as Norwegian and German. Vanessa stated, "I have four brothers, they're older... but I really don't know them... I would like to have a closer relationship with them before my parents die."

Vanessa believes that there were several turning points in her life during her senior high school days. Vanessa described some of the major turning points in her life as picking up and moving from place to place, wherever her father got appointed every two or three years. Also, she vividly talked about turning points in relation to two unsuccessful attempts at suicide. Going away to college was another major turning point for this respondent. It was during high school that she became
"promiscuous," dealing in drugs and alcohol. She stated that several of her friends did commit suicide.

Important persons who helped to influence her feelings and thinking in life were her grade school principal, high school counselor, boy friend's mother, several girl friends, sociology professor, the college chaplain and children in her life. She seems appreciative for the influence that these persons have had on her, although she admitted that she is still growing in her thinking and feelings about her own experiences in life. She feels these individuals not only helped to shape her life but in some ways "they have helped to save my life."

The things that give life meaning for Vanessa include helping others, fighting racism and poverty and doing her best to rid society of crime. She explained, "helping children gives me great joy." Life is worth living because she believes "in loving others and being loved in return."

Vanessa discussed life-shaping experiences and relationships. Relationships important to her are with family, siblings, God, her church and with her sorority members. "These are very important relationships," she said.

Throughout the interview, Vanessa described her relationship with her parents as "turbulent." She admitted she was a very rebellious child. She claimed, "I now realize the hurt I caused them." Although she desires her mother's love, she feels that there is still distance between her mother and herself. She feels very close to her father. She stated, "I'm my dad's favorite child." She expressed gratitude for having two parents who have given unselfishly over the years to help her and her brothers succeed in life.

Vanessa contended that she has experienced many losses in life. The one that seems most significant is her loss of relationship with her mother. She said, "It's not
what it should be and I consider that a loss." Other losses, crises, and suffering experiences that Vanessa identified are the loss of friends to suicide, racism and poverty.

In spite of all the grief and turmoil Vanessa experienced in her formative years, she believes there were moments of joy. For example, her experience at the National Christian Conference was a peak experience. She said "I experienced God in wonderful ways at that conference." She enjoys nature and talking with God as well as receiving direction from God for her life. These too, are peak experiences.

As a preacher's daughter, Vanessa said she felt, "there were many taboos." For example, she had to watch what she wore in public, never miss church services and keep the Ten Commandments. She was taught to never curse, steal, or lie. "Living up to those expectations by parents, church and others created significant chaos and confusion in my life," Vanessa said.

However, there have been experiences that have helped to affirm Vanessa's meaning in life. She said, "when I see children growing out of poverty, that's affirming." Fighting racism, bigotry and ignorance is affirming." Consequently, the negative effects of racism, poverty and bigotry have shaken Vanessa's sense of meaning in life.

Vanessa and the researcher discussed her present values and commitments. It was interesting to hear Vanessa talk about her values and her commitment to social justice, because they sound similar to the values and commitments her parents wanted her to accept. Her beliefs, values and commitments include having God as the center of her life, living a Christian lifestyle, maintaining respect for others and helping children.
According to Vanessa, she believes that there are some approaches to life that are better than others. For example, living crime free and living for God are better than committing crime and being godless. She stated, "I don't know the purpose of human life," but "I believe we're screwing it up."

The symbols, rituals and images that are important to Vanessa are mostly Christian in orientation. She cited the Methodist hymns, communion service and worship service as being important rituals and symbols for her.

Relationships and/or groups that are most important as support for her values are her family, friends, God, church and sorority. These groups and persons, "have been there for me." In addition, these groups have helped her to reinforce her own values and beliefs.

Vanessa contended that making important decisions is difficult. Nevertheless, she believes that God gives her life direction. She relies upon prayer, her own value system and God to help her when she needs to make decisions. Also, Vanessa stated, "we have choices to make: God gives us choices." Although she believes in free will, she maintained that God has a plan for human lives. She stated that she does not know God's plan, but feels he will make it known to her in time.

There have been many struggles in Vanessa's life. She's survived attempted suicide twice, abused drugs and alcohol, and admitted that she was sexually promiscuous. Now she feels that her life has come full circle. It is the simple things in her life that keep her going when life seems most discouraging. For example, she said, "taking a walk, enjoying nature, talking to the Lord and remembering the scripture are things that keep me going."

Vanessa's description of death is, "It's an ugly, scary, horrid thing . . . but for the Christian it [death] can be a beautiful experience." According to Vanessa,
suffering and having poor people in society are difficult to understand. She admitted she is not really sure why we have suffering and poor people, but is willing to hypothesize that it may be the result of evil in the world. She believes that Christians must help poor and suffering people.

In concluding the discussion of Category III, present values and commitments, Vanessa talked about the continuation of life on this planet. Vanessa said that she does not know if life will continue on this planet, but she believes there is a second coming. She identified this second coming of Christ with a heaven and a hell. In her opinion, "heaven is for the righteous and hell is for the unrighteous."

The researcher explored Vanessa's views on religion. She said, "throughout my life I have had gradual religious or conversion experiences, but the most significant one was when I was on my George Washington Carver trip. . . . I just talked to God the whole time."

Vanessa feels that God is an essence. This essence is male. He is "an authority person." He gives her "an inspiring feeling" and "he is magnificent." Knowing God makes her feel wonderful and she excitedly said, "Yes, I am a religious person."

Vanessa maintained that prayer is an important part of her life. She stated, "I've always prayed, even when I was rebellious, but I don't think my parents know that." Prayer helps her to get rid of her burdens as well as ask for guidance and forgiveness.

Vanessa stated, "I believe my religious outlook is right for myself. . . . other people have their own and that's okay." She feels that being Christian, however, is more important than being a Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, or a part of any
denominational affiliation." According to Vanessa, "if a Christian loves God, that's all that's important."

Vanessa confessed that she's committed a sin. Her definition of sin is "going against God." But, she has developed a mature attitude that sin for her may not be the same in the view of someone else's. She admitted she is constantly asking God for forgiveness of her sins.

As for the topic of morality and religion, Vanessa believes that without religion, morality breaks down. Morality, in her opinion, includes ideas of poverty, racism, and crime.

Vanessa stated that her life is constantly changing. She believes that she grows struggling with different issues. She is changing, growing, and struggling all at once with issues of family, career, parents, her relationship to God and the church, as well as with friends. She said, "my relationship with my parents is becoming stronger."

Her image of mature faith is raising a family to serve God. She believes that a person's faith is mature when he/she is ready to go be with God in heaven. Although she feels tired and restless sometimes with the cares of day to day life, Vanessa prefers to stay here on earth and live out God's will. On a scale of one to six, she personally ranked her faith at 3.5. She said, "I'm only half way to pleasing God."

Finally, Vanessa defined faith as "something that relates directly to God... it's abstract, but it's universal and it is a religious idea." The reason Vanessa's gave for participating in this study was "it sounded interesting." She contended, "I know what it takes to get research done being in my major... plus, I wanted to help you out." She admitted she is "curious" about the topic of faith.
Narrative V - Respondent E (Maggie)

Maggie is a 22 year old white female. She is from southern Iowa. Maggie is a senior majoring in sports administration. Maggie comes from a middle class family background. Her parents are college graduates. She is a member of the Methodist Church in her hometown. She described her ethnic background as German, Swedish, and some English. There are four siblings in her family. Maggie's father is a city planner and her mother is head cashier at a bank.

Major turning points in Maggie's life occurred during her middle and senior high school days. She described a situation where she cut her hair short and then realized that her friends thought she "was no longer cute."

Another turning point during senior high occurred after she realized that boys had an interest in her. She believes this was her first experience in recognizing differences existed between males and females. Probably the most significant turning point in her life was becoming pregnant and having an abortion. She stated, "it changed my life." Her achievements throughout high school and college in sports and in academics are considered major turning points.

An important person who influenced her thinking in life is one of her grade school teachers. She stated that her teacher always found positive things to say to her, as well as involve her in positive activities. Her minister had an influence on her thinking during confirmation classes. She remembers having fun during her confirmation classes, but when asked what she learned about the church and God she could not recall. Older adult friends and extended family members contributed to Maggie's way of thinking about life. Two very important individuals who influenced her thinking are her second sister and her current boyfriend. She stated, "they're always there for me."
The things that give life meaning for Maggie include, "being an adult, taking responsibility for my own life, support from loved ones, and succeeding against the odds." Maggie recognizes the impact that her family has had on her, particularly in terms of monetary support. She stated, "my desire is to be able to take care of them because they have given unselfishly to me." She feels that her parents are not happy with their lives because they are stuck in dead end jobs and that by helping her parents, "life is worth living."

Maggie stated she has had many life shaping experiences and relationships. The relationships that are most important to her are with her boyfriend, her parents and siblings, and especially her second sister, who is a lesbian. Although she described her relationship with her parents as "bittersweet," she loves them and stated "their communication is important to me." She feels closer to her mom than her dad. She realizes that her perception of them is changing as she grows older. She stated, "it's changing for the better."

Other persons who contributed to shaping Maggie's life and are important to shaping her values, are her college roommates, her minister during her adolescent years, and professors at college. The influence of these individuals has helped her "in times of loss, crises, and personal suffering." She described the losses in her life as being the death of her grandmother and the death of her dog. Crises situations include her unexpected pregnancy and having to make some tough choices about it.

Although Maggie has dealt with suffering in her own life, she feels there have been moments of joy, ecstasy, and peak experiences. These include, "ecstasy in sexual experience, peak experiences camping out in the Rocky Mountains and Grand Canyon, and having breakthroughs in understanding a question on a test."
The taboos in her early life were, "don't lie, don't do a lousy job on a task, and don't harbor bad feelings about others." Her parents and church taught her these taboos. She stated that a friend taught her how to speak up for herself and stop letting others run over her. She contended that her parents were never really strict. Her parents simply did not want her to stay out beyond midnight or go to the other side of town (south side). Supposedly, "bad things happened over there."

Experiences that have been affirming for Maggie include having other people tell her nice things about herself. In addition, Maggie's athletic accomplishments are affirming experiences. She believes that the one thing that has shaken her sense of meaning in life is becoming pregnant and having to terminate the pregnancy. She feels good about her decision, but wonders "what it would be like if I had not ended the pregnancy."

Maggie stated that her present values and commitments are important to her. "The values and beliefs that guide my life include being nice to others, not taking advantage of others, being my best at all times, and not lying." She said, "all people should live like this."

Maggie described the purpose of human life in relationship to herself. For example," becoming someone unique." She says, "this is a difficult question to respond to." But, she stated her purpose in life is "to make her parents proud of her." Also, her purpose in life is to "help God and his causes and try to positively influence the younger generation."

Maggie's response to the question, "Are there other approaches to life more true than yours?," was, "not in all cases, not necessarily." She believes each situation and each person is different and each must find his or her own approach to life. But,
she feels human life should be valued and "we should not kill." After making the statement, "we should not kill," she paused and said, "I feel bad."

The symbols and rituals that are important to Maggie include the American flag, the cross, baptism, funerals, and wedding services. Relationships that are important to supporting her beliefs are with parents, family, God and the church.

Maggie stated that when there are important decisions to be made in her life, she pushes her feelings, values and morals aside, particularly "ethical decisions of right and wrong." She seems capable of thinking through things by starting with a blank slate. A good example of this might be during the time of her unexpected pregnancy. Maggie said, "I emptied my mind and focused on the decisions that needed to be made."

Maggie does not believe there is a plan for human lives. She thinks "God gives us choices and people must make their own plan." She expressed some anxiety about the future, but admitted she is planning for a bright, successful future. Getting everything done, looking for a job, and maintaining her relationship with her boyfriend, sometimes makes her feel uneasy about the future.

"In discussing the meaning of death, Maggie said, "death is a sudden jolt," "The body is broken down by diseases gradually and people pass on." Maggie hopes that there is a place beyond this life for the dead. But, she does not call it heaven. As a matter of fact, she said that she had no idea what to call it.

Maggie's attitude about the poor and suffering in this world is interesting. She believes "poor people are sometimes happier when they are poor, instead of having the concerns of their rich counterparts." She stated, "some people are poor because of their situation... they don't always have control over it." However, she
is sensitive to the poor and believes society can do more to help poor and suffering people.

Maggie is not certain that human life will continue indefinitely on this planet. Her views about this are summed up in her own words, "don't think so, but not sure if it's about to end . . . life will be consumed by natural disasters."

Maggie expressed her views openly about religion and God during the last segment of the interview. She does not believe that having a religious or conversion experience is important. When she thinks of God, she "feels hope, confusion, frustration, and spiritual power at the same time." She is contentious about whether she is religious or not and expresses resentment toward the question being asked.

Maggie described prayer as an act. She admitted prayer is an important part of her life. "Prayer is thinking outwardly to God," she said.

She believes her religious outlook is true "and that's all that matters." She indicated she is not trying to please others on matters of religion. However, she agreed with the statement, "Without religion morality breaks down."

Maggie stated she has made several changes in her life. Most of all, she feels she is "growing in self respect." She struggles with the issues of a career, but believes she is "more mature today and things will work out."

Maggie defined faith as, "belief in God and belief that there is a higher being." According to Maggie, "mature faith refers to someone who is very involved in church, goes to church every Sunday and participates in all of the activities."

Maggie does not feel that her faith has fully matured. If she had to choose between dying and going to be with God or staying here on earth, she says, "I'd rather stay here...I want to do some other things first." Nevertheless, Maggie ranked her faith
somewhere between a three and four. She believes her stage of faith is however, closer to that of stage four.

Maggie concluded her interview by saying she participated in the study because she wanted to know more about faith. She explained that she appreciated the way the study was explained to her. She feels she has learned a lot about herself and hopes that the researcher was helped through her participation.

Overview and Summary of Respondents' Narratives

The purpose of this section provides an overview and summary of the data provided in the five narratives. The data presented in this section describe the similarities and differences in the respondents' answers to the FDIG. The overview highlights themes identified in the four categories and the respondents' narratives. The themes relate to the questions in the FDIG and provide the basis for the discussion that follows.

Category I: Life Review

The first category is divided into five thematic areas, including personal characteristics profiles, major turning points, persons who influenced their thinking, and the respondents' view of the meaning of life. Data gathered through semi-structured interviews revealed the following.

Personal profiles. The respondents provided in-depth data about their individual backgrounds. For example, the data revealed that two of the five respondents' are college males and the remaining three are college females. All of the respondents have European-American backgrounds. The three female respondents are seniors. One male respondent is a junior and the remaining male respondent is a sophomore. Their age range is from 19 to 22 1/2 years old. All five
respondents indicated that they are from middle class family backgrounds. All of the respondents have siblings. Four of the respondents' natural parents are living. Michael's father died a year ago.

Each respondent discussed their parents' occupational and educational backgrounds. Their backgrounds vary from some college to completion of college and no college. The respondents' parents are employed in various occupations, including farming, medicine, ministry, banking, and homemaking. Each of the respondents was reared primarily in a small rural community in Iowa. Vanessa lived the first three years of her life in Chile, but her family returned to rural Iowa, where she spent the remaining years of her life growing up. The respondents' academic majors and career interests are as follows:

- Respondent A "Jack" Economics and Management
- Respondent B "Michael" International Studies, Politics/Government
- Respondent C "Paige" Communication
- Respondent D "Vanessa" Sociology and Psychology
- Respondent E "Maggie" Sports Administration and Medicine

Three of the respondents' family religious traditions are with the Methodist Church (Michael, Vanessa, and Maggie). Jack is affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church and Paige is affiliated with the Catholic Church.

**Major turning points.** All of the respondents' described major turning points in their lives. Some examples of major turning points follow. Going to college and developing independence were major turning points for Jack. Michael described in detail the deaths of his father and grandfather as major turning points in his life. Major turning points for Paige were the accidental death of two close friends, the death of her grandfather, and attending a Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) group, where she "accepted Christ into her life." Vanessa described major turning points in her life as transitional periods associated with the family moving every two or three
years from one town to another. Her parents serve as ministers in the itinerant ministry of the Methodist Church. As a result of their occupation, their pastoral assignments never allowed them to stay in one place long enough to become a part of the community. Also, Vanessa described her two unsuccessful attempts at suicide as major turning points. The fifth respondent, Maggie, described major turning points in her life as the physical changes in looks she experienced during her middle and senior high school days. Probably, the most significant turning point in Maggie's life was when she found out that she was pregnant and had to make the decision to terminate the pregnancy.

Some of these turning points required that the respondents' and their families seek outside professional help to assist them in coping with the trauma during their transitions. In addition, all of the respondents expressed feeling some level of pain during their transitions in life.

The following quotes from the data illustrate major turning points for the respondents.

Respondent A, Jack: Going to college and developing independence for me, because I had never lived away from home.

Respondent B, Michael: The untimely death of my father was a turning point . . . his death has changed my family.

Respondent C, Paige: The accidental death of my closest friends definitely was a major turning point in my life . . . sometimes I feel responsible.

Respondent D, Vanessa: My parents were in the ministry . . . moving around a lot created major changes in my life.

Respondent E, Maggie: The biggest turning point in my life was an unexpected pregnancy.
Persons who influenced their thinking. Each of the respondents identified persons who influenced their thinking in life. In all five cases, the respondents identified family (parents and siblings), their minister or a Sunday school teacher, and a grade, middle or senior high school teacher, as persons having influenced their thinking. Differences were evident among the respondents. Michael said that his peers in his Methodist Youth Fellowship group influenced his thinking. Paige indicated that the members in her Teens Encounter Christ group influenced her thinking. Vanessa had a lot of praise for a college sociology professor called Jane who contributed to her way of thinking. Also, Maggie stated that her current boyfriend contributed to her way of thinking, particularly in relationship to others. Jack did not mention others outside of parents, minister and school teachers. An important point about this data is that all of the respondents spoke of older adults as the persons having influence on their thinking. In most instances, these adults were role models as well as authority persons in the lives of the respondents. Specific examples of persons who influenced the respondents' thinking are provided below.

Respondent A, Jack: My parents, my minister, and my school teachers.

Respondent B, Michael: Definitely my family and minister in my home church. My family, because they mean so much to me and my minister because he's always been there for my family.

Respondent C, Paige: Probably, I would group the members in my TEC group as having influence and, of course my parents and grandparents....

Respondent D, Vanessa: My high school counselor helped me to turn my life around. When I was doing stupid things, he came to me and said, "Vanessa, get a grip." I have always appreciated him for this.

Respondent E, Maggie: Well, my third grade teacher throughout my life has always been a positive influence. She's always been a
Life meaning. As I asked and discussed with the respondents the questions, "What gives life meaning and what makes life worth living?", they replied:

Respondent A, Jack: God gives life meaning and life is worth living to glorify God. I have reached this conclusion based on my own experiences and watching other people.

Respondent B, Michael: Having an embracing childhood and, knowledge of God and helping others, gives life meaning and makes life worth living; knowing God gives pleasure to lives and doing good gives life meaning...but, tragedy can also enrich your life; being able to relate to various people makes life worth living.

Respondent C, Paige: My beliefs in God, the church, my family, and my TEC group give life meaning...knowing that my life is coming together makes life worth living. It seems as though I keep learning new things every day.

Respondent D, Vanessa: Helping others, fighting racism, poverty and crime gives my life meaning...having my own loving family and living for God give life meaning and simultaneously make life worth living. Sometimes I'm not sure about all of this.

Respondent E, Maggie: Being on my own, taking care of myself, and having my boyfriend gives life meaning; whereas succeeding in life and having a family of my own makes life worth living.

Jack, Michael, Paige, and Vanessa identified God in their responses, whereas Maggie did not. With the exception of Maggie, all other respondents externalized
their responses to helping others. God and other persons appear to be important in the lives of the respondents.

Category II: Life Shaping Experiences And Relationships

Seven thematic areas of importance are identified in this category. The seven themes are (1) relationships that are most important for your life, (2) relationships to parents, (3) other persons who contributed to shaping your life, (4) losses, crises, and suffering experiences that have colored your life, (5) peak experiences in life, (6) taboos in life, and (7) experiences that have affirmed or shaken your sense of meaning in life.

Relationships that are important for your life. The respondents described in similar ways the relationships that are important for their lives. The first four respondents, Jack, Michael, Paige, and Vanessa, directly identified their relationship with God as an important relationship. In summation they said, "God has always been an important person in my life." Their relationship with God started in childhood and was reinforced through Sunday School or church confirmation classes. Although Maggie never directly stated that her relationship with God was important, she explained throughout her narratives the influence of God in her life.

Each respondent stated that their relationship to the church is another important relationship. All of the respondents elaborated on their involvement in church youth fellowships. The degree to which they are involved in church activities is different now from when they were adolescents. They expressed their belief that having a relationship with the church implies a relationship with God.

Other important relationships for all of the respondents included parents, grandparents, peers and friends, college friends, siblings, and groups with which they chose to be involved. The major distinction in this area was with Paige, who
indicated that her relationships with her sorority, her priest, and her Teens Encounter Christ group were very important. Vanessa also named her sorority as important. Fowler (1981) maintained that relationships with others help to determine a person's stage of faith development. Examples of the respondents' responses to the question about important relationships in their lives are outlined below.

Respondent A, Jack: That would be my relationship to the church, my fraternity, parents, siblings and to God. God is first.

Respondent B, Michael: I can name several... mom, brother, grandparents, relationship with God, friends, and the church.

Respondent C, Paige: The important relationships to me are with my church, family, TEC groups, sorority, and friends at college. Each of these relationships has their own special place in my life.

Respondent D, Vanessa: Some of the relationships... are with family, siblings, relationship to God, church and my sorority. I guess I have always had to depend on these relationships to help me through difficult times.

Respondent E, Maggie: They are my boyfriend, parents and siblings, especially my sister that I told you about who happens to be a lesbian. I have a very close family, although we argue at times... we don't allow our disagreements to hurt our relationships.

Relationship with parents. Each of the respondents described his or her parents as authority persons. There is a hierarchy of authority within their families. For example, their fathers, in most cases, reserved the final authority on family matters. The respondents' fathers were clearly identified as the "breadwinners." All of the respondents stated that their mothers had taken time off from work to stay at
home and raise the children. The respondents' described their mothers as "loving, nurturing persons." Often, the respondents kept "little secrets" between themselves and their mothers, while never sharing the secrets with their fathers. For example, Jack stated that whenever he made a mistake on the farm, his mother would help him cover it up so his father wouldn't find out and he wouldn't get grounded.

All except one respondent described their parents as religious people. Maggie stated that she believes her father is religious, "but he doesn't always go to church." However, Maggie believes that "a Christian doesn't always have to go to church." The respondents expressed love and care for their parents. Simultaneously, each respondent identified periods of turbulence or problems in their relationship with their parents.

The data revealed that all five respondents would like to raise their children with the same beliefs and values their parents instilled in them. All respondents expressed concern for the future welfare of their parents as they grow older. The comments below are indicative of the respondents' feelings and thoughts shared about their parents.

Respondent A, Jack: I idolize my parents, especially my father, and want to be like them... I am very close to my mother. She was a nurturing caregiver. My dad was the disciplinarian.

Respondent B, Michael: I love both parents. They have been a blessing to me. I realize that my relationship with my mother is changing since the death of my father. I miss him so much. I am learning that my mother needs my support.

Respondent C, Paige: My relationship with my parents is probably the strongest it's ever been. I value my parents. It's not always been that way. I'm growing with them.

Respondent D, Vanessa: I had a turbulent relationship with my parents and siblings, but I want to change that, especially as they get
older...they've given so much...I've hurt them. I did some bad things, but I'm my father's special child.

Respondent E, Maggie: My relationship with my parents is close...we argue...it's bittersweet at times, but we keep communications open. I'm closer to my mom than dad.

**Persons who contributed to shaping the respondents' lives.** The persons who contributed to shaping the lives of the respondents were identified as the same individuals in Category I, theme three. These individuals also influenced their thinking in life. In addition, all of the respondents identified a clergy person and at least one college instructor or staff person at the College, who helped to shape their thinking. Quotes from the transcript data are provided.

Respondent A, Jack: I think I have answered that one, but I would say my Sunday School teachers, minister, college teachers.

Respondent B, Michael: Grandparents, friends at college, college teachers.

Respondent C, Paige: A Catholic woman friend, staff at college, TEC members.

Respondent D, Vanessa: High school counselors and teachers, college professors and my chaplain. As I said before, my high school counselor was able to just see through me.

Respondent E, Maggie: College roommates, my minister, my professors, my sister. Each of them has contributed something that I think is important to shaping my life.

**Losses, crises and suffering experiences that have colored your life.** Death was a prevailing theme for four of the five respondents. Michael, Paige, Vanessa, and Maggie stated that they had dealt with the loss of a loved one, a family member, close relatives or close peers. Only Jack had not experienced the death of someone close. The losses created crises and suffering for the respondents.
Vanessa and Maggie provided some additional insights for discussion that the other respondents did not mention. Vanessa believes that poverty, racism, and hatred perpetuated by others, have colored her life. Maggie added the death of her dog, terminating an unplanned pregnancy, the Desert Storm War, and finding out that her sister is a lesbian, have created losses, crises, and suffering that have colored her life. None of the respondents indicated a desire to relive those experiences.

Respondent A, Jack: There's been no tragedy that I recall in my immediate life.

Respondent B, Michael: The loss of my father and grandpa, as well as watching my mother adjust to being a widow. Everything is so different for me now. I don't just see things as black and white. I am able to see things from many perspectives.

Respondent C, Paige: I guess I've experienced several losses and crises. Examples would be the death of my close friends ... and my grandpa. My friends died by accident and sometimes I wonder if I could have prevented this. But God is helping me to understand it was not in my control.

Respondent D, Vanessa: I have experienced a great deal of tragedy. Personal tragedy in terms of my suicide attempt. Seeing poverty, racism, and hatred in the world have colored my life.

Respondent E, Maggie: My family has experienced a lot of suffering and losses ... some include my grandmother's death, the death of the family dog was a big shock, and getting pregnant was a crisis, but I'm over that now.

Joy, ecstasy and peak experiences. Although the respondents revealed they had experienced suffering and losses in their lives, each also discussed moments of joy, ecstasy, peak experiences or break throughs in life. Their experiences are unique. The following examples convey their feelings about this question.
Respondent A, Jack: Waking up in the morning, observing nature, receiving a spiritual message are joyful and peak experiences for me.

Respondent B, Michael: Day to day life is a joy . . . traveling abroad and taking family vacations. My family has always traveled. I have been able to learn and experience so many things because of our travels, such as how people all over the world share a lot in common.

Respondent C, Paige: I find joyful and peak experiences in family gatherings and going to Teens Encounter Christ. As a family we get together to celebrate all of the holidays. We have a lot of fun together. As we get older we seem to have a lot more understanding about each other.

Respondent D, Vanessa: Attending the National Christian Conference last year and going on my George Washington Carver trip were peak experiences. Talking to God, praying, and receiving God's direction for my life are joyful experiences.

Respondent E, Maggie: Sexual activity, winning in sports, camping out in the Grand Canyon and the Rocky Mountains, and sometimes when I take a test. When I take tests I usually forget what I have studied, but my grades are good. I just sometimes have to ask God to help me remember.

The respondents did not say that college life is a peak experience for them. They described their enthusiasm about their involvement in college activities as joyful and peak experiences.

Taboos in life. In this thematic area, the respondents defined taboos as something their parents or authority figures taught them not to do. A taboo is considered to be something that is morally or socially unacceptable or prohibited. The five respondents revealed that their taboos during their early childhood and adolescent years, came primarily from parents, extended family, their churches, their schools, and other adults in their communities. The respondents indicated that
taboos they were taught included such things as, "don't lie, steal, curse, drink, smoke, disrespect others, stay out beyond curfew, and don't engage in self destructive behaviors, such as drugs and premarital sex." Among their peers the respondents indicated they witnessed destructive behaviors "all of the time." Each of the respondents said their parents and their church's taught them to keep the Ten Commandments. Each respondent recited at least two or three of the Commandments. The respondents also expressed their views about taboos and sin. They linked taboos with sin. All five respondents believe that a "good Christian should not commit sin." Also, the respondents believe that keeping these taboos has helped to structure their lives.

None of the respondents expressed negative attitudes about their parents' expectation that they maintain their early childhood taboos. Each of the respondents indicated that they had broken at least two or three of the taboos. As young adults the respondents felt more inclined to select their own taboos, but most of them indicated that they plan to hold on to the ones with which their parents and church raised them. Jack and Maggie shared some different taboos in addition to the ones delineated above. They included, "don't work on Sundays, keep your room and belongings clean, and be timely" (Jack). Maggie added, "always do your best, don't harbor bad feelings within yourself toward others, and stay on your own side of town."

Respondent A, Jack: Taboos for me are don't work or play on Sundays, keep the commandments, be clean, timely, keep my vows, don't keep a junky car or house. My father was very strict about what we could or could not do.

Respondent B, Michael: My parents were not as strict as some of my close friends' parents, but I guess taboos for me would be, don't lie, curse, don't leave home without permission,
don't break the commandments and don't fight.

Respondent C, Paige: ... don't tell lies, don't go to parties, don't break the commandments, don't drink, don't have sex outside of marriage and don't cheat or steal. I still have these taboos. I haven't kept every one, but I believe them.

Respondent D, Vanessa: Taboos, everything was a taboo ... don't lie, steal, smoke, break the commandments, don't stay out late, don't miss church and don't disobey parents. Growing up in a preacher's house was difficult. I couldn't do anything.

Respondent E, Maggie: Don't lie, don't stay out past twelve midnight, stay on your side of town, always do your best, give 110% with everything and don't keep bad feelings. My parents were not as strict as other parents.

Experiences that have affirmed or shaken the respondents' sense of meaning in life. Each of the respondents stated that they have had affirming experiences in life. All five included an affirming experience as going to church, completing catechism and receiving God in their lives. The data suggest that God is not only important to them, but belief in God and regular church attendance are expressions of their love for God.

One of the respondents said, "Satanism and godless people have shaken my sense of meaning in life" (Jack). Michael and Paige said that the deaths of loved ones have shaken their sense of meaning in life. Vanessa maintained that crime and violence in society have shaken her sense of meaning in life. Maggie indicated that her pregnancy had a profound effect on her and changed her sense of meaning about life. Generally, experiences that have affirmed and shaken the respondents' sense of meaning in life have had a positive effect on their faith development.
Respondent A, Jack: Experiences that have affirmed my sense of meaning in life include going through catechism, knowing God, having a loving family, going to college, and joining my fraternity. Godless people have shaken my meaning in life. So many people don't care about God and they don't respect others. I have a problem with that.

Respondent B, Michael: I've had a lot of positive experiences in life ... Sunday School and confirmation ... going to church, the family travels abroad, attending youth camp and being a student. The death of my father has affirmed and shaken my sense of meaning in life.

Respondent C, Paige: Being a Christian, participating in TEC, going through confirmation classes have given me meaning in life. The deaths of loved ones have shaken my sense of meaning.

Respondent D, Vanessa: Seeing children grow into productive persons is affirming. Fighting racism and bigotry is affirming. Last year when I attended the National Christian Conference, that was affirming and ... crime and violence have shaken my sense of meaning. Crime is everywhere. I wonder what will happen to our children in the future.

Respondent E, Maggie: Other people telling me nice things. My athletic accomplishments and getting good grades have been affirming ... becoming a member of the church was real affirming. I must admit becoming pregnant and having an abortion was a little scary.

Category III: Present Values And Commitments

There are thirteen thematic areas in this category. They are (1) beliefs, attitudes, and values, (2) purpose of human life, (3) are some approaches to life more true than others, (4) symbols, rituals, and images that are important, (5) relationships or groups that provide support, (6) beliefs that guide your life, (7) making important decisions, (8) plan for human life, (9) what keeps you going when life is discouraging (10) meaning of death, (11) uneasiness about the future, (12) why do
people suffer, (13) feelings about poor people, and (14) will human life continue on this planet?

Beliefs, attitudes, and values that guide your life. All of the respondents indicated a belief in God as a value that is very important to them. The degree to which they expressed their beliefs is different and rightfully so. Their values and attitudes are based on their religious orientations, as well as their levels of faith development. The data indicate that the respondents have a deep understanding of their own faith development. Differences among the respondents' answers show that they have their own beliefs, attitudes and values that guide their lives. For example:

Respondent A, Jack: Love all, love God . . . and my belief that heaven is a wonderful place that I would like to go to one day helps guide my life. I really believe there is a heaven and I want to go there.

Respondent B, Michael: My Republican ideas don’t always fit with my religious beliefs. Sometimes I believe that the republican viewpoint seems uncaring. I believe I am a caring person, but when I listen to people talk against republicans I have to ask myself why that is.

Respondent C, Paige: . . . Love, trust, and honesty are important beliefs that guide my life . . . also, belief in the Bible.

Respondent D, Vanessa: I believe that racism is a sin . . . it is a strong guiding principle in my life; people ought to have a basic attitude of sharing and helping others. But I don’t always see people sharing and helping others.

Respondent E, Maggie: Learned from a girlfriend that I should always have an attitude to not let people take advantage of me. I use to just let people do and say anything to me. Now I know I don’t have to take all of that.
The beliefs, attitudes, and values portrayed in the narratives were influenced by the respondents' parents, church, school, and friends. All of the respondents indicated a desire to pass on their beliefs and values to their children.

**Purpose of human life.** The respondents gave brief, but direct responses to this question. Their responses included, "to serve God;" "to please God;" "life is a sign of God's love;" "don't know, but God made us to become someone unique." There is an acknowledgment on the part of the respondents that God is somehow responsible for human life.

**Respondent A, Jack:** I believe the purpose of human life is to serve God with your total being and help others . . . and continue the species.

**Respondent B, Michael:** Life should be simple. I believe that doing the will of God is the purpose of human life.

**Respondent C, Paige:** Human life is a sign of God's love. We should all want to experience God's love. I have so much peace now.

**Respondent D, Vanessa:** Don't know, but God made us for a purpose, and we are screwing it up.

**Respondent E, Maggie:** To be someone unique and make my family and parents proud. Also, I want to help God and the younger generation grow and develop into healthy people.

**Are some approaches to life more true than others?** All respondents replied yes to this question, however, some "yes" statements included the notion that "life as a Christian is better." One respondent stated, "some non-Christians lead better lives, and each person's situation is different." None of the respondents provided any direct responses about their faith traditions in response to this question.
Respondent A, Jack: Yes, approaching life as a Christian is better than a non-Christian. As a Christian I have something to believe in.

Respondent B, Michael: Yes, for example trying to make the world a better place to live in. Also, being a Christian.

Respondent C, Paige: I see other people living better lives. Yes, some lives are richer and fuller. At least they appear to be richer and fuller.

Respondent D, Vanessa: Definitely. Committing crime is wrong. Living a God-like life is best. Wanting a family is a good approach.

Respondent E, Maggie: Not in all cases, not necessarily. Each situation is different. But we should value human life and not kill. Umh, that's interesting.

Symbols, rituals and images that are important to the respondents. The respondents gave different responses to this question. Each identified symbols and rituals that are important to them. The data revealed that they perceived these symbols, rituals and images as being important because of what they were taught. They responded thoughtfully and immediately to this question. They said:

Respondent A, Jack: The cross, the Bible, baptism, catechism, family, parents, communion, and pastor are important symbols, rituals and images. [Jack seemed to take a definitive position about each, based on the teachings he received in catechism classes].

Respondent B, Michael: Doves, because they represent peace and pictures of Jesus are important images. The clouds are symbols of God. Changes in seasons and church rituals are important.

Respondent C, Paige: My sorority rituals, communion, my TEC cross are symbols, rituals, and images in my life. The cross signifies God's outward and upward reach for his people.
Respondent D, Vanessa: Methodist hymns, communion, worship service; Methodist doctrine and beliefs are important symbols, rituals, and images.

Respondent E, Maggie: The American flag, [but, after restating the question she added], the cross, baptism, and wedding services.

Relationships or groups that provide support for the respondents. The respondents did not project a carefree attitude about relationships. All of the respondents indicated they place a high priority on having supportive relationships. Support for the respondents is inclusive of giving and receiving support. Their notion of giving and receiving support is based on the Judeo-Christian value of being responsible to others. Each of the respondents cited, "family, close friends, and their church community" as their support groups. Jack included his fraternity brothers. Paige and Vanessa included their sorority sisters and a few campus organizations.

Respondent A, Jack: God, family, fraternity, the church and friends. . . .

Respondent B, Michael: The relationships and groups that provide support for me are my relationships with the Religious Life Council, my relationship to my church and going to scripture and supper.

Respondent C, Paige: Church, family, Religious Life Council, my sorority, scripture and supper and people who share my views.

Respondent D, Vanessa: The ones that come to my mind immediately are family friends, relationship to God, to my church and to my sorority.

Respondent E, Maggie: Parents, family, God and the church provide support for me. I lean on them a lot. Sometimes my family thinks I'm trying too hard to be independent.
Beliefs and values that are important and find expression in their lives. The respondents shared similar views that they had expressed in theme one of this category. They did state that their beliefs and values are very important to them.

Respondent A, Jack: They're very important. Living for God is very important.

Respondent B, Michael: My beliefs are very important. They include belief in church, family, and the groups I'm involved with on campus.

Respondent C, Paige: Belief in family, friends, and the church are very important to me.

Respondent D, Vanessa: My beliefs? Yes, they are important... rid society of racism... being a Christian, believing we are all children of God and keeping law and order.

Respondent E, Maggie: Respect other people's property... don't steal... respect others and protect the environment are some of the beliefs and values that are important to me.

How do you make important decisions? This question provided many insightful thoughts about the values and beliefs of the respondents. Jack, Michael, Paige, and Vanessa said in different ways that they go to God for guidance when making important decisions. Maggie said that she "pushes her feelings, values, and beliefs aside and just does whatever needs to be done." The respondents also stated that they consult with friends and family.

Respondent A, Jack: Consult family and pray to God... sometimes I consult close friends. Mostly, I pray and wait on God.

Respondent B, Michael: By asking God for direction in my life.

Respondent C, Paige: Prior knowledge, prior experiences, consult God and
wait for his response.

Respondent D, Vanessa: Pray to God, consult my values and wait patiently on God for direction. I am learning to do this more.

Respondent E, Maggie: Push my feelings, values and morals aside and just do it. Whatever it is. The example (confidential) I used before is a good one about how I make decisions.

Is there a plan for human lives? Jack, Paige, and Vanessa said yes, however, all of the respondents indicated they believe God gives human beings choices and we have free will to do whatsoever we desire. Michael and Maggie do not believe there is a plan for human lives. Michael and Maggie discussed their views about predestination. They do not believe God created some "master plan or scheme for human lives." The five respondents shared the belief that God is capable of controlling our lives and the world, should He (God) desire to do so. Jack and Paige believe God has his hands on everything. Their beliefs are illustrated below.


Respondent B, Michael: No, I don't believe God has some master plan. I do believe God is in control.

Respondent C, Paige: Yes, God has a plan. What is it? I don't know. God controls our lives.

Respondent D, Vanessa: Yes, but we have choices. God does have power above ours.

Respondent E, Maggie: No, God gives us choices. It's up to us to make our own path.
What keeps you going when life is discouraging? The respondents replied:

Respondent A, Jack: God, family, older adult friends, the church and my fraternity.

Respondent B, Michael: Friends and family.

Respondent C, Paige: Family, friends, priest, and my TEC group. Especially my TEC group. It helps me renew myself.

Respondent D, Vanessa: Taking walks, enjoying nature, talking to God and reading the scripture. Sometimes just being alone is all I need. It's hard to find time alone when you live in a sorority.

Respondent E, Maggie: Family and God and knowing that life gets better when you take charge of your problems. I have had to take charge of some difficult situations in my life.

The respondents' discussed their awareness of political and secular issues. They did not project themselves as being selfish or righteously indignant. The respondents expressed a desire to see people live richer, more fulfilling lives, without the threat of some major atrocity occurring, such as war, famine, and natural disasters. This observation is based on the respondents' answers to the question related to suffering and poor people in the world.

What makes you feel uneasy about the future? The respondents openly discussed their concerns about the future. Their responses focused on careers, having families, as well as the welfare of others. They shared the following views.

Respondent A, Jack: Having a career, getting married and the existence of satanism in the world concern me.

Respondent B, Michael: Finding a job, political warfare and the success of my
immediate family. I wonder what my career is going to be like. I am not sure that I'm doing the right thing as far as a career is concerned.

Respondent C, Paige: What will happen to my immediate family, my career, whether I will ever get married, will I go to graduate school and doing God's will. . . .

Respondent D, Vanessa: About the future . . . AIDS, racism, losing my parents and the state of the world. I really don't know about the future of our world.

Respondent E, Maggie: Getting everything done. Looking for a job . . . my relationship with my boyfriend, the Gulf War, my parents' success, AIDS, Roe Vs. Wade, the environment and the 1992 elections. I hope the Democrats win. The Republicans have messed things up and my family is mostly Republican.

Meaning of death. This was a difficult question for the respondents. All of the respondents, except for Jack, had experienced a significant loss. Jack has had distant friends die by accident, but has not experienced the death of someone who was close to him.

The data revealed that for most of the respondents, experiencing the death of a loved has been a long-term, painful process. Asking this question generated a lot of emotions for the respondents. They shared different, but interesting feelings about this question.

Respondent A, Jack: Death is the end of this world and the beginning of heaven or hell. Death is not bad for the Christian believer.

Respondent B, Michael: Death is a difficult faith issue" (he lost his father) . . . "I wonder what the Bible really means by immortality and the Kingdom of God. I wonder if I will know my family in heaven beyond this life.
Respondent C, Paige: Death is a growing experience.

Respondent D, Vanessa: To me it's a ugly, scary, horrid thing, but it can be beautiful if your life is together as a Christian. I haven't experienced death, but I believe it can be beautiful.

Respondent E, Maggie: Death is a sudden jolt. Your body is broken down by diseases ... I hope there is a place for the dead. I'm not sure about life after death, but I want to believe there is a heaven.

Why do people suffer? The old proverb, "suffering breeds character," is an outdated tale for these respondents. The respondents generally concluded that suffering occurs for various reasons. They do not believe that suffering is anything to rejoice or be glad about. Jack attributed some suffering to God, while Michael expressed the feeling that God will help the suffering masses. Vanessa and Maggie believe that suffering is caused by external variables over which people have no control. Paige attributed some suffering to bad decisions or wrong decisions people make. She believes that suffering is a result of people treating others wrong and not living according to "God's will." Regardless of their positions on this topic, none of the respondents welcomed their own suffering. Each respondent believes that people who are not suffering should help others. Likewise, there seems to be a consensus among the respondents that suffering inevitably affects everyone. In general, people suffer because of the many circumstances they are surrounded by.

Respondent A, Jack: Don't know, but God sometimes gives us suffering.

Respondent B, Michael: There will always be poor and suffering people. God can help make people happier.

Respondent C, Paige: Bad lifestyles. Wrong decisions, plus some people are mean to others.
Respondent D, Vanessa: Don't know. Sometimes because of evil in the world. Biblically, we will always have oppressed people.

Respondent E, Maggie: Because of their situation they don't always have control of it.

Feelings about always having poor people in society. The attitudes of the respondents shifted to a more positive response from those they previously gave about suffering in society. There was a general admission by the respondents that "society will always have poor people, but society should not give up on them." Maggie stated, "poor people are sometimes happier than rich people because they don't have all of the headaches and problems that rich people have to deal with."

The respondents did not seem to draw a parallel or connection between a person's economic status and their faith development. Each of the five respondents stated they came from middle class backgrounds and have had limited personal experiences with poor people. Therefore, the respondents' answers in this area seem to be limited to what they have learned from various media about poor people.

Respondent A, Jack: From an economic view, we will always have poor people.

Respondent B, Michael: People should help each other, but the government should stay out of it.

Respondent C, Paige: I'm lucky, but we should help. God will take care of poor people.

Respondent D, Vanessa: We must help them ... some people lack the effort to help themselves.

Respondent E, Maggie: I believe poor people are sometimes happier than rich folks.
Will human life continue indefinitely? The respondents did not express a lot of optimism about the continuation of human life on this planet. At least three of the respondents related the possibility of human life ending to their belief that there is a second coming of Christ, based on their early Christian teachings. They anticipate "a judgment." The remaining two respondents attribute the earth's ending to a scientific explanation involving the environment. Their responses included the following:

Respondent A, Jack: No, because Christ is coming back.
Respondent B, Michael: Life will one day end, because the earth is a star and it will eventually explode.
Respondent C, Paige: It's hard to tell, nevertheless, it will go on until judgment day.
Respondent D, Vanessa: Don't know, but I believe there is a judgment day.
Respondent E, Maggie: I don't think so, but I'm not sure if it's about to end . . . it will be consumed by a natural disaster.

Category IV: Religion

There are fourteen thematic areas in this category. The last four emerging themes are the result of additional questions asked of each of the respondents during the interviews. They provide data that are significant to the purpose of the study. The fourteen thematic areas in this category are: (1) important religious or conversion experiences, (2) feelings about God, (3) are you religious?, (4) do you pray?, (5) religious outlook, (6) definition of sin, (7) feelings about religion and morality, (8) feelings about change, (9) image of mature faith, (10) decisions
about heaven and hell, (11) stage of faith, (12) definition of faith, (13) familiarity with Fowler's theory, and (14) reason for participating in the study. The last five thematic areas emerged from the data because each respondent was asked these questions related to these themes. These questions followed the last question in Category IV.

**Important religious or conversion experiences in your life.** Four of the five respondents classified experiences they had in life as either a religious or conversion experience. Jack, Michael, Paige, and Vanessa characterized their experiences as a progression over their life span. These four respondents do not believe that their religious experiences occurred all at once. For example, Jack stated, "I've grown religiously over time and have had several religious experiences." Michael compared his youth camps to a religious experience. The camps were sponsored by the Methodist Youth Fellowship. Michael also stated, "religious experiences is a lifelong process." Paige claimed that she has had religious experiences "throughout her life," especially during her TEC weekends. Vanessa characterized two particular trips she went on as religious or conversion experiences. But, she believes her religious experiences have "been gradual throughout her life." Maggie said that she does not think she has had a religious experience. Consequently, "having a religious experience is not important to me" she said. Maggie appeared insulted by this question. She angrily asked me, Why is this important; what difference does it make? She said the question seemed judgmental. The respondents' answers to questions related to this theme were:

**Respondent A, Jack:** I have grown religiously over time . . . no one time experience. There's been several.

**Respondent B, Michael:** Yes, they occurred at camps during my youth. Otherwise, I feel religious experiences are a part of lifelong processes.
Respondent C, Paige: Throughout my life and in my TEC groups. God seems
to quietly reveal himself to me.

Respondent D, Vanessa: I have had religious experiences while on my G.W.
Carver trip and throughout college. It's been gradual
throughout my life. I can't always pinpoint the religious
experiences. I hate this question. It sounds judgmental
and I'm not sure that it really matters.

Respondent E, Maggie: Not important to me. No, not really.

Feelings about God. During the discussion of this area, the respondents
related their feelings about God to their early childhood views about God. The
respondents indicated that their feelings about God developed from what their
parents taught them, what they learned in Sunday school and church, and how their
minister or priest explained God to them. The metaphors they used to describe God
were: "love, respect, comfort, strength, big man (with long hair and beard),
magnificent, inspiring, controlling, hope, confusion, spiritual power, protector,
creator, and benevolence." Although each metaphor is different, the respondents'
descriptions indicate that God is viewed by them as a wonderful person. God was
described as a person by each of the respondents. The three female respondents
made a point to inform me that they view God as male and not female. Paige said, "I
don't know what all these feminists think, but he (God) is male."

The respondents selected glowing descriptors for God. When encouraged to
talk about God, they became more reserved in their comments. Their reaction
indicated that they were not sure about God because they only know what they have
been told. This is not to say that the respondents are not religious. Three of the
respondents were asked if God had ever spoken to them, since he was described by
them as a man. Among the responses was, "well not exactly...he speaks in different ways."

Respondent A, Jack: Love, respect, awe, creator of the world ... big man, image, three in one.

Respondent B, Michael: Comfort and strength, feel mystery ... love and benevolence.

Respondent C, Paige: God is a big man, tall, muscular, beard, long hair, dark eyes. He's male. He's creator and protector. I don't believe all of these women groups who say he is female.

Respondent D, Vanessa: An essence. Authority figure who is controlling. He's a man ... magnificent. God is an inspiring feeling.

Respondent E, Maggie: Hope, confusion, frustration, very intangible. He is a spiritual power. I can't see him, but I feel the presence of God sometimes.

Are you religious? All of the respondents described themselves as being religious, although some described themselves as more religious than others. Maggie expressed resentment about this question. She likened the question to someone asking her, "are you a Christian?" She stated, she "could not stand it!" She had been asked this question before by "indignant Christians." The researcher perceived that on this question alone, the respondents thought that a personal judgment might be made about them. The researcher explored this feeling with them, but each respondent explained their religious position as being something personal that they believe and feel strongly about and that they should not have to answer such a question. Some comments indicative of the respondents' answers are:
Respondent A, Jack: Yes, but growing.
Respondent B, Michael: Yes, but not ostentatious with it.
Respondent C, Paige: ... being Catholic and Christian means being religious.
Respondent D, Vanessa: Yes, but I desire to be more religious.
Respondent E, Maggie: Yeah, but not in the true definition. Some people feel that by not doing or saying certain things they are religious. I can't stand this question.

Do you pray? If so, what happens? In response to this thematic area, all five respondents said "yes." Prayer for the respondents is "talking to God, a two way communication, and communicating with God." One respondent said that she "falls asleep at times." Another respondent said "prayer is releasing fears and tensions and thinking outwardly to God." It did not seem to matter where and how the respondents prayed. What mattered most is that they believe in prayer and the power of prayer. Through prayer the respondents stated God provides answers and meets their unmet needs.

Respondent A, Jack: Yes, I pray. Prayer is talking to God on a one to one basis.
Respondent B, Michael: Yes, Prayer is a two way communication. You share your thoughts and feelings and God responds.
Respondent C, Paige: Yes. But, sometimes I fall asleep. Prayer is openly talking and communicating with God ... I go to the chapel to pray. It's the only place for me to be alone.
Respondent D, Vanessa: For me prayer is releasing of fears and tensions, while talking to God. Getting rid of burdens. Asking for guidance and forgiveness.
Respondent E, Maggie: I pray often, but I don't use it as an escape like some people. Prayer helps me to get in touch with God and control my sense of being in the world.
Is your religious outlook true? What about others? The respondents demonstrated in their statements an appreciation and tolerance for other religious traditions. All said that their religious outlook is true, but did not feel they could personally or theologically make a negative judgment about others. There was a consensus among the respondents that all religions contain the basic values of love, respect, trust, honesty, and personal integrity. In their estimation, if these values exist within other religions, that is all that should matter.

Respondent A, Jack: Yes, so are others, but I don't know a lot about other religions. They all seem to have their good points.

Respondent B, Michael: I hope that it is, but it's hard to say. Yes others are true. All of them practice the same principles.

Respondent C, Paige: Yes, because it is based on the Bible, Catholicism, what God says and the teachings of the church.

Respondent D, Vanessa: It is right and true for myself. That's about it.

Respondent E, Maggie: Yes, for me. I believe others are true.

Definition of sin. Has your attitude about sin changed? Sin was defined by the respondents as do's and don'ts. In general the respondents' definition of the words "sin" and "taboo" were basically the same. Their responses indicated no differences in meaning. For example, "if you break the Commandments you've sinned," according to all of the respondents. At some point in each of the respondents' lives their attitude was if you commit a sin, God will not forgive you. The respondents seemed to indicate that their attitude on the topic of sin has changed over the course of their development. The respondents know that from their own personal experiences God does forgive sin. The respondents have learned from the sins they have committed. However, Paige, Vanessa, and Maggie
expressed some doubt about receiving forgiveness for some of their sins. They indicated they continue to pray to God hoping that he will forgive them. Each of the respondents indicated that they have experienced God’s love as a result of sin in their lives. It seems as if God granted them another chance to prove to Him that they are worthy of God’s "benevolence."

Respondent A, Jack: Sin is breaking the Commandments. I’ve learned that God does forgive.

Respondent B, Michael: Sin is doing something God wouldn’t do, like lying, stealing, those things. Yes, my attitude about sin has changed. Sin is more than an act. It can be an attitude. Attitudes can lead people astray.

Respondent C, Paige: Anything that goes against what or how God wants us to live . . . anything he wouldn’t do. It’s changing, but as I get older I don’t beat up on myself like I used to. I know God does forgive.

Respondent D, Vanessa: A sin is going against God’s will. What’s a sin for me is not a sin for someone else.

Respondent E, Maggie: I use to think sin was being bad and lying. I believe it’s more of not being true to self and others. Sin for me is hurting others.

Without religion morality breaks down. The respondents rejected and accepted this statement. Jack said, "morality will not break down if there is no religion." He believes that there are too many moral people in the world who do not consider themselves religious for this to happen. Michael stated that he does not agree with this statement. He believes there will always be moral people in society. Paige suggested that "morality breaks down with or without religion." Vanessa and Maggie agreed with the statement. This statement tests moral and logical reasoning.
It is evident from the data that the respondents are at varying levels of reasoning on this item.

Respondent A, Jack: Morality would not break down without religion. There are moral people who are not religious.

Respondent B, Michael: I don’t agree with that point of view. There will always be moral people.

Respondent C, Paige: I believe morality breaks down inspite of religion. People just seem not to care.

Respondent D, Vanessa: I agree with the statement.

Respondent E, Maggie: That is true.

Where do you feel you are growing, struggling, or changing in life? All five respondents said they are doing a little of each. All believe they are struggling with issues about careers, families, and marriage. The three female respondents discussed struggling, changing and growing with their sexuality. The male respondents were reluctant to talk about any sexuality issues. However, one of the male respondents did say that he had not engaged in sexual activities. He stated that he struggles with the desire, but believes that premarital sex is wrong. All of the respondents indicated that they are growing in their relationship with God and changing in their understanding of Him. Jack and Michael specifically said they are growing in different faith or religious issues. The respondents were deliberate in discussing their personal struggles. They seem to have openly acknowledged their struggles. In doing so, they expressed joy in having someone to confide in.


Respondent B, Michael: That’s a good question. Struggling with immorality.
Growing in different personal faith issues. Growing with my family. Struggling with my career goals.

Respondent C, Paige: Gee, family, my sexuality, friends, career and lots of other things. I'm growing, struggling and changing all at the same time.

Respondent D, Vanessa: Doubting self. Wondering about the future, career, a family and my relationship to God. But, growing in some of these areas.

Respondent E, Maggie: Growing in respect for self more. That's the biggest one. I am much more mature. But, I'm struggling with my career, graduate school and the future.

**Your image of mature faith.** The respondents gave very specific responses to the question regarding mature faith. They said:

Respondent A, Jack: Mature faith is willingness to do whatever God commands and to die for his cause. Few people are willing to die for God. I wonder if I could rise to the challenge if confronted with death.

Respondent B, Michael: An adult who has experienced a lot of life and is ready to go if necessary to be with God has mature faith . . . also, a person who's thoughtful, prays, and thinks a lot about God.

Respondent C, Paige: A person who is following God and doing what the scripture tells them. Sometimes it's not as easy as it sounds.

Respondent D, Vanessa: Ready to go be with God. That's a tough one.

Respondent E, Maggie: Someone who goes to church every Sunday and participates in all the activities. I guess I am not mature enough, because I don't always go to church.
These data reveal that mature faith for these respondents is focused on pleasing God, having a willingness or desire to be with Him, following God's commandments, and actively worshipping Him. The respondents revealed through the data that mature faith comes with a price. The respondents indicated that one price is being willing to leave earth to go to be with God in heaven.

Preference of going to heaven or staying on earth. Jack, Paige, and Maggie clearly stated their desire to stay here on earth if they had to make a choice. They feel that they have not accomplished their goals here on earth. They want to get married, have families, buy homes, have a career and do all of the things they have been raised to believe they should do. Michael wanted the security of definitely going to heaven, so he said he "would leave this world if God was ready for him." Vanessa said, "I'm ready to go, but I prefer to stay here." She said, "sometimes I feel so tired." It seems as though the respondents contradicted themselves when they discussed their desire to be with God in heaven in other parts of their narratives. No one was in a hurry to pack up and go to see their God.

Respondent A, Jack: I would prefer to stay on earth to accomplish my goals and God's goals.

Respondent B, Michael: Go to heaven and have the security.

Respondent C, Paige: Stay here on earth and fulfill some of my earthly desires.

Respondent D, Vanessa: I am ready to go, but I prefer to stay here. Sometimes I feel so tired.

Respondent E, Maggie: I would rather stay here. I want to do other things first. Although I feel I'm ready to go to heaven.
Rank your faith. The respondents were willing to answer this question without any significant knowledge or understanding of Fowler's (1981) six stages of faith development. Each respondent was asked this question because it seemed to follow as a continuation of the previous question. The researcher explained briefly Fowler's six stages and gave the respondents Fowler's ranking for each stage. They were given a moment to think about the question and respond to it. The researcher reiterated that it was not the purpose of the study to determine their stage of faith. They replied:

Respondent A, Jack: Four to five . . . my faith is not the most it can be.
Respondent B, Michael: I am going to be a little cocky and give myself a five, because I am close to developing mature faith.
Respondent C, Paige: Five, because the next step is what I'm striving for.
Respondent D, Vanessa: Three and a half, because I believe I'm only half way to pleasing God.
Respondent E, Maggie: "Probably a three or four, but more four . . . but, I don't feel like I am really very, very religious.

This question was a challenging one for the respondents. It was not the purpose of this study to determine their stages of faith development. Somehow, this question seemed to follow logically the other questions that had been asked. If it was a purpose of this study to determine the respondents' faith development, based on Fowler's stages. The researcher believe the respondents would not be that far off with their own estimates. Research done on faith development theory generally places traditional college age students in between stage three and four (Fowler, 1981; Parks, 1986). However, Parks (1986) contended that a transitional stage is needed.
between stages three and four. She further stated that her research would place the average traditional college students between the transitional stage. According to Fowler (1980), faith development and stage of faith are based on a person's experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and values. Fowler (1980) would place a "normal" 18 to 22 year old between stage three and stage four.

Definition of faith. Faith was described by each of the respondents as an action. It is an action directed toward God. Belief in God is the action. All of the respondents indicated that their faith is personal, it can be abstract, but it is universal.

Respondent A, Jack: Faith is action. It is absolute surrender to God.

Respondent B, Michael: Faith is based on my personal experiences and commitment to God, as well as believing in God.

Respondent C, Paige: It is a personal feeling. Like believing in God and his existence.

Respondent D, Vanessa: It's something that relates directly to God. It's abstract, but universal. It is a religious idea.

Respondent E, Maggie: Faith is belief in God and that there is a higher being.

Familiarity with Fowler's theory. All of the respondents said that they had no familiarity with the theory of faith development prior to the informational sessions to select respondents for the study. Michael had heard of James Fowler. The researcher asked this question to determine if the respondents had prior knowledge of the theory of faith development, in which case this prior knowledge might have affected their responses.
Respondent A, Jack: \(\text{No, never heard of him.}\)

Respondent B, Michael: \(\text{None, but heard of him [Fowler].}\)

Respondent C, Paige: \(\text{None.}\)

Respondent D, Vanessa: \(\text{None.}\)

Respondent E, Maggie: \(\text{None.}\)

**Why they chose to participate in the study.** All of the respondents expressed a desire to assist the researcher in completing his dissertation and also shared personal reasons for their participation.

Respondent A, Jack: \(\text{I wanted to be a part of a study that deals with Christian ideas.}\)

Respondent B, Michael: \(\text{I decided to participate because the study sounded interesting and I wanted to help you out. Plus, I've never done this before, so jumped at the opportunity.}\)

Respondent C, Paige: \(\text{I wanted to be a part of this kind of study because I felt it would help my understanding of faith.}\)

Respondent D, Vanessa: \(\text{I was curious and the way the study sounded seemed interesting... and, I know what it takes to get research done.}\)

Respondent E, Maggie: \(\text{I appreciated the way the study was explained to the group and I wanted to know more about faith for myself... I felt it was worth it.}\)

**Summary**

The purpose of this section was to provide an overview and summary of the five respondents' narratives. This section delineated similarities and differences in the respondents' responses to the FDIG. All of the respondents seemed to have honestly and openly answered the questions asked of them during their interviews.
The respondents displayed a lot of enthusiasm and willingness to adjust their schedules to fully participate in the study.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this section is to provide a description and analysis of the faith development of five respondents who attend a church-related college. The findings are presented using Fowler's theory of Faith Development as the basis for discussion. Fowler (1981) defined faith development as a human universal. According to Fowler (1981), all people possess faith since it is universal in nature. One does not have to be a Christian or believe in God to have faith or to experience faith (Fowler, 1981; Parks, 1986).

Fowler (1986) maintained that faith is expressed through shared rituals, community, traditions, beliefs, and symbols of one's religious background. Faith is also described by Fowler as various modes of knowing and being in the world (Fowler, 1981, 1986). He believes that individuals mature in faith as they develop physically, morally, and psychologically.

Faith is that essence that gives life meaning. Faith is interactive and social. Faith is developed in relationship with others (Fowler, 1981). Four basic tenets that Fowler (1981) identified in his theory are used in this analysis. The four tenets are: faith as identity, faith as imagination, faith as knowing, and faith as relational (Fowler, 1981, 1986). The tenets are used in order to provide a basis for analysis. Background information on the tenets is included in the review of the literature in Chapter II. In addition, the tenets are briefly described below in conjunction with an analysis of the respondents' answers.
Faith as Identity

The respondents used their unique voices to tell their stories of faith development. Fowler (1981) is of the opinion that all of us as human beings are story tellers. We tell the stories of our lives that make sense. Sense-making gives life meaning. Sense-making also provides the basis by which logical and moral decisions are made (Fowler, 1981). The respondents in this study described their decision-making on the basis of attitudes, beliefs, and values that were formed in relationships and nurtured throughout identity development with parents and friends.

In this study, the five respondents shared experiences and perceptions about how their relationships with their family members helped to shape their identities. The data in this study concur with Fowler's (1981) and Erikson's (1968) theory that identity is formed out of trusting and loving relationships. For example, each of the respondents in this study explicitly described their relationships with parents and siblings. Most importantly, the values and beliefs that the respondents subscribe to in their lives were passed on from their parents.

Identity develops in infancy (Erikson, 1968). A child learns to trust and bond oftentimes with an adult parent. As the child trusts and develops, the child learns to respond to the demands of external authority. Fowler (1981) stated that our commitments and trusts shape our identities. He believes that people become part of that which they love and trust. Likewise, our identities are formed and shaped by the communities we join and participate in (Fowler, 1981).

According to Fowler (1981, 1986), parents provide the rules, structures, taboos, and beliefs, that give form to our lives and meaning to our existence. Each respondent in this study described their parents as the loving, caring, nurturing and
trusting individuals who passed on their values and beliefs that helped to shape their own values and beliefs.

In the first category of this study, the respondents' master stories focused around parents and families. A center of value for each respondent at an early age was developing a belief in God. Their master stories are told in such a way that God was not only a center of value for them, but they expressed the belief that God should be a center of value for every human being.

The rules, structures, taboos, and beliefs of the parents of the respondents in this study were accepted by the respondents. As the respondents grew up and started to write their own life stories they spoke of their own experiences of going to school, developing friends, going to college, attending church, and becoming involved in youth camps, sports, and other youth organizations and activities. Those involvements formed the basis of their identities in relationship to others.

The external influences of friends felt by the respondents, together with the structure imposed upon them by parents, raised the question in their minds, Who am I? The question, Who am I?, can lead a person to search and find his or her own identity. Fowler (1981) believes that identity develops as a person experiences the world in relationship to others and community. The foundation of identity development in the lives of these respondents is based in infancy and childhood growth. None of the five respondents reported having an untrusting, unloving or uncaring childhood. The respondents did not discuss conflicts with their parents from the perspective that their parents did not care for them. In fact, the data suggest that some of the parents may have overcompensated in this area. In at least three of the respondents' narratives, they stated that they initially rebelled against some of the structure, rules, and taboos imposed on them by parents. However
negative they may have been, the respondents now believe those same values and beliefs are not only good for them, but will be good for their own children. There seems to be a consensus that the respondents plan to pass their beliefs and values on to their children.

Fowler (1981) argued that faith and identity development are of ultimate concern to human beings. The ultimate concern of these five respondents is to lead fulfilling lives that reward and give life meaning and purpose. Because of the development of their own identities the respondents indicated a desire to somehow reward their parents, friends and communities for helping them form their identity and faith.

Identity can be placed in several centers of value and power (Fowler, 1981, 1986). In this study, the respondents defined their identities in relationship to their parents, their hometown communities, their churches, and their schools. These entities served as and continue to serve as centers of value and power for them.

One major factor to be considered here is the community of faith that these respondents came from. All of the respondents stated that they have maintained an ongoing relationship with their various church communities. The respondents generally believed that their religious identities are the by-products of the church communities and parental influence. In each case, the respondents stated that catechism, Sunday school, or confirmation helped to form their religious identity. Being religious and participating in religious activities were described as important values and beliefs for the respondents. There was no indication on the part of the respondents that they wish to lose their religious identities. At least two of the respondents indicated that they are more able to understand their own faith in view of traditional church dogma (Michael and Maggie).
Fowler (1980) strongly believes and advocates that faith communities play an important role in the formation of identity development for children, adolescents, young adults, and older adults. He emphasized that faith is not always religious, it is the expression we find in communion with others. Hence, the development of faith continues to grow. The respondents in this study do describe the importance of community, both secular and religious, in their faith development.

**Faith as Imagination**

The respondents in this study identified images, symbols, and rituals that are important to them. Their symbols and the meanings associated with them have evolved from their early childhood. As religious persons, the respondents described God as a significant image in their lives. The respondents stated that images, rituals and symbols have always played a role in their development. Their images included childhood play, images of parents and God, and rituals of belonging expressed in becoming members of a church family and being associated with their family's religious traditions.

The powers that the respondents in this study attached to their images, symbols, and rituals, are discussed in their master stories. Ideally, these images serve to provide content to the faith development of the respondents. Images for the respondents in this study helped to shape their interpretations of their perceptions and have helped them to form principles, passions, and priorities that guide their lives.

Images also serve the purpose of reinforcing and structuring beliefs and values that individuals attempt to live out in community with others (Fowler, 1981).
Images can be powerful, impersonal, hostile, indifferent, symbolic or peaceful representations of harmony among people.

In faith development, the form and the content of images and symbols can serve as life sustaining and life-giving meanings (Fowler, 1986). According to Fowler (181) changes in a person's images and symbols can provide a transformation in identity development. Furthermore, group association provides content and meaning to the images that people affiliate with. For example, images contain power and in the face of adversity or uncertainty in life, people look to their images to restrain crises and in turn sustain their lives. The respondents in this study discussed turning to certain images and symbols (i.e., the cross, God) for help when they found themselves in crises.

Fowler (1981) believes that the structuring powers of images during childhood often continue throughout adulthood. For example, reality is often based on a person's perception. The importance that parents, church, school, and other groups place on images, symbols and rituals will often influence a child or adolescent to join in fellowship with a group. In this study, each of the groups that respondents affiliated with provided strong images of faith, beliefs and values that helped to shape the respondents' lives and belief in God.

According to Fowler (1980, 1981) imagination is used by individuals to construct their environments. Imagination can be a key component in a person's ability to know and respond to truth. Fowler's (1980, 1981) usage of imagination does not mean fantasy-making or make believe. For Fowler (1981) imagination is our use of symbols, images, rituals, metaphors, and other forms of representation that provide us with meaning and truth. Symbols and rituals can be used in helping to chart turning points in a person's faith. Something that meant one thing at a
particular time and place, may mean something totally different if we attach symbols and images to it (Parks, 1986).

**Faith as Knowing**

In this study, the respondents' perspectives on social norms, social justice, liberation, poverty, and helping the poor are significant in understanding their sense of knowing. The respondents' commitments and values expressed in relationship to social causes are indicative of their understanding of social order and the role of human beings in helping to structure society. This is evident in the respondents' statements about world peace, hunger, poverty, AIDS, racism, and concern for the environment.

When asked directly, How do you know?, the respondents in this study replied, "I was told;" "I was taught;" Someone informed me;" or, "I was led to believe." Knowing on the basis of their own experiences did manifest itself to a minimal degree throughout the respondents' narratives. The researcher concluded that had the respondents' life experiences been broader than what they are now, more of them would have said, "I know because of my experiences."

As it relates to this tenet, the respondents were more concerned with the aspect of social-role perspective taking. Social-role perspective taking provides the means for the respondents to interact with other groups and persons whose values and beliefs may be different from theirs. Through social-role perspective taking a person is able to determine his or her own mode of knowing (Fowler, 1981). In simpler terms, the respondents' understanding of that which is external to them becomes that which is most important. For example, a groups' inner motivations, a person's feelings, values and beliefs are important in developing new relationships.
Relationships provide the basis for respondents to learn and act out appropriate roles.

A difficult aspect about knowing for the respondents had to do with their perspectives about their future and the future of human life. The respondents indicated uncertainty about their own futures and the existence of human life. Knowing in this instance creates tension by which faith can grow.

Faith as knowing provides validation and contentment. Fowler (1981) stated that there are three factors associated with this aspect of validation. They are authority, perceptions of authority, and inner feelings about authority. For example, in this study the first source of knowing the respondents identified was an authority person (i.e., teacher, minister, professor, friend, etc.). Secondly, the respondents identified perceptions of knowing based on how authorities and relationships are held in common together. Third, the respondents may have relied on an inner feeling or belief imposed or accepted out of a tradition that provided their sense of knowing.

Faith as Relational

The respondents in this study revealed that church membership and participation in prayer, Bible study, communion, hymn singing, and social outreach are important aspects of their faith. The relationship to church and God was stated repeatedly by the respondents as being a belief or a value that has guided and shaped their lives. Each respondent identified the role of his or her pastor in catechism or confirmation in helping them to structure and form an understanding of faith in God and the community of believers. Evidence within the narratives
suggests that the respondents have maintained that bond of trust and loyalty with their church communities and with God.

All of the respondents stated that they pray to God and desire that their relationship with God continues to grow. Faith for these respondents has manifested itself throughout the narratives, especially in their discussions of strong support relationships with their friends, family, sorority, fraternity or other organizations.

All of the respondents identified and exhibited aspects of faith as relational. Some of the relationships are with members of their peer groups. Other significant relationships where trust and loyalty seem to be the center of their values, are with the respondents and their parents, as well as their boyfriends or girlfriends.

Analysis of the data also indicates that there is a strong connection among the respondents as it relates to the tenets faith as relational, faith as community, and faith as belonging to a church. All of the respondents stated the importance that church has had for them. Also, each of the five respondent identified a person in the church who influenced his or her thinking about faith and their relationship to God.

Faith as relational is best understood from the perspective that faith begins in relationship and not in isolation (Fowler, 1981). Fowler (1981) believes that faith as relational is a shared commitment to a set of values and beliefs. In any instance, if faith is to develop, Fowler (1986) believes that it must begin in infancy. Gathering from the statements made by the respondents in this study, their families started the formation of faith for them as relational very early in their lives.

The foundation of faith development is in relationships (Fowler, 1981). Relationship implies trust with or in another. In this aspect, the self is able to
integrate in trust with another person. Commitments are made. Bonds are formed and expectations held in grandeur (Fowler, 1981).

Self in relationship is bound to others by trust and loyalty. In most instances the relationships that are formed are usually shaped by a shared sense of loyalty to a certain belief, value, principle or issue. The center of value in this instance would be that which the group or two people hold sacred or in common.

Maria-Rizzuto (1980) contended that the initial representation of God and faith in God is provided by the community of faith and the child's parents at an early age. The process continues, she stated, and more than likely serves as the foundation for faith in the child who has become an adult. Fowler (1980) asserted that the language, rituals, and teachings of faith communities are essential for faith development. Faith develops through images, relationships, knowing, and personal identity within Christian communities. Rites of Christian initiation impact and influence faith development (Fowler, 1980). The respondents' language about faith illustrated a commitment to a relationship with God.

The central task of faith development is to grow in faith. All of the respondents expressed an eagerness to grow in knowledge and relationship to God. This study revealed that faith development is an important issue in the lives of these five respondents. In each of the four categories the respondents identified faith as a part of their identity, as a part of their imagination, as knowing and as part of their relationships. Their desire to participate in the study, to question their own values and beliefs, as well as the values and beliefs passed on to them, exemplifies what the researcher believes is a desire to grow in faith.
Conclusion

The questions in the FDIG, which elicited the primary data for this study, challenged the respondents' beliefs, values, commitments, and views about relationships. The respondents did not waiver in discussing their commitments to God, family, church, support groups and other significant relationships. For example, when questioned about their belief in God, the respondents generally stated that even though they had not personally seen God, they still believe in God. Faith in the Christian tradition is not based on seeing. It is based on the unseen. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Holy Bible, Kings James Version, Hebrews 11:1). Faith is the antithesis of being and doing in the world. Fowler (1981) described faith development as a process that occurs throughout life. In general, the respondents described their own faith as being mature, but not perfectly mature.

The analysis using the four tenets provides an understanding of the description of faith development in the lives of the respondents. The past and current religious orientation of the respondents was important in helping them describe their faith and how it has evolved over time.

All of the respondents expressed a concern about the future of their families, the future of the world, and their relationship to God. The respondents in this study have welcomed the beliefs, values, and attitudes given them by others to help in structuring their lives. Inevitably, faith must deal with life (Fowler, 1981).

The process of creating a God representation, for providing centers of value, images of power, and master stories are all functions of faith development and are evident in the narratives of the five respondents. The structural components of faith for these respondents are inclusive of other religious traditions, Christian and non-
Christian traditions. Their statements about God reveal that God is a person who is up in heaven, who looks down upon the souls of men and women. God is not necessarily destructive.

There is consistency and clarity in the statements made by the respondents about their faith development. Their views about world order and coherence are discussed in light of the purpose of human life and its relationship to God and the cosmos. Things, places, people, beliefs, and values seem to make sense for the respondents in this study, thus, providing a greater degree of coherence.

The respondents were reserved in discussing their views of moral judgment about others and to some degree, their reservations about others have helped them examine their own inadequacy to grow in faith. Their logic and reservation are resonant in the value of being non-judgmental and placing themselves "in the shoes of the sinful, the hungry, the uneducated or the suffering masses."

As the respondents in this study develop, they are realizing that their centers of value are taking on more meaning. God is now viewed as "magnificent," "powerful," and "all knowing." God is not just a man with long hair and a beard whom they saw in a picture somewhere. For these five respondents God is the essence of their faith.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study of the faith development of five students attending a midwestern church related college. In addition, recommendations for future practice, recommendations for further research, and a concluding statement are provided.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of the study was to provide a description of the faith development of five respondents who attend a church-related college. The objective of this study was to describe the faith development of the respondents using their own words as the basis for discussion and analysis. Faith development for the purpose of this study was viewed as a set of beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape and provide meaning to a person's life (Fowler, 1981).

Faith development is defined as the making, maintenance, and transformation of human meaning (Fowler, 1981). It is a mode of knowing and being in the world. Through faith we shape our lives in relation to comprehensive convictions or assumptions about reality (Fowler, 1981).

According to Fowler (1981), there are four tenets of faith development. These are: (a) faith as identity, (b) faith as imagination, (c) faith as knowing, and (d) faith as relational. In each of the four tenets, a person develops faith through interaction with family, church, organizational affiliations and objects of the world environment. Faith is not necessarily religious or Christian (Fowler, 1981). It is a shared belief in a set of values, beliefs, attitudes and experiences.
Within this study, faith as identity was described by the five respondents. The attributes of this tenet were formed during the formative years of their development with parents and their church communities. Fowler (1981, 1986), believes identity develops through trusting and caring relationships with the child and in relation to an authority figure who nurtures within the child a respect for and appreciation of similar values and beliefs they consider important.

Faith as imagination is used to help individuals construct their sense of meaning about symbols, rituals, and images in their environment (Fowler, 1981). The data in the study revealed that the five respondents associated images, symbols, and rituals with a set of shared religious values and beliefs that were passed on to them by persons having authority to teach them the meanings they associated with these items. Imagination was defined by the respondents in terms of their ability to provide meaning and coherence to the symbols, rituals, and images that exist in their environment. The respondents' images of God, church, and family illustrated their sense of belonging and experiencing community.

Faith as knowing for the five respondents is evident through the patterns of their beliefs. For example, in faith development, knowing has to do with the patterns of beliefs a person attributes to self, to others, and to their environment (Fowler, 1981). Knowing for the respondents in this study included knowing God, knowing self, knowing their peers, knowing about career and personal interests, as well as knowing the expectations of their particular religious denomination about belief, and particularly belief in God. Through catechism, Sunday school, personal study and personal reflections and feelings, the respondents indicated an acknowledgment of God, church, and faith in their lives.
The tenet faith as relational includes thoughts, actions, attitudes, responses and initiations with others, that are externally directed (Fowler, 1981; Parks, 1986). Faith as relational is not only directed toward God, but toward other people who interact with each other and share similar beliefs (Fowler, 1981). Each of the respondents discussed life-shaping influences that relationships have had on their development as individuals, as Christians who believe in God, and as persons who treasure the bond of commitment in relationships. The respondents specifically attributed their faith relationships to parents and church, the key influences that shaped their values about faith.

Research Methods

The purpose of this study was to provide a qualitative description of the perceived faith development of five students attending a midwestern church-related college. The research question that provided the direction and focus for this study was, "What do the respondents in this study say about their faith development?"

The methods of data collection and analysis used in this study were qualitative. The primary data were collected through interviews with the five respondents. Qualitative methods (i.e. interviews and document analysis) were used because they provide a description of human experiences from the individuals' point of view (Kniker, 1991). For example, the study described the perceived faith development of students attending a church-related college, based on their personal life experiences, perceptions and observations.
Data Sources

The primary data for the study were generated by using Fowler's (1981) Faith Development Interview Guide (FDIG). The FDIG is a qualitative protocol developed by Fowler to study faith development. The FDIG was useful in providing a framework to collect, organize and analyze the data. Based on this study, the researcher was unable to document any inherent weaknesses in the FDIG.

Secondary data were obtained from selected documents which described the institutional setting of the study (i.e., the midwestern church-related college, student life, curriculum, policies and procedures).

Interviews

The interviews were conducted with the five respondents starting in April 1992 and continuing through June 1992. Each respondent's interview was tape recorded and transcribed to facilitate data analysis. Throughout the interview period written notes were maintained by the researcher (e.g., follow-up questions, ideas for organizing and analyzing the data) to assist him in collecting, organizing, and interpreting the data.

Following the interviews, each respondent received a copy of his or her transcription and was asked to review it and note comments, questions, or concerns in the margins. Member checks completed with the respondents were designed to give them an opportunity to review the data and clarify or verify the data for accuracy. Some of the respondents requested that sensitive or personal information about them be deleted from the data analysis and reporting. Omission of these data did not change the results of the study. No other changes were recommended by
the respondents. All of the raw data collected for this study are the property of this researcher.

Data Analysis

According to Marshall and Rossman (1989) data analysis involves clarifying, organizing and establishing meaning out of large amounts of data. Merriam (1988) asserted that data analysis is the most important step in qualitative research. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) proposed that the goal of data analysis in qualitative research is to link units and categories together, creating themes that can then be used to draw rational conclusions about the data.

For the purpose of this study, the data were collected, organized into units and then sorted according to relevant categories and thematic areas from Fowler's FDIG. (see Methods section of Chapter III on unitizing and categorizing). The research design framework was based on a sequential process of: collecting and organizing the data, sorting the data into Fowler's categories and thematic areas, interpreting the data, challenging assumptions based on the data, drawing reasonable conclusions based upon the data, and writing the research report.

Since it was not a goal of this study to determine the stage of faith of the respondents, the data were not scored according to the seven variables of Fowler's theory. Discussion in the analysis about the respondents' stages of faith is based upon their personal assessment of their stages of faith after having participated in the interviews. The data do not represent an assessment of the respondents' stages of faith by the researcher.
Establishing Trustworthiness

Throughout this study, the procedures outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1989), for establishing trustworthiness of the data were followed. Lincoln and Guba (1989) advocate the use of several strategies to assure trustworthiness of the data. These include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These strategies are described in detail in Chapter III, Research Methods.

To meet the requirement for credibility of the research, the researcher used a combination of interviews and document analysis (use of multiple data sources or triangulation), peer debriefing (review of methodological procedures, decisions by a colleague), and member checks (review of the data by the respondents to clarify and confirm the transcript data and draft of the researcher's interpretation of their responses) (Merriam, 1988).

Through detailed narratives, biographical profiles, and in-depth discussion of the analysis of the findings, the data should meet the test of transferability for other researchers to determine if the findings apply to other situations or settings. In order to establish dependability and confirmability of the findings, records of evidence to assure the objectivity of the researcher's decisions about implementing the study were established through an audit trail (e.g., raw data, tapes, notes, etc.). The audit trail is designed to enable an outside examiner to evaluate the judgments and decisions by the researcher to determine if the findings can be verified (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

Ethical Considerations

The procedures and standards advocated by Merriam (1988) that deal with the ethical considerations for conducting and writing qualitative research were
adhered to by the researcher. Each of the respondents signed an informed consent form prior to participating in the study. All of the respondents were informed of the rights and scope of the study (see Chapter III). Anonymity was achieved by having each respondent select a pseudonym, which was used throughout the transcripts and written report. The raw data were selectively made available to only the respondents for their review.

Approval for the study was obtained from the Iowa State University Human Subjects Committee and the participating midwestern church-related college.

Writing the Report

The study was presented as a case study, which includes descriptions of the faith development of the five respondents. Case narratives were included in Chapter IV along with a discussion of the findings of the study. An abbreviated section on the results of the study follows in the next section to present the reader with an overview of the findings of the study.

Results of the Study

The literature on developmental theories revealed that student services practitioners are beginning to recognize and include the theory of faith development within their understanding of the development of traditional-age college students (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). In addition, trying to assess and respond to all of the developmental needs of college students will require practitioners to know more about the whole person. According to Barr and Upcraft (1990), student development theorists and student services practitioners in the 1990s must add to their concept of the whole person an understanding of faith development theory.
The review and analysis of the respondents' faith in this study were based on Fowler's (1981) theory and categories. The four main categories were used to develop the thematic areas discussed in the narratives. These categories are (1) Life Review, (2) Life Shaping Experiences and Relationships, (3) Present Values and Commitments, and (5) Religion. In this study attention was given to data using each of the four categories to organize and analyze the data.

The findings in this study illustrated that all five respondents came from middle class, mid-western, rural communities. Each respondent was raised to have a "belief in God, religion and the church," regardless of their respective religious affiliations. All of the respondents revealed that they had been raised with "Christian beliefs and values."

In some instances, the respondents indicated that they had not personally "challenged their faith beliefs because they were raised to trust the teachings of the church and those who did the teaching." One respondent went as far as asking, Why would I? (Paige).

The observations in this study demonstrated that faith is not only important to the respondents, in actuality, "it has become a way of life." Fowler (1981), contended that faith is our way of being in the world. The transcriptions and master stories of the respondents revealed important religious influences upon them from having been raised in Christian homes and churches. Based on the respondents' own words their faith is literal and figurative. It is grounded in the Judeo-Christian traditions, values, symbols, rituals, and images.

The findings in this study about the development of the respondents' faith, are consistent with the literature on faith development theory. Based on the interview data, faith development appears to be an ongoing process of development
for the five respondents. Each of the respondents stated they are growing in their faith development.

The in-depth method of interviewing, using the Faith Development Interview Guide, did provide a means for these five respondents to discuss in detail their faith. Their master stories revealed that their thinking about faith is logical and sequential, and at times illogical. The respondents did perceive faith development as a lifelong process.

This study does make a contribution to the literature on faith development because it provides insights into the faith development of five students attending a midwestern church-related college and who willingly participated in the study. Perhaps other researchers and student services practitioners can expand upon this study to determine if there is a fit between traditional human development theories used in working with college students and the theory of faith development.

More study is needed to test students' faith development and its impact upon students at church-related colleges. Fowler's (1981) theory of faith development creates possibilities for the researcher who is interested not only in development, but especially in faith development.

This study was confined to the five respondents and their master stories. No attempt was made to generalize the data to other traditional-age college students or other higher education institutional settings. The descriptions presented in the narratives and the findings of this study provide a detailed description of the respondents' faith development.

Fowler (1981) believes that faith development and identity development are central tasks for all persons to master. Myers (1991) concluded that identity development and faith development are inextricably bound together. Based on the
findings of this study, the respondents indicated that their faith development is connected to their views about their individual identities. The researcher has concluded that to minimize the impact of faith in the lives of these five respondents would be similar to denying them their own identities.

According to Fowler (1981), his theory is based on six stages of faith which are categorized as: (1) Pre-stage faith, (2) Intuitive-projective faith, (3) Mythic-literal faith, (3) Synthetic-conventional faith, (4) Individuative-reflective faith, (5) Conjunctive faith, and (6) Universalizing faith. As a child, a person begins to characterize and make meaning of the many life experiences they encounter. Progression through these six stages is hierarchical and can be externally influenced. Parental influence in faith development plays a major role in the development of moral, psychological, and spiritual beliefs and values that are fundamental elements of a person's faith development.

Summary

Perhaps the theory of faith development can help professionals in structuring educational programs that are designed to address the whole person (Bolen, 1990). Students in transition from high school to college are particularly vulnerable as they seek to grow and experience the world apart from parents, church, and the home community (Parks, 1986). Their sense of knowing and being in the world faces increasing challenges. The fear, apathy, lack of involvement, as well as destructive self-behavior that some students may exhibit during the college years, may be assessed by developing an understanding of their stages of faith development (Bolen, 1990).
Recommendations for Further Practice

This section of Chapter V consists of three parts. They are: (1) general recommendations for student services practitioners, (2) recommendations for student services practitioners at church-related colleges, and (3) recommendations for student services practitioners at public universities. The recommendations begin with the general and move to the specific.

The following recommendations are not scientifically proven by empirical research, but are based on the experiences and intuition of the researcher. The researcher for this study has approximately eleven years of experience in working with students and student service practitioners at public and private higher education institutions. Included in the researcher’s professional experiences are his attendance as an undergraduate student at a church-related college and two years of professional work experience in a church-related college setting.

General Recommendations for Student Services Practitioners

Results from this study underscore the need for student services practitioners to develop an understanding of the theory of faith development, because problems associated with a student's faith may impact other areas of his or her development. More importantly, the issue of faith development may have a profound impact on how a student thinks, reasons, makes moral decisions (especially in light of conflicting and competing values), and develops his or her sense of autonomy and identity in a college environment. Barr and Upcraft (1990), concluded that student services programs and student development theories in the 1990s must be based on a whole person approach, which includes a student's faith development.
In general, student services practitioners may want to closely examine relationships between students' values, beliefs, and actions as it relates to their faith development (if any relationship exists at all). Although some students seem to be similar in attitudes and experiences (i.e., traditional-age college students), this study reinforced the researcher's perception that students' attitudes on faith development issues can vary from student to student.

Student services practitioners might want to develop programs at their institutions that are designed to address individual issues of faith among students. Perhaps hiring staff who are interested in and knowledgeable about student services and faith development may be a start in developing programs to address students' faith development concerns.

Student services practitioners may voluntarily provide students with opportunities, time and space to come together on their campuses to discuss their faith development. This researcher believes that students are interested and willing to talk about their faith development, along with their concerns about career decisions, spouse/partner choices, developing personal guidelines of ethics to follow in life, and other issues that impact their identity and faith development.

Student services practitioners may want to establish small groups among professional and paraprofessional staff that will be instrumental in serving as intervention groups. These groups might work with students when their are times of crises on their campuses and in their communities that may relate to students' faith development concerns. A practical way of approaching this recommendation would be to work with campus ministry associations to develop the groups and programs.
Recommendations for Student Services Practitioners at Church-Related Colleges

It is recommended that student services practitioners at church-related colleges be empathetic and genuinely receptive to taking time to listen to the stories of faith development among their students. This researcher's experience is that student services practitioners at church-related colleges become so busy trying to assure academic success that leads to a successful career for their students, that they forget to listen to the faith needs of their students. The researcher believes that church-related colleges are in a unique position to address faith development needs of their students, because faith development is usually included as a part of the developmental mission of the colleges.

Student services practitioners at church-related colleges should demonstrate a commitment to their students' faith development. This commitment to assist students in enhancing their faith development can be consistent with the mission of the institution by helping to integrate the mission in a way that assists students in actualizing their faith development.

It is recommended that student services practitioners at church-related colleges assist their academic communities in understanding the faith needs of their students and in bridging the gap between academic programs and curriculum and the faith development of their students. Through integrating issues of faith development into the curriculum with secular ideologies, students may be better prepared to address their societal needs from both secular and sacred perspectives. In the opinion of the researcher, the need for self-expression and self-actualization are imperative needs among students today. Student services practitioners at church-related colleges should develop orientation programs that address the whole person from various faith perspectives so that their students will become more
keenly aware of the diversity of attitudes, opinions, and beliefs that exist among people of different cultural and religious traditions.

Recommendations for Student Services Practitioners at Public Universities

Few public universities embrace student developmental programs that address the faith development needs of their students. The researcher has observed that the students he has interacted with who attend public universities are genuinely concerned about matters of faith development. If faith development has to do with the making, maintenance and transformation of meaning, as Fowler (1981) suggested, then students who attend public universities are not exempt from having to develop their sense of meaning in the world.

It is recommended that student services practitioners at public universities study the perceptions, experiences and impact of faith development among their students. In addition, student services practitioners at public universities should attempt to understand the impact of a student's parents, home church and other communities that have been influential in shaping his or her faith development prior to arrival on campus. Practitioners can develop programs, symposia, small groups and workshops for students to help them explore faith development, as part of a whole person approach to student development.

Additionally, student services practitioners should openly acknowledge a student's concerns related to matters of faith that have heretofore been considered off limits because of a fear of being perceived as proselytizing. Student services practitioners should not disengage themselves from their students when they begin to discuss personal matters of faith. Student services practitioners can, by example, model their own faith development among their students by helping them to
understand that faith development should be integrated into a person's total development and not be viewed as something to be dealt with in isolation. This researcher continues to notice that college personnel appear uncomfortable in confronting or discussing apparent contradictions of faith development exhibited and discussed by their students.

It is recommended that student services practitioners, along with campus ministry associations, sponsor joint activities on leadership development, academic integrity and excellence that provide opportunities for growth among their students to address personal matters of faith development. Similarly, student services practitioners should take the lead in helping to educate students that values and beliefs can be different among students of different cultural and religious traditions and that students' individual appreciation for a person's faith beliefs may help them to understand and effectively participate in a world that is a global village.

Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations are based on the observations and analysis made during the course of this study. Although the findings of this study are not generalizable, the study should provide a basis for further research in the areas delineated below.

1. Future researchers, using qualitative or quantitative methods may want to examine the influences of church-related colleges on the faith development of their students. Perhaps church influences or denominational influences on faith development could be examined by studying the dogma of the church denomination, the mission of the institution, how denominational support
(financial) influences students' faith development, and how religion and faith are taught in academic courses at their institutions.

2. Further research should be conducted to study the influence of faculty, staff and administrators on the faith development of students attending church-related colleges. Perhaps, faculty, staff and administrators' personal views about faith are transmitted to their students and embraced by them as their own values and beliefs.

3. Further research should be conducted to determine if students' involvement in religious life activities influences their faith development. In this study, each of the five respondents reported that his or her involvement in religious life activities on campus helped to nurture his or her faith in some way.

4. Research on religious symbols, images, and rituals at church-related colleges should be studied to determine their influence on the faith development of students.

5. Another important area for future research may be how campus rules and regulations, along with student activities and involvement, influence or provide structure at church-related colleges to influence the faith development of their students.

6. Studies could be conducted on the role of campus ministers and campus chapels at church-related colleges to determine how they influence and
encourage faith development for all students regardless of religious affiliation.

7. Studies involving practitioners in student services at church-related colleges should be conducted to determine practitioners' understanding of the theory of faith development and how it impacts the whole person concept of development.

8. Researchers should develop quantitative measures, such as Likert scales, to use in collaboration with the theory of faith development, to determine if students view themselves as religious, somewhat religious, not religious, or do not believe in religion at all. For example, Likert scale measures might provide more generalizable data about the faith development of college students from which greater understanding of the differing needs and interests of students might result.

9. Interested researchers may desire to study the impact of family values upon a student's faith development in view of the fact that family values have now become a widely discussed topic of political debates. This study did, however, address the shared family values that the respondents believe are important to their faith development.

10. Further research should be done to address similarities and differences between gender groups at church-related colleges.
Concluding Statement

Faith development among students attending church-related colleges has been minimally researched. Practitioners who are interested in the whole person concept of student development, as well as persons who have expertise in student development theory, must be willing to engage their students in a dialogue about their faith. First and foremost, practitioners must be knowledgeable about faith development theory and be comfortable in incorporating their understanding of the theory into the advice and counsel they give to their students. A person's faith development can have a significant impact on how they interact with others and give meaning to their world. Traditional-age college students have many beliefs and values that are passed on to them by parents, school, church, peers, and community. Some of those beliefs and values eventually unfold into the master stories they tell about themselves in relation to their faith and their belief in God.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


DOCUMENTS


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not have been possible without the aid of my friends, family and colleagues. I want to thank my wife, Annette, for her continuous love and faith in us. We did it, in the midst of many obstacles. We know the sacrifices it took. Without you we would not have reached these milestones in our lives. Thanks to you and your family.

To my mother (Georgia Mae Haggray) who gave unselfishly of her time, energy, financial resources, faith, love and prayers to start all of her seven children on the road to a higher education. You mean the world to me. It is through your eyes that I saw faith in the darkest moments of our upbringing. You knew there was a way, when no way at all was in sight. God bless you mom. I love you. I have learned through you and the difficulties encountered during this process what faith really means.

To my brothers and sisters, Sherryl, Edward, Jr., Barbara, Anthony, Christopher and Jeffrey, it goes without saying, I love you all and thanks for every encouraging word and keeping faith in me. Most of all to my grandmother, Mary Green, whose faith is continuous.

To my home church (Miller's Temple) you taught me faith and I shall never forget my roots.

To my friends across this country, Jerry and Beverly Peoples, Melvin and Phyllis Ray, Carol Mahan, Mike, Rev. Dr. McKarl Thomas and family, Wheeler and Frances Weston (You have given us so much), Carlie and Gary, Dr. Charles Ramsey (who introduced me to ISU), Dr. George Jackson and family, Harvey and Dr. Cortez Henderson, Rev. James MacMillan, Vern and Delores Hawkins, Dr. Charles Samuels and family, Dr. James Sweeney, Grace Weigel and others, too
many to name. I love you all and thanks. As well, to Bishop and Mrs. John H. Miller, Sr., and The Rev. and Mrs. Jonathan Robinson who had faith in me and kept me looking onward in ministry.

I am extremely grateful to my doctoral committee, Drs. Daniel C. Robinson (Co-Chair), Charles Kniker (Co-Chair), Motoko Lee, Janet Sweeney, and George Jackson. Special thanks to Dr. Norman Boyles for your support as Department Chairman. You all helped to make this effort a reality. I will always remember and cherish the moments of leading me on this journey towards the completion of the dissertation. My faith in this committee has made the dissertation project possible. Thank you Dr. Lee for serving strategically and giving support to me as a member of this committee. Melvin said, "You're the best." Thank you Drs. Robinson and Kniker for stepping forward in moments of uncertainty. Thank you Drs. Sweeney and Jackson for coming aboard when called upon, in spite of your busy schedules.

I am eternally grateful to God, that in the midst of all of life's ups and downs, I have climbed one more mountain. When all hope seemed to have vanished, it was God's strength that undergirded my travels in life.

I owe credit to the following persons at my undergraduate alma mater: Dr. Thomas W. Simmons, Dr. Thelma Roundtree, Dr. Prezell Robinson, Dr. Wiley Davis, Dr. Nelson Harrison, Dr. Julius Nimmons, Rev. Dr. Ronald Fox, Dr. Forrest Toms, and Mr. Wanzo Hendrix. You all set a blaze in my heart, "learning for learning's sake," which kept me driven towards the achievement of the doctoral degree. Through your efforts to instruct, teach, and nurture me, I am who I am. Thank you St. Augustine's College, you are one of the best
experiences in my life. You reinforced faith in my abilities to master the dark moments of life.

To one of my best friends for many years, Carla D. Williams and her mother (Mrs. Manigault), thank you for the lasting friendship. I remember we started together. To all of my family, especially "Grandma" Mary Green, (uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces, nephews, and extended members), I hope to join you in the future at family endeavors. To my friends at Sidney A. Jones (Mrs. Jones and Mr. Mills) and to my brothers and sisters at Lester's Florist, and the late Rev. Isiah Boles, thanks for years of loving me and caring.

My gratitude is owed to Jill Shannon who did extensive transcriptions and made herself available in times of crisis. Thank you for your contribution to this dissertation.

To my father in the ministry, the late Bishop Robert B. Thompson (deceased), I would not know the true meaning of faith had you not taken the time to teach me in my formative years.

This dissertation is a family venture of all who have come before me and those to follow. Great appreciation is given to "Chuck" Frederiksen, the Director of Residence at ISU and the Residence Life and Minority Student Affairs staffs and departments, as well as all of my colleagues at ISU who kept encouraging me to "just do it." To "just do it," is the reality of faith.

My gratitude is owed to Drs. Neil Nakadate and Don Whalen for reviewing with me the rough drafts of the dissertation, as well as helping to keep me focused.

Thanks - Peace and Love

Dennis
APPENDIX A. HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW
Information for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects
Iowa State University
(Please type and use the attached instructions for completing this form)

1. Title of Project: Faith Development: A Qualitative Research Study Utilizing Fowler's Theory to Examine the Faith Development of Students Attending a Church-Related College

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to ensure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any adverse reactions to the committee. Additions to or changes in research procedures after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review. I agree to request renewal of approval for any project continuing more than one year.

Dennis Alonza Haggray
3/25/92
Professional Studies
1208 Friley Hall (Dept. of Res.)

3. Signatures of other investigators

4. Principal Investigator(s) (check all that apply)
   □ Faculty  □ Staff  □ Graduate Student  □ Undergraduate Student

5. Project (check all that apply)
   □ Research  □ Thesis or dissertation  □ Class project  □ Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project)

6. Number of subjects (complete all that apply)
   □ # Adults, non-students  □ # ISU student  □ # minors under 14
   □ # minors 14 - 17

7. Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects: (See instructions, Item 7. Use an additional page if needed.)

   The purpose of this study is to provide a detailed and comprehensive description of the faith development of the students who attend College. Limited research exists on the topic of faith development and the impact of church-related colleges on students' development. In this study, I will use qualitative research methods to describe and examine each respondent's faith development by using Fowler's Faith Development Interview Guide (see attached) to generate the findings of the research. Data collection will be conducted by doing taped interviews with each respondent. No institutional observations will occur.

(Please do not send research, thesis, or dissertation proposals.)

8. Informed Consent: [ ] Signed informed consent will be obtained. (Attach a copy of your form.)
   [ ] Modified informed consent will be obtained. (See instructions, Item 8.)
   [ ] Not applicable to this project.
9. Confidentiality of Data: Describe below the methods to be used to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained. (See instructions, item 9.)

Pseudonyms will be given to the respondents and will be utilized on anything written about the participants. The unedited data collected will be available to the participants, but will be strictly confidential; therefore, College administrators and other students at College will not have access to the raw data.

10. What risks or discomfort will be part of the study? Will subjects in the research be placed at risk or incur discomfort? Describe any risks to the subjects and precautions that will be taken to minimize them. (The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to subjects' dignity and self-respect as well as psychological or emotional risk. See instructions, item 10.)

No procedure will be utilized which will involve physical, psychological, or social risk or discomfort to the participants as a consequence of participation in this study.

11. CHECK ALL of the following that apply to your research:

☐ A. Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
☐ B. Samples (Blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
☐ C. Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
☐ D. Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
☐ E. Deception of subjects
☐ F. Subjects under 14 years of age and/or
☐ G. Subjects in institutions (nursing homes, prisons, etc.)
☐ H. Research must be approved by another institution or agency (Attach letters of approval)

If you checked any of the items in 11, please complete the following in the space below (include any attachments):

Items A - D Describe the procedures and note the safety precautions being taken.

Item E Describe how subjects will be deceived; justify the deception; indicate the debriefing procedure, including the timing and information to be presented to subjects.

Item F For subjects under the age of 14, indicate how informed consent from parents or legally authorized representatives as well as from subjects will be obtained.

Items G & H Specify the agency or institution that must approve the project. If subjects in any outside agency or institution are involved, approval must be obtained prior to beginning the research, and the letter of approval should be filed.
Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. □ Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
    a) purpose of the research
    b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see item 17)
    c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
    d) if applicable, location of the research activity (Simpson College campus)
    e) how you will ensure confidentiality
    f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
    g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. □ Consent form (if applicable)

14. □ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. □ Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:

   First Contact
   ____________________________
   April 9, 1992
   ____________________________
   Month / Day / Year

   Last Contact
   ____________________________
   Contact is ongoing until the data are collected.
   ____________________________
   Month / Day / Year

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

   ____________________________
   Not Applicable
   ____________________________
   Month / Day / Year

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer

   ____________________________
   Department or Administrative Unit

   ____________________________
   Date

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

   □ Project Approved
   □ Project Not Approved
   □ No Action Required

   ____________________________
   Name of Committee Chairperson

   ____________________________
   Date

   ____________________________
   Signature of Committee Chairperson
5. Five undergraduate student respondents will be selected to participate in the study. Each student attends
The interview questions to be used in the study will be taken directly from Fowler's Faith Development Interview Guide. Each respondent will be asked the same questions. Information reported in Chapter Four about the respondents will include age-group, gender, race, religious orientation and stage of faith. The research questions set forth in this study are given below in four major sections.

Faith Development Interview Guide

Part I. Life Review

1. Factual Data: Date and place of birth? Number and ages of siblings? Occupation of providing parent or parents? Ethnic, racial and religious identifications? Characterizations of social class-family of origin and now?

2. Divide life into chapters: (major) segments created by changes or experiences - "turning points" or general circumstances.

3. In order for me to understand the flow or movement of your life and your way of feeling and thinking about it, what other persons and experiences would be important for me to know about?

4. Thinking about yourself at present: What gives your life meaning? What makes life worth living for? You?

Part II: Life-shaping Experiences and Relationships

1. At present, what relationships seem most important for your life? (E.g., intimate, familial or work relationships.)

2. You did/did not mention your father in your mentioning significant relationships.

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? Explain.

When you think of your mother...[same questions as previous]?
Have your perceptions of your parents changed since you were a child? How?

3. Are there other persons who at earlier times or in the present have been significant in the shaping of your outlook on life?

4. Have you experienced losses, crises or suffering that have changed or "colored" your life in special ways?

5. Have you had moments of joy, ecstasy, peak experience or break-through that have shaped or changed your life? (E.g., in nature, in sexual experience or in the presence of inspiring beauty or communication?)

6. What were the taboos in your early life? How have you lived with or out of those taboos? Can you indicate how the taboos in your life have changed? What are the taboos now?

7. What experiences have affirmed your sense of meaning in life?

Part III: Present Values and Commitments

1. Can you describe the beliefs and values or attitudes that are most important in guiding your own life?

2. What is the purpose of human life?

3. Do you feel that some approaches to life are more "true"or right than others? Are there some beliefs or values that all or most people ought to hold and act on?

4. Are there symbols or images or rituals that are important to you?

5. What relationships or groups are most important as support for your values and beliefs?

6. You have described some beliefs and values that have become important to you. How important are they? In what ways do these beliefs and values find expression in your life? Can you give some specific examples of how and when they have had effect? (E.g., times of crisis, decisions, groups affiliated with, causes invested in, risks and costs of commitment.)

7. When you have an important decision or choice to make regarding your life, how do you go about deciding? Example?

8. Is there a "plan" for human lives? Are we-individually
or as a species-determined or affected in our lives
by power beyond human control?

9. When life seems most discouraging and hopeless, what
holds you up or renews your hope? Example?

10. When you think about the future, what makes you feel
most anxious or uneasy (for yourself and those you
love; for society or institutions; for the world.)

11. What does death mean to you? What becomes of us when
we die?

12. Why do some persons and groups suffer more than others?

13. Some people believe that we will always have poor people
among us, and that in general life rewards people according
to their efforts? What are your feelings about this?

14. Do you feel that human life on this planet will go
indefinitely, or do you think it is about to end?

Part IV: Religion

1. Do you have or have you had important religious
experiences?

2. What feelings do you have when you think about God?

3. Do you consider yourself a religious person?

4. If you pray, what do you feel is going on when you pray?

5. Do you feel that your religious outlook is "true"? In
what sense? Are religious traditions other than your
own "true"?

6. What is sin (or sins)? How have your feelings about
this changed? How did you feel or think about sin as a
child, an adolescent, and so on?

7. Some people believe that without religion morality
breaks down. What do you feel about this?

8. Where do you feel that you are changing, growing,
struggling or wrestling with doubt in your life at
the present time? Where is your growing edge

9. What is your image (or idea) of mature faith?
APPENDIX B. LETTER OF PURPOSE AND INTENT (STUDENTS)
Dear ________________:

We are currently involved in a study on the topic of Faith Development of students attending a church-related college. College was selected and approved for the study. The purpose of the study is to determine the stage of faith development of each student participant. In addition, we are interested in finding out if attendance at a church-related college and the academic study of religion have had an impact on the students' faith.

We need your help and participation in the study. We are planning an informational meeting on Tuesday, March 10, 1992, from 6:30 PM to 7:45 PM in the ________________. This meeting will provide you and other students with background information about the study, its details and how the study will be conducted. It is our desire to select a pool of student participants at this meeting. At the above scheduled meeting we will discuss the student's role in the study, issues of confidentiality and the rights of students.

Your cooperation and reply will be greatly appreciated. Please complete the attached form and return it to the Office of the Vice President for Student Development, located in Please return the form by March __, 1992.

Should you have questions and wish to contact me by phone, my telephone numbers are (515) 294-5636 – work and 232-0398 – home. You may choose to contact the Vice President for Student Development, on your campus.

Thank you for your consideration of our request to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Dennis A. Haggray
Ph.D. Candidate
Iowa State University

Dr. Larry Ebbers
Major Professor and Chair of Graduate Dissertation Research
Please return this form to the Student Development Office at College, located in the Student Center, by March 1992. We need you to complete the form even if you do not plan to attend the meeting.

Name ________________________________

Campus/Home Address __________________________ Campus Telephone #__________

Classification Fr Soph Jr Sr (Please circle)

Major __________________________

Best time to reach you by phone __________________________

(Please circle the correct response for the questions below)

Will you be in attendance at the March 10, 1992 meeting? Yes No

If you cannot attend the meeting are you interested in participating in the study? Yes No

Are you currently working on campus or off-campus? Yes No

If you are working, what are your daily hours?

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Please list and identify your class and work schedule on the back of this form if you plan to attend the meeting. Your schedule will help in determining your availability to participate in the study interviews.
Class Schedule

Please mark (X) in the hour blocks when you have class and work.

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Are you planning to intern, travel abroad, or be on campus during the May term. Please state which activity you will participate in below.
Respondent Consent Form
(Adapted from Whitt, 1988, dissertation)

Investigator: Dennis A. Haggray
4804 Westbend Drive
Ames, Iowa 50010
Home: 292-0398 Office: 294-5636

I, _______________ understand that

a. the information obtained during this project will be used in a dissertation which will be read by each of the respondents and the five faculty members who comprise the thesis committee. The dissertation will also be available through the Iowa State University Libraries. Information will be collected by voice recordings and interview notes.

b. real names (of individuals) will not be used during data collection (e.g., in interview notes) or in the completed dissertation.

c. the "raw data" (interview recordings and notes, etc.) will remain at all times the property of the investigator and will not be read by anyone other than the investigator, nor will conversations be shared.

d. I am entitled to review the dissertation before the final draft is written in order to confirm or deny the investigator's constructions of my statements. If necessary, I may negotiate changes in these constructions.

e. my participation in this study is voluntary and I understand I will not receive any renumeration for doing so. I may withdraw from the study at any time by speaking to the investigator, and that all data collected from me will be destroyed immediately after the final approval of the dissertation. I understand that I also have the right to refuse to answer any of the questions asked by the investigator.

I agree to participate in this research project according to the preceding terms.

Respondent Signature ___________________________
Dated ___________________________

I (do) (do not) (circle one) agree to be quoted directly.

Respondent Signature ___________________________

I agree to conduct and report this research according to the preceding terms.

Investigator Signature ___________________________
Date ___________________________
APPENDIX D. DOCUMENT SUMMARY FORM
DOCUMENT SUMMARY FORM
(Adapted from Whitt, 1988, dissertation)

Today's Date:

Name or description of document:

Event or contact (if any) with which document is associated:

Significance or importance of document:

Summary of contents of the documents:
APPENDIX E. REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY
Vice President for Student Development

Dear [Name],

I am a doctoral student in Higher Education and Student Development at Iowa State University. I am interested in meeting with you to discuss the possibility of conducting a dissertation study on the topic of Faith Development at a church-related college. In particular, I am interested in Church-Related Colleges in

I am planning to call you to arrange a time that I can meet with you to discuss my proposal. I would like to know if your institution would be willing to allow me to conduct the study with College students. Attached is an abbreviated proposal of what I am interested in doing. I will send you a copy of the first draft of the proposal prior to our meeting.

If you have questions prior to my telephone call, please do not hesitate to contact me at (515) 294-5636 (office) or (515) 292-0398 (home).

I look forward to talking with you. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dennis A. Haggard
APPENDIX F. PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE CSAO
February 28, 1992

Dear Student:

Dennis Haggray, an Iowa State University Doctoral Candidate, has contacted our office regarding a research project he is interested in conducting at This project is part of his doctoral dissertation which he is completing for his Ph.D. degree.

I think this project is an interesting study and it could provide some useful information for I encourage you to attend the March 10 meeting and consider participating in this research study.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Vice President for Student Development
Respondent:

Date of Contact:

Today's date:

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<th>Interview Information</th>
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APPENDIX H. OBSERVATION ADDENDUM ITEM
Observation Addendum Item
Submitted April 6, 1992

By: Dennis A. Haggray
260-98-1442

Submitted to: Human Subjects Review Committee
Subject: Explanation of Observations

The only observations that will occur during this study include observing the respondent's behavior(s) as he or she answers the questions to the Faith Development Interview Guide. No observations of any other person, campus setting, etc., will be done to meet the requirements of this study.

hsr/obs/dh
APPENDIX I: FOWLER'S SEVEN VARIABLES OF FAITH
FOWLER'S SEVEN VARIABLES OF FAITH  
(Fowler, J.W., 1981)

Variable One: Aspect A–Form of Logic

This variable emerged from the constructivist theory of Piaget (1964). It is used to examine patterns of reason and judgment, although faith is neither rational or irrational (Fowler, 1980).

Variable Two: Aspect B–Role-taking

Fowler (1980) borrowed from Selman (1974) to develop his understanding of role-taking. Social role-taking occurs up to and through stage three.

Variable Three: Aspect C–Form of Moral Judgment

Fowler (1986) maintained that there are patterns of development consistent between moral judgment and stages of faith. Kohlberg’s stages of moral influences are the basis of this variable.

Variable Four: Aspect D–Bounds of Social Awareness

This variable seeks to explain the influence of the group of reference that a person identifies with, but it does not define the influence of the group on a person’s identity (Fowler, 1980).

Variable Five: Aspect E–Locus of Authority

The key elements to this variable are best identified by asking the question, from what sources does the individual derive his or her beliefs and values? Loyalty, trust, commitment, and conviction provide descriptors for this variable (Fowler, 1980).

Variable Six: Forms of World Coherence

Coherence is achieved as a variable when people integrate the various elements of thoughts, feelings, convictions, etc., to form their own comprehensive way of knowing (Fowler, 1986).

Variable Seven: Aspect G–Symbolic Functioning
This variable is best described as an operation and powerful
dynamic or form of logic that builds on empirical observations of
those things that create memory in environments (Fowler, 1986).